

## **Dynamics of Religion**

# **Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten**



Herausgegeben von  
Jörg Rüpke und Christoph Uehlinger

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# Dynamics of Religion

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Past and Present

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International Association for the History of Religions,  
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Tim Jensen, President of the IAHR

## Preface

Continuing a trajectory of global expansion begun in the 1950s along with its tradition of promoting the scientific, academic study of religions, the XXI 2015 World Congress of the IAHR in Erfurt is of both historical and immediate interest. The Erfurt Congress was the first to be held in Europe in twenty-five years. The proceedings published here provide an invaluable resource not only for IAHR 'nerds' and librarians but also for the IAHR membership at large, and for all scholars of religion around the world – providing, as they do, a context for the ongoing 'mission' of the IAHR and its own historical transformation over time.

The first *International Congress for the History of Religions* was held in Paris 1900. Interrupted by the First World War and with changing intervals, congresses were held in 1904, 1908, 1912, 1923, 1929, and 1935, all in European cities. The first post-WWII congress took place in Amsterdam 1950, and in the same year “The International Association for the Study of the History of Religions” (I.A.S.H.R) was founded. At the 1955 *VIII Congress for the History of Religions* in Rome, it was decided to change the name of that association to “The International Association for the History of Religions” (I.A.H.R. – later simply the IAHR).

Since 1950, the IAHR has been strategically developed to become 'truly' global or international. In 1958, the first conference was held outside Europe – the *IX International Congress for the History of Religions* held in Tokyo and Kyoto, Japan. A decision was taken after the next conference, the *X Internationaler Kongress für Religionsgeschichte*, held in Marburg 1960, to adopt a quinquennial model, holding world congresses every five years.

In 1954, the establishment of *NVMEN* (the IAHR flagship journal which for a long time included a special [I.A.H.R.] *Bulletin* reporting on the meetings and decisions of the IAHR executive and international committees as well as of the General Assembly), marked the transformation of IAHR into an organization with a life and function between congresses.

Since then a separate *IAHR Bulletin* (beginning in 1986) enhanced by an *IAHR Bulletin Supplement* and later an *IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement* (see [www.iahr.dk/bulletins.php](http://www.iahr.dk/bulletins.php)) have continued the expansion of the IAHR beyond the quinquennial congresses, and so has an IAHR book series. The *NVMEN Book Series* (as of 2008 no longer with the IAHR) has recently been substituted by a new IAHR book series named *The Study of Religion in a Global Context*, published with Equinox. An international committee meeting held in-between the

quinquennial world congresses, and, not least, a series of regional and special conferences, further expanded the scope of the IAHR.

Nevertheless, the world congresses have been and still are pivotal to the development and history of the IAHR and thus also to the academic study of religions worldwide. Each of the world congresses, with subsequent proceedings, constitutes what has been called a milestone or landmark in IAHR history and in the history of the History of Religions, nowadays often called the Study of Religion(s). The Erfurt 2015 IAHR World Congress and these proceedings are no exception.

Proceedings, the present ones too, with their overview of the academic program, with im- or explicit indication of changing theories and approaches, with their listing of congress participants as well as of IAHR member associations and affiliates, and with the inclusion of the reports and minutes from IAHR business meetings, bear witness to the development and dynamics of the international study of religions as driven by and reflected within the IAHR.

The reader of the present proceedings thus can find, *inter alia*, information on the election of the IAHR Executive Committee 2015–2020, and of the discussions about a proposal to change the name – as well as the decision *not* to change the name. The IAHR, thus, in spite of the proposals for a change discussed in 1995 in Mexico and now again in 2015 in Erfurt, is still carrying the name it gave itself in Rome in 1955. The curious are directed to the appropriate reports, minutes and proceedings as reflective of the continued vitality and expansion of the IAHR.

Locating the XXI IAHR World Congress in Erfurt, Germany, Europe, thus cannot be seen as evidence of a continuous or lingering 'Euro-centrism' within the IAHR. On the contrary. The 2015 IAHR World Congress was the first IAHR world congress to be held in Europe for 25 years, and though the number of scholars from outside Europe was not at almost 50% (as first estimated), the Erfurt World Congress, nevertheless, evidenced the continuous process towards globalization.

The aim of the IAHR (cf. the Constitution § 1), however, is not globalization 'as such' and at any cost. The aim of the IAHR is to promote "the academic study of religions through the international collaboration of all scholars whose research has a bearing on the subject." The paragraph added in Toronto 2010 to this statement ("The IAHR is not a forum for confessional, apologetical, or other similar concerns") speaks its own clear language as regards the concomitant aim to strictly limit the 'business' of IAHR-related conferences and publications, wherever in the world they take place or originate, to the scientific, academic study of religions.

The Erfurt World Congress proceedings bear witness to the continuous growth, change and development in terms of members, research areas and approaches. They bear witness to a congress that, though held in the heartland of Europe, reflected the globalization of the IAHR. And they bear witness to the efforts of the IAHR, the German hosts, and the Academic Program Committee to present an academic program in line with the academic aims of the IAHR.

Heartfelt thanks are extended to the Erfurt hosts and host institutions, to the *DVRW* (The German Association for the Study of Religion), and to everybody else engaged in the planning and holding of the congress. Special thanks are extended to all those, the IAHR Publications Officer, Prof. Satoko Fujiwara included, engaged in the swift and expedite editing and publishing of these proceedings.

Last but not least, thanks are extended to all the officers and individual members of the IAHR member associations and affiliate societies. Without your willingness to serve the IAHR in various ways, during the world congresses but most certainly also in-between the world congresses, and without your daily hard work to develop the academic, scientific study of religions, the World Congress would not be what it is – and maybe would not be at all. Thanks also to the editors and contributors to *NVMEN* and the new IAHR book series, *The Study of Religion in a Global Context*. You are all making the IAHR, its conferences, congresses and publications, these proceedings included, possible and worthwhile.

Tim Jensen

IAHR President, Copenhagen, April 2016



# Christoph Bochinger, Jörg Rüpke

## Introduction

Religion is a human, historical, social and cultural phenomenon. As such, religious ideas, practices, discourses, institutions, and social expressions are in constant change. This is a product of individual performances and group processes, of changing social constellations and external pressure. It is a challenge for those engaging in religious activities as for those observing them. Change can be constituted by new agents and new events, and be regarded as contingent and narrated as such. Change can also be analyzed as a sequence of changes in time and result of time, that is to say as a 'process'. A process can be classified as continuous or as temporary (for instance differentiation or syncretism), as repeated or unique (e.g. innovation or globalization), as reversible or irreversible (e.g. expansion or commoditization). Opinions might differ. Progress has been regarded as irreversible, monotheism seen as an original phenomenon soon in decline or as an irresistible trend of the history of religion. A process looks very different if regarded as a contemporary development or as a historical and comparative phenomenon. Diagnosis of one's own time tends to stress uniqueness and the acceleration of change. Here, a comparative perspective can help to situate and recontextualize change.

For the XXI World Congress of the *International Association for the History of Religion* (IAHR) held at the University of Erfurt (Germany) in August 2015, the organizers, who acted on behalf of the hosting German association, the *Deutsche Vereinigung für Religionswissenschaft* (DVRW), chose this challenge as its central topic (see Bochinger and Rüpke 2015) and it is the topic of this book, which builds on the results of that Congress. Hence, this volume addresses the internal and external dynamics of the interaction between individuals, religious communities, and local as well as global societies. The contributions concentrate on four fields – contemporary religion in the public square, religious transformations, the individual religious actor, and challenges in narrating religion – which will be briefly introduced in the following.

## 1 Contemporary religion in the public square

The focus here resulted from the Congress' first field, dedicated to 'Religious communities in society: Adaptation and transformation'. Embedded within complex cultures, characterized by changing social and political parameters and intercultural exchange, religious communities constantly develop practices, dis-

courses, and institutions, conceptualized by themselves and/or by scholars as ‘religion’ or in analogous terms. Religious actors shape social, political and economic environments, they are part of those environments, even if they form minorities or are excluded from the dominant discursive patterns of ‘religion’ in their respective societies (see Bochsinger 2012). The contributions hence aim at exploring all kinds of interrelations between ‘religious communities’ and ‘society’ in both directions.

Overall, it must be kept in mind that the degree of change might vary widely. Religious traditions are invented and re-invented or they might be imperceptibly transformed, violently reformed or emphatically defended and petrified. The Congress asked: how do religious communities and institutions adapt to cultural change? How do they affect social change? Does interreligious contact and dialogue lead to religious change? How do religious communities adapt to new social and cultural environments created through global migration processes? How do they react to the possibilities and threats of new media? How does globalization transform public religions, emigration and the rise of diasporas? It is these problems that are foregrounded in the chapters dealing with ‘The Dynamics of Religions and Cultural Evolution: Worshipping Fuxi in Contemporary China’; ‘Religion and Public Space in Contemporary Japan: Re-activation of the Civilization of the Axial Age and the Manifestation of State Shinto and Buddhism’; ‘The Tactics of (In)visibility among Religious Communities in Contemporary Europe’; and ‘Religion Intersecting De-nationalization and Re-nationalization in Post-Apartheid South Africa’.

‘Religion in the public square’ has been drawing public interest far beyond academic debates and it will certainly continue to do so. Legislation and legal conflicts have proven to be a growing field of impulses for religious change, as have been attempts to use religion in groups’ strife for power. In many cases it is the physical presence of religion, in architectural form or highly visible performances, that has mobilized social identities and loud dissent and also sharpened and questioned the very nature of the ‘public’ (e.g. Vries 2006).

## 2 Religious transformations

Again, the chapters of this field deal with very different forms of religious transformations, thematizing ‘Forms of Religious Communities in Global Society: Tradition, Invention, and Transformation’; ‘Subversive Spirituality: Political Contributions of Ancestral Cosmologies Decolonizing Religious Beliefs’; or ‘Religion and the Historical Imagination: Esoteric Tradition as Poetic Invention’. The concept of transformations points to the very different rates and extensions of

change, and focuses on actors as well as the invisibility of change: in short, the relationship of constant and changing elements within practices, beliefs, and institutional forms. Although practices, networks, and institutions classified as religious are always subject to constant external influences and internal processes of social change, they may at the same time be viewed as *longue durée* historical structures and symbolic representations. Shaped by founding figures and their followers, often enough fostered by schisms and revivals, the dynamics of religion are to be perceived as a seemingly contradictory concomitance of continuity and fundamental changes. Such major changes have led to violent splits and feuds or the surge of new religions, and have instigated much emic reflection and legitimating discourse. This is certainly triggered by the attraction of ‘origins’ and extraordinary persons, whether regarded as religious geniuses or divine figures.

But change can also accumulate over variations on a much smaller scale. The concept of lived religion has been established over the past two decades and now extends also to historic societies (Orsi 1997; McGuire 2008; Rüpke 2016), but it does not address thriving religious communities or the latest theological fashions. Instead, without falling into the fallacy of methodological individualism – clearly untenable given the inter-subjective and relational character of the individual – it is focusing on individuals’ ‘usage’ of religion. It does not ask how individuals replicate a set of religious practices and beliefs preconfigured by an institutionalized official religion within their biography – or, conversely, opt out of adhering to a tradition. Instead, ‘lived religion’ focuses on actual everyday experience: on practices, expressions, and interactions that could be related to ‘religion’. Such ‘religion’ is understood as a spectrum of experiences, actions, beliefs and communications hinging on human communication with super-human or even transcendent agent(s). Ritualization and elaborate forms of representation are called upon for the success of such communication with these addressees and stimulate a selective appropriation of established forms (traditions) as well as innovation.

This is not to deny the existence and importance of culturally stabilized forms of rituals and concepts. These are of importance. It is necessary to keep in mind that individual practices are not entirely subjective. There are religious norms, there are exemplary official practices, there are control mechanisms. But we also have to take into account that our evidence is biased. It is precisely such institutions and norms that tend to predominate the evidence in many cases. We see the norm, but this is not a description, rather a communicative strategy on the part of some other agent. If we observe religion in the making, in its transformations, then institutions or beliefs are not simply culturally given, but are themselves aggregates of individual practices – as well as the latter’s constraints.

The ‘lived religion’ approach, highlighted here as an example of coming to grips with the dynamic character of religion, induces methodological modifications in the process of selecting and interpreting the evidence, to only two of which we will just very briefly refer. Firstly, the focus is on experience rather than symbols. The concept of experience has not yet been brought to bear on many non-contemporary phenomena outside of mysticism. Frequently, the very subjective nature of ‘experience’ seems to be in conflict with the dearth of sources. ‘Experience’ stresses the role of the viewer and user of objects, texts or more or less sacralized spaces in open and domestic contexts, and the communicative and social processes of articulating and classifying such experience as religious, giving as much prominence to the individual as to the social context (Taves 2016).

A second focus is on culture in interaction rather than on habitus, organization or culture as text. Everyday religion is not to be grasped in terms of individual isolation, but is characterized by diverse social contexts that are appropriated, reproduced and informed by the agent on relevant occasions (Lichterman 2012). People are not a group and behave accordingly. Instead, by trying to embody imagined norms they form a group in a specific public, according to the situational necessities of forming alliances, displaying differences, giving saliency to particular (religious) collective identities. Both notions thus focus on the dynamics of religion, from situational alterations to long-term consequences in larger aggregates.

### 3 Focusing on the individual

Individuals, hence, are agents of change. Within modernization theory, individualization has advanced to being a hallmark of (Western) modernity – sometimes mirrored in counter-stereotypes by non-Western thinkers. Many forms of individual religiosity, or even less institution-related spirituality, have been convincingly diagnosed, and consequently have severely modified our concept of religion. But it has also become clear that such phenomena might be critically reviewed outside that ‘Western world’ which would like to stand out compared to others just by the self-description as the locus of a ‘modern age’. This is taking the form of pointing to the historical nonsense of such claims to singularity, as well as criticizing those counter-stereotypes that e.g. elevate Eastern collectivity over supposed Western individuality. The conceptual linking of modern age and religious individuality has obstructed looking at comparable phenomena in earlier periods, so that the focus on individuality has played only a limited role in the examination of the dynamics of religion in history (Fuchs 2015). We give just

two examples. In regarding ‘Western’ pre-modern cultures, the concept of polis religion or civic religion – that is the identity of the religious practices of a political unit and their institutions – functions with respect to the whole of religion. Likewise the concept of the religious unity of medieval Europe is just the reverse of the self-description of modern societies implied in the secularization thesis. The diagnosis of modern privatization and individualization and the ascription of a public and collective character to pre-modern religion reinforce each other.

Such observations and criticism cannot overlook the fact that religious individuality is distributed unevenly also in situations characterized by processes of individualization based on or transforming religion. It has been pointed out that after the existence of awesome dissenters in the high middle ages, it was the large number of people interested not only in objective processes of technical and economic matters, but also in the subjective dimension of the human agents that constituted individualization as a process. But mere numbers do not add up to a scale. In several cultural contexts ‘individuality’ is not an arbitrary option within the range of possible privatized sacred cosmoi, but it carries a hegemonic character (e.g. Madsen 2009). It is a way of life that is equipped with a claim to dominance in the eyes of a larger group. In certain phases, some religious traditions developed anthropological and theological reflections that could further individuality. The institutionalization of such tendencies, however, was a matter of historical contexts and social location; it was contingent. For India, for instance, the tradition of bhakti offers a comparable constellation. The narrative and theological framework of the propagation of an individual and even loving relationship of the human and a god – Vishnu and Shiva being particularly popular, wherever the addressee was regarded as personalized (instead of abstract, *nirguna*) – proved to be a reservoir that led and leads to processes of individualization of very different forms with regard to gender, medial presence, and social mobilization (e.g. Craddock 2007; Omvedt 2008).

Contrary to the dominant view of individualization as a uni-linear and coherent process, the History of Religion perspective reveals diverse, temporary, and discontinuous processes. The claim of uniqueness, unity, and irreversibility of individualization is in itself a claim that is part and parcel of modernization theory. This is reflected in this field’s chapters on topics like ‘Religion and Life Trajectories: Islamists Against Self and Other’; ‘Angels, Animals and Religious Change in Antiquity and Today’; ‘Gaining Access to the Radically Unfamiliar: Religion in Modern Times’ and finally on “Cloning Minds”: Religion between Individuals and Collectives’.

## 4 Narrating religion

The use of the term ‘religion’ by an academic discipline needs self-reflection. Religious change is registered and narrated by outsiders and insiders. Through its chronological framework, history allows for various stories to relate and speak to one another. It is likely that conflicts and contesting claims have frequently served as triggers for the production of alternate narratives. History, then, does not occur in the singular. Instead it tends to be disputed and endangered. History introduces contingency from the very beginning in order to question the established truths of others.

Religion may not seem a very likely candidate for historicization, featuring as it does meta-historical claims, gods outside of time, and displaying an inherent immunity to change. Religion as a social phenomenon possesses strong traditional authority in a Weberian sense. Frequently, myths tell stories of a distant past and thereby establish binding norms. These norms continue to be valid, not *despite* the fact that this past is categorically different from contemporary life, but precisely *for* this reason. How could one narrate a history for a system of rituals, for a ‘cold’, a supposedly rather stable sector of culture? How could continuity and change be accounted for in a narrative (Stausberg 2001)?

Emic representations influence academic interpretations (Otto, Rau, Rüpke 2015). Like the conference, this volume takes an intensive look at the narratives of and about ‘religions’, their histories and the contexts of their origins and traditions. Scholarly paradigms and theories are therefore as dynamic as their objects and invite us to regard old and new questions. Foremost among these seems to be to rethink those master narratives about religious change which have had a large impact on the general public and politics. The last section of the volume analyzes examples from very different geographical and historical contexts by focusing on ‘Of Yellow Teaching and Black Faith: Entangled Knowledge Cultures and the Creation of Religious Traditions’; ‘Global Intellectual History and the Dynamics of Religion’; and ‘Narrating, Performing and Feeling a “Religion”: On Representations of Judaism’.

\* \* \*

The introduction to a volume resulting from a Congress that brought together around 1,400 participants from all over the world cannot but end in thanking at least a few of those who made this event possible. Together with the Congress directors and the General Secretary of the IAHR, Tim Jensen at that time, Wanda Alberts (Hannover), Martin Fuchs, Vasilios Makrides (Erfurt), Hubert Seiwert (Leipzig), Katja Triplett (Göttingen), Katharina Waldner (Erfurt), as well as Elisa

beth Begemann (Congress Secretariat, Erfurt) and Bernd Otto, formed the local Organizing Committee. Together with many helpers from Germany (and some even from abroad) and the secretarial staff of the Max Weber Center – Diana Blanke, Ilona Bode, Vera Höke, Diana Püschel, Manuela Seifert, Maren Würfel and Brigitte Benz – they are to be thanked for organizing the whole process: from the selection of the topic and invitations to structuring the program, defining venues, and welcoming all the participants.

The members of the Program Committee, co-chaired by Mar Marcos (Santander), Veikko Anttonen (Turku), Eileen Barker (London), Corinne Bonnet (Toulouse), Carole Cusack (Sydney), Vasudha Dalmia (Berkeley), Satoko Fujiwara (Tokyo), Yolotl Gonzalez (Mexico City), IAHR president Rosalind Hackett (Knoxville), Noriko Kawahashi (Nagoya), Göran Larsson (Gothenburg), Jacob Olupona (Harvard), Marco Pasi (Amsterdam), Michael Stausberg (Bergen), Emilio Suárez de la Torre (Barcelona) and Ann Taves (Santa Barbara), helped by further colleagues in individual cases, screened hundreds of applications, gave advice for improvement and finally accepted around 1,400 papers.

The generous support of the University of Erfurt, namely presidents Kai Brodersen and Walter Bauer-Wabnegg and chancellors Michael Hinz and Jan Gerken, the Federal State of Thuringia, the Prime Minister of which, Bodo Ramelow, welcomed the participants at the Opening Ceremony, grants by the German Research Foundation (DFG) and the Ernst-Abbe-Foundation (Jena), travel grants by the IAHR, the EASR and the DVRW, and the support by publishers, Walter de Gruyter and C.H. Beck in particular, as well as individual benefactors, made possible the participation of so many, in particular younger, scholars and a very substantial program. Our final thanks go to Elisabeth Begemann, without whose meticulous care and uninterrupted engagement far beyond the expectable, the Congress would not have been the one it was.

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Hubert Seiwert

# The Dynamics of Religions and Cultural Evolution: Worshipping Fuxi in Contemporary China

**Abstract:** The paper discusses the theme of the congress ‘Dynamics of Religions’ in the theoretical context of cultural evolution. In contrast to the prevailing progression model of cultural evolution, it proposes a diversification model that allows for considering the dynamics of religions on the micro-level. In this view, a central element of cultural evolution is the dialectical relationship between cultural production and cultural environment, which is the outcome of cultural production and at the same time enables and restricts further production. The approach is exemplified by the religious dynamics in contemporary China focusing on the worship of Fuxi in popular and state rituals. The example also serves to illustrate divergent views of what counts as religion.

**Keywords:** cultural evolution, religious dynamics, China, Fuxi, popular religion, state rituals, ancestor worship

As this opening lecture is at the same time the first Gary Lease Memorial Lecture, I would like to begin by briefly referring to a theoretical point made by that honored scholar of religion. In an article published in 2000, Lease discusses the perennial problem of defining religion. He concludes with the remark: ‘But whatever definitions may emerge, they will always be accompanied by boundaries that allow us [...] to distinguish what we allow to count as religion from the rest of our cultural productions’ (Lease 2000, 293).

It is noteworthy to observe that Lease does not ask for the boundaries of religion, but for the boundaries of ‘what we allow to count as religion.’ The study of religion is facing the dilemma that religion is not an object of empirical observation (Lease [1994] 2009, 129). Addressing this dilemma and reflecting on it is a constitutive element of our discipline. It has, as it were, lost the innocent naivety which most other disciplines are privileged to use when dealing with religion.

The question of boundaries to distinguish religion from the rest of cultural productions will repeatedly surface in this paper although I shall not treat it systematically. Primarily, I will approach the general theme of this conference, which is ‘dynamics of religions’. When drafting this paper, my starting point was the observation of temple activities in contemporary China that appeared to be examples of religious dynamics on the micro level. After briefly describing one of these ex-

amples, I will put the discussion of religious dynamics into the theoretical frame of religious and cultural evolution. This will be followed by a more detailed description of the empirical case and its historical context, in order to use it as an illustration of cultural evolution on the micro level. Finally, some further theoretical aspects of religious evolution and methodological problems will be addressed against the backdrop of the findings.

## 1 Dynamics of popular religion in contemporary China

The theme of this Congress is supplemented by the specification ‘past and present’. I have chosen therefore an example from the present that allows for drawing lines to the past. Contemporary China is a perfect case to observe religious dynamics in the present. During the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), most temples, monasteries, mosques and churches were destroyed or converted to other purposes. All religious activities were outlawed and virtually disappeared from public life. With the change of the religious policy of the Communist Party from the early 1980s on, however, there began a tremendous revival of religions. Its most visible expressions are the large-scale reproduction of religious sites and the building of new ones. Buddhist and Daoist institutions were reorganized and expanded, and Christianity and Islam increasingly gained public visibility. Most remarkable is also the revival of what Western scholars usually call ‘popular religion’, which includes all religious sites and activities that do not belong to one of the five officially recognized religions. It is on this aspect of contemporary religious dynamics that I will concentrate in the following.

In the spring of 2015, I had the opportunity to observe a number of temple festivals in north-western China. Temple festivals (*miaohui*) are quite common in the region nowadays, because each village has its own temple. Depending on the importance of the temple and its deity, the festivals can be big events. They involve not only rituals of worshipping and presenting offerings to the deity, but also various kinds of entertainment. The really big festivals extend over several days or even weeks and usually include temple fairs. They may attract tens, or even hundreds, of thousands of people.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> One of the biggest temple festivals takes place in Huaiyang, Henan province, at a temple compound including the alleged tomb of Fuxi. It lasts for one month from the second day of the second lunar month to the third of the third month and attracts more than two hundred thousand visitors from the neighboring provinces; Hudong Baike 2014; Baidu Baike 2015b.

The example I will use to illustrate some aspects of religious dynamics is a temple festival which is celebrated in the city of Tianshui in Gansu province from the 13th to the 17th of the first lunar month, which in 2015 was early March. It is one of the bigger events with all day performances of local operas, music and dancing troupes, and other entertainments. The festival is dedicated to Fuxi 伏羲 – a mythical figure said to have invented the foundations of Chinese culture, among them the institution of family and the famous Eight Trigrams (*bagua*) on which the *Book of Changes* is based. Fuxi is worshipped in a large, walled temple compound. Bordering the temple wall is a small temple of the Black Pool Dragon King (*hei chi longwang*).

Part of the rituals that can be observed during the days of the festival is a parading of the statues of Fuxi and the Dragon King, both sitting in palanquins carried by a number of young fellows. The parade includes a troupe of Daoist priests and nuns who during these days also perform rituals in front of the Dragon King temple. However, the Daoists do not play any role in the main rituals for Fuxi, which take place inside the temple compound and are performed by lay people of the temple association.

It is also inside the temple compound where an unusual ritual can be observed. It consists in slaughtering, rather unceremoniously, a pig and a sheep in front of the temple of Fuxi. The blood of the victims is drunk by some, but most use it to soak money bills, which is said to bring good fortune. Later on, the pig is displayed as an offering on the threshold of the main hall facing the statue of Fuxi.

There is no need to describe further details of this five-day ritual event. The brief description should be sufficient to explain why, as a scholar of religion, I was interested in attending this ritual. I was convinced I would witness an example of the dynamic revival of popular religion, including the very rare performance of an animal sacrifice. However, when I asked people, they unanimously explained that the rituals for Fuxi have nothing to do with religion. The reason given was very simple: Fuxi is not a god but considered the first ancestor of the Chinese people. So, it is a form of ancestor worship (Xin Xuan 2015, 50). But again, it's not religious. Otherwise, the mayor of the city and other representatives of the Communist Party certainly would not have participated as guests of honor in the main offering ritual on the night of the third day. After all, members of the Communist Party are not allowed to publicly engage in religious activities.

If religion is what people declare to be or allow to count as religion (Lease [1994] 2009, 130), then I apparently was on the wrong track when I expected to observe a religious event. But, even if it might not be part of a religion, the Fuxi temple festival without doubt is an interesting object of research of the study of religion. I will come back to this festival later.

## 2 Cultural and religious dynamics and evolution

Before returning to the worship of Fuxi, it is necessary to explain the theoretical outlook I take on the concept of ‘dynamics of religions’. A possible understanding would be to simply equate dynamics with change. In conventional language the concept of change is sufficiently clear, but as a theoretical concept it is apt to lead into the trap of essentialism by suggesting that there is something that changes in some respects while remaining essentially the same. Religious change could thus mean that religion changes its forms without changing its essence of being religion. Evidently, what remains the same is not religion as something that exists behind the empirical data, but religion as a theoretical concept used to interpret the data. As the concept of change can imply essentialist assumptions, I prefer to explicate religious dynamics as an aspect of cultural evolution.

‘Cultural evolution’ is a theoretical concept referring to the production and reproduction of human culture. The concept is related to genetic evolution, which in the case of human evolution is about the role of genes: their transmission and modifications as factors conditioning the phenotypical traits of humans. Cultural evolution likewise aims at understanding factors conditioning human phenotypes, which include not only the anatomical properties and neuronal functions of human bodies but also the ways humans behave, think, feel and interact. From this perspective, there is a great diversity of human phenotypes, which obviously is not due to genetic but to cultural diversification. The cultural diversification of humans at any given time is the outcome of evolutionary processes that make up cultural evolution.

To contrast genetic and cultural factors influencing human phenotypes, I take ‘culture’ to refer to everything conditioning human phenotypes that is an outcome of human activity. It thus includes both material and immaterial human products. It should be observed that this concept of culture is more comprehensive than the usual understanding of the term in the social sciences, where culture mostly is taken to denote patterns of meaning, values, rules, ideas and knowledge that are represented symbolically (Tylor 1871, 1; Kroeber, Kluckhohn [1952] 1963, 357; Geertz 1966, 3; Archer 1996, xviii). In the terminology used here, this all would be part of the immaterial culture, which includes social institutions. However, culture also comprises material products. In short, it denotes that part of reality affecting human behavior, thinking, feeling, and bodily functions that exists only because it has been brought about by humans.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> It should be observed that cultural evolution presupposes genetic or biological evolution because humans are biological beings. They have evolved genetically in a way that enables them to

This applies to immaterial as well as to material products. In fact, material and immaterial culture are closely connected because the production of material goods usually depends on available technologies and knowledge. Furthermore, the meaning of material products, such as temple buildings or particular dress, is an element of immaterial culture. Because material and immaterial products exist in the cultural environment of individual and collective actors, their behavior has to adapt to their environment and is therefore to some extent conditioned by it. This is why culture is both a product of human activity and a factor affecting human activity. This dialectical relationship between human activity and human culture is the key factor of cultural evolution.

The connection between cultural evolution and the dynamics of religions stems from the fact that religions are part of human culture. Whatever definition of religion we may choose and however we define the boundaries, it is obvious that there cannot be religion without humans. When we study religion empirically, such as beliefs, rituals, institutions, symbolic representations or material artifacts, we deal with human products.

While cultural evolution involves the whole process of cultural production and reproduction in the evolution of humankind, cultural dynamics applies to developments within a circumscribed period of time. As a theoretical concept, cultural dynamics includes qualitative and quantitative aspects. Qualitatively, we must differentiate between different classes of human products such as beliefs, rituals, institutions, social organization, technologies etc. The quantitative aspect of cultural dynamics concerns the increase or decrease of the number or frequency of production of particular products within the time range under consideration. To give an example from the field of Chinese religions: if we take cultural products classified as temples, we observe that during the three decades after 1980 their number has increased, which indicates positive dynamics in the production and reproduction of temples. The same applies to other cultural products such as temple festivals, Buddhist monks,<sup>3</sup> or publications about deities. Since all these products are usu-

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produce culture. However, human behavior, thinking, feeling, and bodily functions are not determined genetically because ontogenesis is also affected by environment factors. What I want to underline here is the fact that a large part of the environment conditioning human life has been produced by humans in the course of cultural evolution. This means that human phenotypes, i. e., the actual behavior etc., is a result of both genetic and cultural evolution. The production of culture is part of the biological nature of humans that enables the species to transmit phenotypical traits to the next generation independently of genetic inheritance.

<sup>3</sup> Buddhist monks are cultural products in the sense that the status of monk depends on human activity. An increase in the number of monks presupposes an increase in human activities that confer the status of monks.

ally classified as religious, their increased production could be taken as an indicator of religious dynamics. The example shows that the concept of cultural dynamics provides a theoretical perspective on cultural processes that has not the same extension as cultural change.

Of course, cultural dynamics and evolution also imply cultural change if we consider their effects. Culture, conceived of as the totality of human products, changes with the appearance or disappearance of certain cultural products. However the processes that induce these changes are not changes themselves, but singular events that occur under particular conditions of time, space, environment and agency. To consider the conditions under which singular events of cultural production occur allows for zooming down the theoretical perspective to the level of empirical data.

As has been illustrated, the dynamics of religions can be understood as a particular aspect of cultural dynamics referring to cultural productions considered to be part of a religion or classified as religious. The problem is that what is allowed to count as religion or deemed religious may be highly controversial. This doesn't make the concept of religion futile and the study of religion impossible. But we have to be aware that religion is not an empirical object whose dynamics can be observed, but a theoretical concept directing the perspective with which to look at and interpret empirical data. Applying this perspective is what characterizes the study of religion, even if there is no consensus about what counts as religion.

Cultural and religious evolution cannot be studied without studying history. History is also concerned with human activities and their outcomes. While the empirical data are the same, the study of cultural evolution and human history are different in their research outlooks. The goal of historical studies is to reconstruct, understand and possibly explain events and developments that happened at particular constellations of time and space. The study of cultural evolution aims at understanding and explaining the general factors that condition the ongoing processes of cultural production and reproduction. However, data provided by historical research are indispensable for the analysis of cultural evolution. As will be seen in the next section, theories of cultural evolution are therefore prone to take the form of theories of history.

## 2.1 Two approaches to cultural evolution

There are two main approaches to cultural and religious evolution, which I call the 'progression model' and the 'diversification model'. They do not contradict each

other, but reflect different views on the dynamics of religions both past and present.

The progression model focuses on the sequence of stages in the development of human culture. The best example of this approach is Robert Bellah's sequence of tribal, archaic, historical, and modern religions, which corresponds to the development of economic and political formations from tribal societies to modern states (Bellah 1964; Bellah 2001). The basic structure of this model is marked by two major turning points in the evolution of human culture: the Axial Age in the first millennium BCE and the Modern Age.

The Axial Age is described as a breakthrough in theoretical thinking, which opened new horizons of universal principles, critical thinking and an ontological distinction between different levels of reality: the empirical and the transcendent (Arnason, Eisenstadt, Wittrock 2005, 2; Bellah 2005). The emergence of historical religions including Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam is interpreted as one of the outcomes of Axial Age transformations.

The Modern Age, which sometimes is considered a new axial age (Lambert 1999), likewise engendered profound intellectual and religious changes. Although most scholars agree in considering modernity a fundamentally new epoch in human history with far-reaching consequences for the development of religions, there is some disagreement on what exactly these consequences are supposed to be.

The progression model in one form or another has been widely accepted as a basis for structuring human history and viewing cultural and religious evolution. It has the shortcoming of suggesting a linear development of different stages. Gary Lease has characterized such distinctions of stages as a construction of Western historical thinking (Lease [1994] 2009, 119–121; cf. Casanova 2012). The progression model is 'autobiographical' (Weil 1975) because it interprets human history from the perspective of our own modern condition by trying to identify the steps that were necessary to reach this condition. It is a selective view of cultural evolution that concentrates on events and developments that paved the way to modernity. Concomitantly, the countless cultural productions that have no meaning in this teleological interpretation are not seen as being part of cultural evolution. In this way, the progression model overshadows the diversity brought about by cultural evolution.

In contrast to the progression model, the diversification model does not focus on a sequence of developmental stages but on the cumulative process of cultural production. From this perspective, the intellectual and religious innovations that doubtlessly occurred in ancient Greece, India or China do not appear as breakthroughs in the evolution of human consciousness, but rather as products of human creativity that broadened the realm of possibilities. The same applies to

the transformations of modernity, which engender new possibilities in many fields, including religion, without eliminating what has been produced before.<sup>4</sup>

The diversification model avoids the teleological implications of the progression model because it does not intend to understand the emergence of a particular cultural formation, such as Western modernity, but rather the mechanisms of cultural production and reproduction. In this respect its theoretical outlook is closer to the biological model of evolution. To be sure, biological evolution can be misunderstood as a teleological process culminating in the emergence of *homo sapiens*. But such an autobiographical version of natural history ignores the fact that evolution led to an increasing diversity of biological species.

This is not the place to treat the different aspects of cultural evolution that have received the attention of scholars who discuss it against the background of biological evolution.<sup>5</sup> I just want to emphasize two points in which cultural evolution significantly differs from genetic evolution. The first concerns the environment.

Both in genetic and cultural evolution, adaptation to the environment is a decisive factor for the survival of things and their further reproduction. The environment has a selective effect in the evolutionary process by enabling the reproduction of some forms and restricting the reproduction of others. For humans, it comprises both the natural and the cultural environment. Because the products of human activity become part of the environment, the environment changes continuously as a result of cultural production. Indeed, a large part of cultural evolution may be conceived of as behavioral adaptations to environments that increasingly have been shaped by human activity. This is why cultural evolution is a cumulative process in which the culture produced and reproduced by humans feeds back on the conditions of further cultural production (Tomasello 2000).

A second point that distinguishes cultural from genetic evolution is even more crucial. Genetic evolution results from random modifications in the process of reproduction. If the modified phenotypes happen to be sufficiently adapted to their environment, they may survive and reproduce (Mayr 2005, 150–154). The same mechanism works also with cultural evolution: modifications of existing products may be random, such as copy errors or misunderstandings in the reproduction of texts or rituals. However, the production of culture is not a completely random process because humans can act intentionally. They can intentionally create prod-

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<sup>4</sup> I should mention that Bellah, in his late publications, to some extent revised his former views on religious evolution by emphasizing the fact that nothing is lost in the course of cultural evolution, which shifts the interpretation from a sequence of stages with increasing complexity to increasing possibilities and diversity (Bellah 2005; Bellah 2011).

<sup>5</sup> For a convenient overview see Stone, Lurquin 2007, 129–143.

ucts which are better adapted to their cultural or natural environment. The process of cultural evolution therefore is affected by the factor of agency, i. e., goal-oriented action, which is completely lacking in genetic evolution.

The progression and the diversification models of cultural evolution are not incompatible. But the two models differ in their analytical perspectives. The progression model interprets macro-history in evolutionary terms to understand the historical preconditions of modernity. It does not cover cultural evolution that has no significance in this history. The diversification model focuses instead on micro-processes of cultural evolution to better understand its mechanism. It therefore allows for analyzing cases of cultural dynamics without considering their historical significance.

## 2.2 Different interpretations

Let me briefly highlight the different views of the progression and the diversification models on the example of the religious dynamics in contemporary China. A central element of Chinese popular belief is asking gods for help in quite mundane matters such as childbirth, family problems or business success. The religious dynamics visible in the large-scale reappearance of this and other popular practices such as temple festivals do not fit very well the progression model of religious evolution. Chinese popular belief can hardly be seen as a paradigm of ‘modern’ religion, for asking gods for help and communal feasts have been popular practices for time immemorial. They certainly existed in China already before the Axial Age transformations (Maspero [1927] 1965, 130–231). The progression model would therefore see the contemporary occurrence of such beliefs and activities either as relics of former stages or even as retrogressions that contravene the progressive course of religious evolution.

From the perspective of the diversification model, on the other hand, religious evolution includes the reproduction of available religious ideas and practices. However, they are reproduced in and adapted to cultural environments that differ considerably from those in which they were formerly produced. They are not the same as those produced a hundred or a thousand years ago. Rituals and beliefs do not exist as phenomena that manifest in different places and times. Rather, they are always concrete events depending on individual or collective agents who perform rituals or maintain beliefs. They are always singular because they occur under particular conditions of time, space, environment and agency.

These particularities must not be ignored if we want to understand the dynamics of cultural and religious evolution. Just like biological evolution, it takes place in small steps of modification, which often have no lasting effect. Only in retro-

spect can we identify the emergence of new formations, be they new biological species, new economic or political structures, or new forms of religious institutions and beliefs.

### 3 The Fuxi rituals

To illustrate this view on cultural and religious evolution, I now return to the sacrifices made in the Fuxi temple at Tianshui on March 5, 2015, which were part of a temple festival starting two days earlier. The rituals are a rather new invention although in popular publications they are said to have an unbroken history of many centuries (China Culture 2006). I will first sketch the historical view on the ritual and then explain it in terms of cultural evolution.

#### 3.1 Historical development

According to legend, the first temple on this site was built during the Eastern Jin dynasty (317–420) by a local official who was later worshipped as the tutelary deity of the region under the title Black Pool Dragon King (Cao Wei 2010, 15–16). Historical documents show that during the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) the imperial sacrifices to Fuxi were transferred from a temple on top of the Guataishan Mountain (‘Trigram Terrace Mountain’) to the present site at what today is the city of Tianshui. Imperial sacrifices were regularly performed twice a year until the end of the eighteenth century, when they were first reduced to once a year and finally no more performed as state rituals. Thereafter, the sacrifices were organized by the local population under the responsibility of the Lantern Festival Association (*Shangyuan hui* 上元會), whose members were local gentry and notables (Liu Yanxiang 2003, 151–152, 160). During the Republic (1911–1949) the temple premises were converted to military barracks, but still a modest festival was organized regularly. After the founding of the People’s Republic in 1949, the buildings housed military offices, a textile mill and finally a teachers’ seminary. After the Tianshui City Museum moved to some buildings in the compound in 1986, reconstruction of the temple started and in 2001 the reconstructed temple was included in the list of important national cultural monuments (Liu Yanxiang 2003, 115–117). The Fuxi temple that can be visited today is thus a fairly recent reconstruction according to a model of the temple that had been produced and continuously reproduced on the same site from the sixteenth to the early twentieth century.

Collective rituals worshipping Fuxi, in one form or another, seem to have been regularly performed until about 1950, when the Lantern Festival Association was

dissolved and the temple festival with its rituals was not performed any more until the 1980s. In 1988, the Tianshui City Government organized the celebration of an official ritual in honor of Fuxi, and the next year a temple festival was arranged. Sacrificial rituals were performed by members of the newly founded Lantern Festival Association, whose members were mostly common people from the neighboring city district (Cao Wei 2010, 27–28). In 2009 the director of the Tianshui City Museum invited a conference to discuss the reorganization of the popular rituals. It was decided to establish a standard course of action based on the state rituals for Fuxi in the Ming dynasty. This new ritual design included a ritual called *tailao* 太牢 (Li Ningmin 2013). *Tailao*, which can be translated as ‘Great Animal Sacrifice’, is the name of a ritual of the former imperial cult. It usually consisted in offering an ox, a pig, and a sheep.

The *tailao* sacrifice provides the offerings to Fuxi with an even longer historical pedigree. Some Chinese historians argue that the first documented sacrifice to Fuxi dates back to 756 BCE when a *tailao* sacrifice was supposedly offered to Fuxi in the state of Qin (Liu Yanxiang 2003, 145–146). In any case, animal sacrifices in China can be traced back to the second millennium BCE. During the Han dynasty, in the second century BCE, *tailao* sacrifices were the most important of all sacrificial rituals, which the emperor offered in person to the highest deities (Bujard 2009, 785). Since then, they were part of the imperial cult, which was abolished only with the end of the Qing dynasty in 1911. In historical interpretation, we could therefore say that the *tailao* sacrifices attest an astonishing continuity of ritual practices over roughly three thousand years. Its contemporary performance in the Fuxi temple may thus appear as continuing an age-old tradition.

In what sense can we take this as an example of religious evolution? The observation of historical continuity apparently contradicts the assumption of dynamics and change.

### 3.2 Historical continuity and cultural evolution

Historical continuity is a theoretical concept that easily hides the fact that cultural products, which include institutions, practices and ideas, as well as material artifacts, continue only insofar as they are reproduced and maintained through generations. This reproduction may be an exact copying, but in many if not most cases it involves minor modifications, which however, in the course of time, can accumulate to major ones. This is exactly what evolution means.

Sacrifices offered to deities and royal ancestors were the most important state rituals from the late second millennium BCE to the early twentieth century. However during these three thousand years, significant innovations occurred. To men-

tion only one: For the Shang kings at the end of the second millennium BCE, royal ancestors were powerful supernatural agents who needed sacrifices to ward off misfortune (Eno 1996). A thousand years later, in the third century BCE, the Confucian thinker Xunzi explained that sacrifices had no effects whatsoever on fortune or misfortune, but were performed as expressions of cultivated behavior (Xunzi 2014, 179. 215–216). In the Confucian tradition, the utmost importance given to rituals and sacrifices was not explained as an attempt to influence supernatural agents. Instead, the observance of rituals was seen as a way of cultivating the individual personality and securing the harmonious order of society. Ancestor worship was primarily an expression of filial piety, rather than grounded in the belief that ancestral spirits need offerings to feed upon – a belief that was ridiculed by the philosopher Wang Chong in the first century (Wang Chong 1962, 509–524).

The progression model of cultural evolution would take such new interpretations of ritual and sacrifice, which were first produced during the Axial Age, as indications of an increasing rationalization and critical attitude of human thinking (Roetz 1992, 343–363; Bellah 2011, 472–473). Indeed, ancestor worship is being seen as a ritual form of paying respect to one's forbears, without assuming that they are supernatural beings. On the other hand, however, it would be mistaken to imagine that such rational interpretations of rituals have replaced the belief in ancestor spirits needing offerings to secure fortune and ward off misfortune (Wolf 1974, 163–168; Ahern 1973, 191–203). Both explanations were reproduced and modified since antiquity in many ways. Cultural evolution resulted in a diversification – not only of the explanations but also of the design of rituals.

### 3.3 Environment and agency

Ritual practices and their explanations are human products that can be perceived and exist objectively in the cultural environment in which individuals live. However, even in the same society, the cultural environments of individuals are not identical. They depend on location, family background, gender, social contacts, education, profession and other variables. Still, some cultural products are widespread in a society and known to most people. In any case, the cultural environment is the basis on which new cultural products are created.

Besides the environment, the second crucial factor for cultural innovation is agency. To produce something new, there must be agents who are creative. In the 1980s a number of devoted worshippers of Fuxi founded a new Lantern Festival Association to resume the rituals in the reconstructed temple. In contrast to the former association of the same name, it was not dominated by local notables but by common people from the neighborhood. Some of them were old enough to re-

member the former ritual practices, which were to some extent reproduced. But they were not copied exactly. For example, formerly women were not allowed to enter the sacrificial space, but this taboo was abandoned when the leadership of the Lantern Festival Association was taken over by a woman (Cao Wei 2010, 28–30). This modification not only illustrates the role of agency but also the adaptation to the changed status of women in the cultural environment.

However, the Lantern Festival Association was not the only agent that participated in the reproduction of the rituals. For the local believers Fuxi is an object of worship similar to other popular deities,<sup>6</sup> but there are a number of other agents who want to promote the temple and rituals primarily as symbols of the local cultural heritage and prestige or as public events to attract tourists. A decisive role was played by members of the local cultural elite whose educational background is quite different from the common worshipper's. In 2009, the director of the Tianshui City Museum invited local political leaders, retired cadres and scholars to discuss a reform of the popular rituals to make them more cultivated. They decided not only to include the *tailao* sacrifice, after the model of the Ming dynasty state rituals, but also to enlarge the festival by additional entertainments and exhibitions. A new and officially registered association for the organization of the popular Fuxi festival was founded in 2013 by local elites (Li Ningmin 2013), which reduces the influence of the Lantern Festival Association.

The rituals that I could observe in 2015 thus were far from being the same as those performed twenty, let alone two hundred years before. They are new cultural products, which are modified reproductions of older ones. On the one hand, the main components are taken from the pool of festive activities available in the cultural environment. On the other hand, each reproduction involves innovations to adapt the product to aims and purposes prevailing in the environment. Yet the actors engaged in the cultural production do not share the same background and their interests diverge. Conflicting interests have to be negotiated and it appears that those who first reproduced the festival some decades ago increasingly lost control of its yearly reproduction.

Although attempts to make the festival more 'cultivated' were successful in many respects, and while the *tailao* sacrifice supposedly follows the example of the Ming state ritual to meet the cultural expectations of the more educated stakeholders, still the cultural environment of the common people provides some of the components of the newly designed rituals. The statues of Fuxi and the Dragon King

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<sup>6</sup> The Lantern Festival Association also takes care of the temple festival celebrated some days earlier in the nearby Daoist Jade Fountain Monastery (Yuquan guan) (Xin Xuan 2015, 50), which suggests that the members are devoted religious believers.

are carried in palanquins just like other popular deities, for example. More striking is the fact that the introduction of the *tailao* sacrifice was not to supersede another sacrificial ritual of local origin, which is called *lingsheng* 领牲 ('accepting the victim') and takes place in the afternoon before the *tailao*. While the *tailao* is a 'cultivated' sacrifice, which does not involve killing the animals on the spot but presenting their prepared heads as an offering,<sup>7</sup> the *lingsheng* ritual is a blood sacrifice and the blood of the victims, which are butchered in front of the main hall of the temple, is in high demand by the watching crowd. The ritual called *lingsheng* seems to be unknown in other parts of China. It is attested in rural areas of southern Gansu and northern Shaanxi, where it usually involves the killing of a sheep, and is often part of burials (Han Dian 2015; Blog.sina.com.cn 2013). Its inclusion in the program of the Fuxi festival shows that the design of the various rituals performed in the temple reflects the different cultural environments of the key actors.<sup>8</sup>

The invention of the complex five-day ritual event in Tianshui thus illustrates very well the main factors of cultural evolution: environment and agency. The cultural environment provides a reservoir of accumulated human products; at the same time it restricts or facilitates the opportunities of production. Agency refers to individual and collective actors, who creatively select, use and modify some of the available products to invent new ones. Of course, cultural reproduction involves not only temple buildings, institutions or rituals; it also includes ideas.

As to ideas, we can turn to the ideas connected with the symbol of Fuxi. It is not possible here to explain in detail their evolution since antiquity. Suffice it to note that it resulted in an extreme diversity of beliefs. On the one hand, there are mythological accounts of Fuxi and his wife Nüwa, each with the body of a snake and a human head, as well as mythological narratives that describe them as the first beings after the primordial chaos, and creators of humankind (Wang Jian 2004). In the cosmological theories of the Han dynasty, Fuxi was identified with one of the five deities associated with the five cardinal directions. On the other hand, in later historical literature Fuxi was considered a historical personage of high antiquity and the very first in the succession of Chinese rulers (Guo Weny-

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7 In the state ritual of the Ming dynasty, whole animals, which had been killed 'offstage' (Zito 1997, 46), were presented as offerings. See the Ming painting of Emperor Han Gaozu sacrificing to Confucius (BBS.F/173.com 2015).

8 I was unable to find out since when the *lingsheng* ritual has been performed in the Fuxi temple. It is not mentioned by Liu Yanxiang as one of the components that are traditionally part of the ritual and festival. He does mention that after 1988 the popular festival included the sacrifice of two pigs (Liu Yanxiang 2003, 154). However, in the *lingsheng* ritual traditionally a sheep is slaughtered.

ing 2007, 21–22; Karlgren 1946, 206–207). All these diverse interpretations – mythological, religious and historical – are available today. Although in most contemporary publications Fuxi is described as a historical figure, in local lore there still are narratives about Fuxi and Nüwa as a primordial brother and sister couple who created the human race (Cao Wei 2010, 12). The cultural environment provides a choice of explanations and anyone is free to select and mold her or his own idiosyncratic version.

### 3.4 Contemporary dynamics

Chinese academic scholars agree that Fuxi is no historical personage. However, the common understanding keeps to the traditional historiography and takes him as a first of the Three Emperors and ancestor of the Chinese people.<sup>9</sup> This historical fiction is a ready-made component not only for the reproduction of the popular worship of Fuxi; the historical fiction is also used as a component to produce official state rituals.

Besides the so-called popular sacrifices I have been referring to so far, there is also an official ceremony worshipping Fuxi.<sup>10</sup> This official ceremony was invented in 1988 and organized by the city government of Tianshui, but since 2005 has been organized by the government of Gansu Province. It takes place each year on June 22. Nowadays it a spectacular event that starts in the large square in front of the temple compound with professional dance and music performances. The official program is broadcast on television and watched by common people. There is also a by-program on the streets with parades in historical and fantasy costumes.<sup>11</sup>

The main actors of the official ritual are the heads of the provincial government and high-ranking representatives of the Communist Party. Hundreds of invited guests attend the ceremony where the governor of the province solemnly reads a eulogy praising Fuxi for his great achievements as founder of the Chinese culture. Soldiers in dress uniforms carry flower baskets into the temple where the official representatives bow three times to the statue of Fuxi. The table in front of the

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<sup>9</sup> This can be seen from the entries in popular web-encyclopedias (Baidu Baike 2015a; Weiji Baike 2015).

<sup>10</sup> The Chinese terms are *minjian jisi* 民间祭祀 ('popular sacrifice') and *gongji dadian* 公祭大典 ('Grand public memorial ceremony'). *Jidian* 祭典, which is used for the state rituals, literally means '(official) sacrificial rite', but in modern Chinese is usually translated as 'memorial ceremony'. The popular rituals for Fuxi are called *jisi* 祭祀, which is also used for sacrifices to deities and ancestors.

<sup>11</sup> For the official website of the ceremony see [fuxidadian.com](http://fuxidadian.com) 2015.

statue is loaded with food offerings. After the official ritual the common people crowd into the temple to burn incense and worship Fuxi.

What we have here is a recently invented state ritual worshipping a legendary ancestor of the Chinese people. One of its functions certainly is to symbolize the cultural heritage of China, to nurture patriotism and foster the Chinese cultural identity.<sup>12</sup> Remarkably, to do this, the Communist authorities make use of symbols available from both the imperial state cult and popular religious traditions. Offering food and bowing to the statue of a mythical ancestor are ritual behaviors that seem strange if performed by leading representatives of the Chinese state and the Communist Party. They take place in a temple supposed to be the site where imperial sacrifices to the very same mythical figure have been performed. These are all ingredients that have been produced before, but in the course of their modified reproduction gain a new meaning. Whatever this meaning may be, it seems to be quite different from the one attributed to Fuxi by the thousands of village people who, on the day before the state ritual, participate in a popular sacrificial ritual a couple of miles away on top of Guataishan mountain (Tianshui City Government Net 2015; Lanzhou Chenbao 2007). The temple there has been reconstructed by the local population, after having been razed to the ground during the Cultural Revolution.

There is a remarkable dynamics of religious reconstruction in contemporary China. The reconstruction of popular religious temples, rituals and institutions has been observed by many scholars. But how can we interpret the invention of new state rituals devoted to mythic ancestors? The official ‘sacrificial rites’ (*jidian*) honoring Fuxi are not the only ones. There are similar rituals devoted to other equally legendary figures, among them the Yellow Emperor (Huangdi) and Fuxi’s sister and wife Nüwa (Billioud, Thoraval 2015, 189–191). Can we regard these new rituals as modified reproductions of the imperial state cult?

## 4 Cultural evolution and selection

This brings me back to the issue of cultural evolution. Charles Darwin, one of the fathers of the evolutionary theory in biology, explained the origin of species with the formula ‘descent with modification’ (Darwin [1859] 1997). Later on, the metaphor ‘inheritance’ gained usage. Biological evolution is thus conceived as a proc-

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<sup>12</sup> Official reports of the ceremony stress the fact that among the official participants are representatives from Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau and overseas Chinese who all share reverence to Fuxi as common ancestor.

ess of differentiation of species based on genetic inheritance with modification. It is this paradigm on which the diversification model of cultural evolution is based.

Inheritance refers to the aspect of continuity. As I have shown, in the field of culture and religion what is perceived as continuity is in fact the ongoing reproduction of cultural products. Cultural products do not persist by themselves, but have to be preserved through human activity, which is often called ‘preserving the cultural heritage’.

Cultural reproduction rarely results in exact copies of existing products. There is usually a range of variations. If we take biological evolution as a paradigm, we must look for mechanisms of selection. Basically, selection means that some variations are better adapted to certain environments than others and can therefore survive by being reproduced. Others may survive only in ecological niches or not at all. From this perspective, changes in the cultural environment in modern China, which includes the political environment, can be seen as resulting in a massive process of cultural selection. Particularly during the Cultural Revolution, many cultural products, including religious practices, ideas and institutions, could not be reproduced under the new environmental conditions and disappeared. Others were reproduced in cultural niches or in heavily modified forms.

During the past thirty years, there were again enormous changes in the cultural environment. Under the new political and economic conditions, many elements of what is called popular religion were reproduced in modified forms. The invention of the popular sacrificial rituals in the Fuxi temple in Tianshui, in which elements of the imperial state cult are combined with local religious customs, is an example. As the success of cultural innovations largely depends on their adaptation to the environment, we should expect the evolutionary dynamics to reflect selective pressures. In a cultural environment controlled by a Communist Party with a declared atheist ideology, the public production of religion is severely restricted. Cultural production adapts to this selective pressure through modifications.

One of the possible modifications is to change classifications. Temple festivals need not be classified as religious events. They have many elements that can be classified as entertainment, such as opera performances, dance, music, and sight-seeing. What we perceive as religious elements, such as burning incense, praying and offering sacrifices, are just one aspect, which – of course – from the perspective of a scholar of religion is the most interesting one. But these elements are only part of the event and increasingly overshadowed by countless activities that are adapted to the expectations of the cultural environment. From the perspective of the local government, prestige, economic and entertainment functions are the most important aspects. They choose to classify the temple festival as a cultural event of national importance. What appears to be the reproduction of traditional

religion is explained as the preservation of the immaterial cultural heritage, which at the same time serves economic development. In fact, however, this preservation is not the reproduction of what has been produced before, but a new product (Du Zhun 2011).

For the study of religions, this presents some methodological problems. How do we deal with a temple ritual that involves animal sacrifice, food offerings, burning of incense and solemn eulogies addressing a mythic ancestor, if all this is declared by the participants as having nothing to do with religion? The study of religion offers a number of possible interpretations. From a post-colonial point of view, we could take the findings as further evidence of the fact that the concept of religion is a Western construction, whose application to other cultures is meaningless. However, from the perspective of the discursive study of religion, this view would need to be qualified, because there are indeed discourses about religion in contemporary China, even very controversial ones. But in the official discourse, worshipping Fuxi is not allowed to count as religion. Taking the position of the cognitive science of religion, it could be assumed that the temple rituals are religious activities, at least for those participants who worship Fuxi as an ancestor. However, the majority would probably explain that even though Fuxi is venerated, he is not a supernatural agent.

This latter view is also the official one given to explain the meaning of the state rituals devoted to mythical ancestors. There still remains the question whether we can interpret these rituals as a modified reproduction of the imperial state cult, which included worshipping the very same imagined ancestor. Of course, nobody would admit that the Communist government is reproducing religious rituals of the Confucian empire. What is obvious, however, is the fact that the production of the contemporary state ritual for Fuxi cannot be explained without referring to the cultural environment. It is the cultural environment that provides the symbol of Fuxi as first ancestor as well as the ritual forms used to stage an official ceremony of ancestor worship. It is not a reproduction of the imperial cult. It is a new cultural product whose creators make use of available components to adapt it to the existing cultural environment. It is an example of cultural evolution.

Evidently, the invention of state rituals dedicated to mythical figures is not a case of cultural evolution in the sense of the progression model. It does not attest to a historical breakthrough. Breakthroughs are retrospective interpretations of historical meaning and it is impossible to know to what extent these new ritual forms and their explanations will be reproduced and elaborated in the future. To be sure, it could be that in retrospect they will appear to have been the first occurrence of new forms of sacralization of Chinese order and history (cf. Billioud, Thoraval 2015, 191), but they may just as well turn out to be a short episode of cultural production without any lasting effects. However, whether they survive by being repro-

duced or not, they are bits of cultural evolution, which is a selective process that works through the elimination of cultural products that are not sufficiently adapted to their environment.

In the short range of the last three decades in China, the production of quite a number of popular and state rituals for imagined ancestors without doubt can be considered an example of cultural dynamics. But how about the dynamics of religion? Can the invention of new ancestor rituals, whether they are on the popular or the state level, be taken as a case of religious dynamics? Could the ritual offerings be religious even though they are not allowed by the participants to count as religion? I cannot answer these questions. I am even not sure that they are meaningful questions. I am sure, however, that dealing with these developments is a meaningful subject of the study of religion even if we should not be able to define the conceptual boundaries of religion.

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# Religion and Public Space in Contemporary Japan: Re-activation of the Civilization of the Axial Age and the Manifestation of State Shinto and Buddhism

**Abstract:** Religious discourses and activities or discourses by religious organizations and religious leaders are occupying an increasingly bigger space in the public sphere in Japan in the 2010s. On the one hand, State Shinto has manifested its presence, and a political movement to further its influence is in place. On the other hand, Buddhist and New Religion organizations in the Buddhist line are inclined to participate more in the public sphere, presenting their discourses against nationalist tendencies. The visualization of religions in the public space in Japan can be seen as an example of a revitalization of the Axial Age civilization, either from the aspect of the revival of State Shinto, or the aspect of Buddhism as a public religion.

**Keywords:** State Shinto, Axial Age civilization, public religion, imperial nationalism, Japanese nationalism, religious nationalism, Nippon Kaigi, Yasukuni Shrine, Soka Gakkai, Shinzo Abe

## 1 Revival of State Shinto

In discussing religion in contemporary Japan, there are many factors which tend to be overlooked if attention is given only to religious organizations. It is necessary to take into account the religious behavior and consciousness of people who do not belong to any specific religious organizations, and those who do not consider themselves to be related to religion. This does not imply only those people who assert: 'I am not religious, but I am spiritual.' In Japan, there is an influential system of religious discourse and behavior named 'State Shinto' which has not been based mainly on formal religious organizations. In East Asia, the traditional spiritual cultures – notably Confucianism, Taoism and folk religions – have exerted strong influence on the culture and behavior of the people and occupy important positions without having formal religious organizations. Thus, it is not easy to draw a proper picture of religions in East Asia.

A notable change is observable in religion in contemporary Japan. Ise Shrine, which enshrines Amaterasu Omikami, the principle female deity of Shin-

to mythology who is said to have ordered her descendants to rule Japan from heaven, and which had been the central axis of State Shinto until the end of World War II, was reportedly visited by over 14.2 million worshippers in 2013 (Asahi Shimbun, January 1, 2014). That number exceeded the record number of visitors in 2010 (8.83 million, which was the largest number since the beginning of recorded statistics in 1895) by over five million. The year 2013 was the twentieth year since the new shrine was constructed and the enshrined objects were transferred from the old shrine. This anniversary was the greatest factor for the increase in number of worshippers. In the years prior to transferring the shrine, the number of visitors amounted to 4.82 million in 1954, 8.59 million in 1973, and 8.39 million in 1993. Compared to these numbers, the number of worshippers in 2013 is remarkable.

It was reported that 13 out of 19 members of the Abe Cabinet, formed in 2012, belonged to the Nippon Kaigi Parliamentary Panel. This group is a parliamentary section of the organization named Nippon Kaigi (Japan Conference). It is a large group of 252 members in the parliament, with MP Takeo Hiranuma serving as its chairperson (Akahata, Communist Party Newspaper, January 15, 2013).

The Nippon Kaigi, according to its official website, is a non-governmental organization for advocacy and popular movement working to rebuild a beautiful and self-respecting Japan. The website gives the following explanation (accessed March 31, 2015, <http://www.nipponkaigi.org/about>):

Nippon Kaigi was established on May 30, 2007 combining the former ‘Nihon wo Mamoru Kokumin Kaigi (National Conference to Protect Japan)’ and ‘Nihon wo Mamoru Kai (Association to Protect Japan)’ as a popular movement with a national grassroots network.

Over the past 30 or so years, we developed nationwide movements in an effort to define the best path for Japan to take. Our activities include: the legislation in 1979 of the use of names of Meiji, Taisho and Showa, periods corresponding to the reign of each of those emperors, in official documents; the movement to celebrate the 60th year of the reign of Emperor Showa and the enthronement ceremony of the present emperor and other auspicious events in the Imperial Household; a movement to normalize education; editing of history textbooks; holding a memorial ceremony for the war dead in the 50th year after the end of WWII and festivals aiming for maintaining harmonious relations with countries in Asia; supporting the peace keeping operations of the Self-Defense Forces; and advocating the formulation of a new Constitution embodying a national concept based on tradition.

Japan today, however, has many problems such as confused politics, school education with problems, insufficient risk management, and its economic prospects are grim. We will advocate and take action to protect and pass on a beautiful Japan with the motto of ‘self-respecting nation building.’

In response to our new popular movement, the multi-party ‘Nippon Kaigi Parliamentary Panel’ was established. Together with parliamentary members, we will conduct grassroots popular movements all over the country. We request your support.’

Notable concrete ‘popular movement’ projects are the legislation of the use of the emperor’s reign period names in official documents, the encouragement of the veneration of the emperor such as celebrations of auspicious events of the Imperial Household, the advocacy of formulating a new Constitution embodying the concept of a nation based on tradition, and support to the peace-keeping operations of the Self-Defense Forces. This organization places importance on strengthening the power of the state, and inspiring the veneration of the emperor in its activities.

The declaration for the establishment of the organization adopted at the initial assembly in May 1995 says (accessed March 31, 2015, <http://www.nipponkaigi.org/about>):

The Japanese people, since ancient times, have admitted the coexistence of diverse values and absorbed aspects of overseas cultures and assimilated them in our nation-building efforts while respecting our traditions and living in harmony with nature. The building of the first modern nation in Asia after the Meiji Restoration was a glorious result of our national efforts.

Despite the nation’s unprecedented defeat in WWII, our national character to venerate the emperor as the central being for national integration was never shaken, and people rose up from their despair and from the scorched land, and have made strenuous efforts to rebuild the nation into an economic power.

However, behind its admirable economic prosperity, the traditional culture which had developed over many generations and had been handed down to us by our ancestors came to be slighted, and our glorious history has been forgotten or sullied, and the spirit to protect the nation and devote ourselves to the good of society was lost among our people, while tendencies to seek only one’s self-protection and enjoyment prevail in society. Now, the nation is inclining toward dissolution.

In addition, the collapse of the Cold War structure clearly revealed the fallacy of Marxism, but on the other hand, the world entered a new age of chaos where nations selfishly pursue their own interests. Nevertheless, Japan today has no firm concept or national goal for survival in the rapidly changing international community. If we continue living an idle life, the ruin of the country cannot be avoided.

Being aware of living in this critical age, we establish this organization to promote the development of our nation and people so that we can contribute to the development of Japan and mutual prosperity with the world. We will inherit the achievements of activities carried out over the past 20 years and moreover, we will mobilize the passion and power of interested people in striving for a broad range of popular movements.

The Association of Shinto Shrines, embracing almost all Shinto shrines in the country, is deeply involved in Nippon Kaigi. Other than this organization, many organizations which belong to New Religion and the moral movement are associated with it. They include Gedatsu-kai, Kokuchu-kai, Reiyu-kai, Sukyo Mahikari, Institute of Moralogy, Kirisuto-no-Makuya, Bussho-Gonenkai, Nenpou Shinkyo, Shinsei Bukkyo Kyodan, Oisca International, and Ananai-kyo.

Further, there is the Shinto Political Federation working in partnership with the Association of Shinto Shrines. The Shinto Political Federation also has a parliamentary members' group. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe served as the chairperson of the group some years ago. More than sixty percent of members of both parliamentary groups under Nippon Kaigi and Shinto Political Federation belong to both organizations. In the election for the House of Representatives in June 2012, more than 200 candidates who were recommended by the Shinto Political Federation were successfully elected. The Association of Shinto Shrines has concentrated its efforts on reviving State Shinto after WWII (Shimazono 2010). After the 2012 election, parliamentary members in favor of the revival of State Shinto have grown to be a large force in the Diet. Prime Minister Abe made a worshipping visit to Yasukuni Shrine in December 2013 supported by this political background.

Even so, it should be carefully judged if the ruling party members are all affected by the Shinto Political Federation and Nippon Kaigi, because many members in the Liberal Democratic Party greatly depend on votes by Komeito supporters. Komeito party supporters comprise the followers of Soka Gakkai, a New Religion organization in the Buddhist line. Soka Gakkai is cautionary about the revival of State Shinto. The Komeito party has been expressing its concerns about Prime Minister Abe visiting Yasukuni Shrine. If the Liberal Democratic Party were to strongly push its agenda to revive State Shinto, the coalition of the Liberal Democratic Party and Komeito party would have no choice but to break up.

Is this political context related in any way to the increase in the number of worshippers at Ise Shrine? It is not known what kind of political consciousness worshippers have. In fact, the increase of worshippers is closely related with a 'Power Spot' boom. (Power Spots refer to spiritual places in which people can feel energy from the earth.) It is said that a large portion of the worshippers are young women wishing for their good fortunes.

The increase in numbers of worshippers at the shrine is also in response to the tourist strategy of local business people. Akafuku Honten, a long-established confectionery, invested 14 billion yen to develop 'Okage Yokocho,' a shopping lane in the style of the late Edo and Meiji periods, in front of the inner shrine to entertain visitors. This shopping lane became popular and helped attract more tourists to Ise Shrine.

The increase in Ise Shrine worshippers and the promotion to revive State Shinto may be seen to be related to some extent. If State Shinto, under the umbrella of the Association of Shinto Shrines, and Ise Shrine, which is considered as the main base of Shinto by the Association, have gained distinction in peo-

ple's minds, it should be carefully studied how this mindset is related to the current political context.

In short, since the beginning of the 2000s, and in particular after the March 11, 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake and Fukushima First Nuclear Power Plant accident, the movement to revive State Shinto has become apparent. The influence of the religion seems to have become stronger in the form of encouraging State Shinto and the veneration of the emperor in the public sphere. But is this movement only limited to State Shinto?

## 2 Seeking a lifestyle without depending on nuclear power

Because of the accident at Fukushima First Nuclear Power Plant following the Great East Earthquake on March 11, 2011, many people have lost their lands, living environments and jobs and are forced to live in evacuation housing arrangements. Many families have to live separately. Workers are engaged in post-accident work, exposed to high doses of radiation at the risk of shortening their lives. Several hundred thousand people sustained enormous damage. Radioactive substances spread over many acres of land, and a great number of people are concerned about the health hazards to children posed by radioactive substances. The accident is attributed to a failure in taking necessary safety measures by those who have promoted nuclear power generation. The nuclear power disaster is understood as a manifestation of making light of the value of human life.

Since April 2011, movements by religious organizations taking action to promote living without nuclear power plants became remarkable. Christian and Buddhist organizations were the main players in the movements (Fujiyama 2012). The action by Christian organizations was in concert with the decisions adopted by the parliaments of Germany and Italy and other anti-nuclear movements in the world. But here, movements by Buddhist organizations will be examined (Shimazono 2013a).

Among traditional Buddhist organizations, the Myoshinji sub-sect of the Rinzai Sect, the Otani sub-sect of the Shin Sect, and Rissho Koseikai advocated doing away with nuclear power generation. There were Buddhist followers who made public appeals against nuclear power plants and who carried out activities to help victims of the power plant accident and help children in Fukushima on individual or group bases. The more impactful event beyond these activities was

the ‘Declaration – Seeking a Lifestyle without Depending on Nuclear Power’ issued by the Japan Buddhist Federation on December 1, 2011. It begins by saying:

Due to the proliferation of radioactive substances caused by the accident at Fukushima First Nuclear Power Station of Tokyo Electric Power Co. Ltd., a great number of people are forced out of homes where they have lived for years, and are now living the life of refugees. With unfocused rage and anxieties with a bleak prospect, they live in distress. Many families with infants and small children are living in enormous fear of radiation damage to their health, and spending their days in fear of their ‘life.’ We cannot deny the possibility that the radioactive substances, diffused not only in Japan but also globally, will have an effect on the environment and ecological system and threaten the ‘life’ of not only humans but also other living things.

The document continues to state that many Japanese, as citizens of the A-bomb victim nation, have a special prayer, or hope, opposing the violation of life by exposure to radiation:

Japan is the only nation victimized by atomic bombs in the world. Many ‘lives’ were lost, and people who survived the explosions are still suffering subsequent complications of nuclear exposure. In order not to repeat the same mistake, we Japanese have been conveying the messages of misery and rage to help the world understand the importance of ‘life.’

Further, from the viewpoint of the peace desired by the Buddhist spirit, it stresses that the violation of life by nuclear power plants is unacceptable:

Based on the Buddhist spirit, we, at the Japan Buddhist Federation, have been trying to realize world peace in order to build a society in which the ‘life’ of each person is respected. On the other hand, we have expanded our desires to live a more comfortable and convenient life. Behind our pursuit for convenience, there are realities that people in the locations of nuclear power plants are spending their days risking their lives due to the possibility of accidents and leaving behind the unpleasant legacy of how to deal with indisposable radioactive wastes. We must, therefore, regret that we have brought about such a situation in which life and peaceful living are threatened by nuclear power plant accidents.

Finally, the declaration explains that the ground for ‘seeking a lifestyle without depending on nuclear power generation’ is a lifestyle that contains a religious spirit:

We, at the Japan Buddhist Federation, will try to decrease our dependence on nuclear power generation which threatens our life, and aim to build a society with sustainable energy not supported by nuclear power generation. Instead of hoping to live in affluence at the expense of others, we must choose ways whereby personal happiness goes together with human wellbeing.

We declare that each of us should address this issue as our own problem, and while reviewing our own way of living, we should break away from excessive material desires, know that we each have enough, do our best to realize a way of living that is humble before nature, and build a society in which every 'life' is protected.

Their religious spirit is embodied in sentences emphasizing that nuclear power plants 'threaten our lives,' that we receive power supply 'at the expense of others,' and urging that we should seek ways by which 'personal happiness goes together with human wellbeing,' and that, for that purpose, every person should 'know that one has enough and become humble before nature.' It can be said that this declaration is intended to express a view based on Buddhist spirit in a broad sense, beyond various traditional Buddhist Sects, and that its content has an appealing tone to the religious mind and spirituality of Japanese people.

The Japan Buddhist Federation encompasses almost all traditional Buddhist organizations in Japan. Never before had Buddhist organizations made a concerted appeal of this kind to the public. This can be seen as the emergence of a new function for religious organizations: as public religion responding to the needs of society.

Later, on February 2012, the assembly of the Otani sub-sect of Shin Sect announced its resolution 'demanding the realization of a society not dependent on nuclear power generation by discontinuing nuclear power plant operation and decommissioning reactors.' The reason for this resolution is similar to that of the Declaration of the Japan Buddhist Federation, but it takes one step further by demanding concrete measures 'by discontinuing nuclear power generation and decommissioning reactors.'

On June 18, 2012, Rissho Koseikai, in the Hokke Sect line, published its statement titled 'Building a truly rich society – beyond nuclear power plants', which says: 'what is demanded of us now, is to build a truly rich society without nuclear power generation as early as possible.' It also says: 'The most important thing is to review our values and lifestyles to unlimitedly increase energy consumption at the cost of many things. It is now, in this time of greatest need that we should control our consumption and lead a life "to know that we have enough to live" and to find happiness in simple living.' With this, Rissho Koseikai pushed forward its religious spirit while controlling the expression of its religious faith.

Soka Gakkai, another New Religion in the Buddhist line, published a memorial proposal titled 'Century when the tie of dignity of life gives off a brilliance' on the 37th 'Soka Gakkai International Day' on January 26, 2012, by Honorable President Daisaku Ikeda. In it he says: 'The government should immediately examine energy policies not dependent on nuclear power generation.' However, the Komeito Party, supported by Soka Gakkai, is a coalition partner with the Lib-

eral Democratic Party which is greatly inclined to the promotion of nuclear power plants; therefore, Soka Gakkai does not announce a position in favor of breaking with nuclear power generation.

Not all religious organizations in Japan are taking action to break with nuclear power generation as there are some religious organizations, such as Kofuku no Kagaku (Happy Science), advocating the promotion of nuclear power generation and others which maintain a neutral position on this issue such as the Soto Sect. Even so, it should not be slighted, in terms of impact on society, that the Japan Buddhist Federation – linking major organizations of traditional sects and influential Buddhism-line New Religion organizations such as Soka Gakkai and Rissho Koseikai – presented their directions for the nation to live without nuclear power generation.

Inter-religious and inter-sectoral activities to support the people affected after the 3.11 Earthquake/Tsunami, and the action by the Japan Buddhist Federation in making a public appeal ‘seeking a lifestyle without depending on nuclear power generation’, should be noted as epoch-making events in the history of public functions of Japanese Buddhism (Mukhopadhyaya 2005, Shimazono 2013b). They may trigger Buddhist organizations in Japan to display their public functions anew within the current trend to examine the spiritual blank caused by the prevalence of secularism in our ever-diversifying society. Although the pace is slow, Japanese Buddhist organizations have begun to evolve as a public religion, and the public looks to the movement with potentiality and hope rather than being cautious about it.

### **3 Revival of State Shinto and involvement of religious organizations in the public sphere**

In section 1, the trend toward revival of State Shinto was discussed, followed in section 2 by an examination of the expanded involvement in the public sphere of Salvation Religion organizations. These two trends are rising from two different directions, and have some opposing aspects.

The *Bukkyo Times* January 1, 2013 issue reports that the number of candidates for the election of the House of Representatives held in December 2012 who were recommended by the Japan Buddhist Federation greatly decreased, and the number of election winners fell accordingly. The article says that the Federation recommended 85 persons, of whom 46 were elected (in both single-seat and proportional representation constituencies). This was a great drop from the previous election in 2009 when 98 persons were elected out of 119 candidates

recommended by the Federation. Among the 46 winners, 32 were from the Liberal Democratic Party (out of 33 recommended), 10 (out of 40) from the Democratic Party, 1 (out of 2) from the Japan Restoration Party, 1 (out of 16) from the Tomorrow Party of Japan, and 0 (out of 2) from non-affiliates.

The same tendency was true in the election for the House of Councilors in July 2013. The *Chugai Nippo* July 5, 2013 issue gives an intermediary report that the Japan Buddhist Federation recommended 17 candidates: 9 from the Liberal Democratic, 5 from the Democratic, 2 from the People's Life, and 1 from the Japan Restoration Parties. The article says that comparing 35 candidates recommended by the organization for the election in 2010, the number of recommended candidates has been greatly decreased. As a reason for the decrease, the newspaper considers that to be eligible to obtain recommendation from the Federation, candidates were required to agree to the Declaration 'Seeking a lifestyle without depending on nuclear power generation' of December 2011, and the letter of protest against 'Official worship visit by the prime minister and cabinet ministers to Yasukuni Shrine' which was sent to Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in May 2012.

According to this article, the members of parliament (MPs) are declining to link with traditional Buddhism. It is said that the conservative parties gained force through the House of Representatives' election in 2012, and the House of Councilors' election in 2013, but the Liberal Democratic Party, which increased its MPs in number, has weakened its partnership with traditional Buddhist organizations which had been playing a central role in Japan's spiritual culture. Here, the Party's pro-business-community stance, shown in its policy in favor of nuclear power generation, and its position in favor of the revival of State Shinto as manifested by a worship visit to Yasukuni Shrine (see below), are contrary to what traditional Buddhist organizations seek.

In order for the Liberal Democratic Party to increase its seats in the Diet, collaboration with the Komeito, supported by the Soka Gakkai, means a lot. However, the Liberal Democratic Party, which is inclining toward the revival of State Shinto, and the Soka Gakkai, which has a bitter memory of having been suppressed under the State Shinto administration, can hardly go together. The *Bukkyo Times* reports in its January 1, 2013 issue that the votes given to the Komeito in the proportional-representation constituencies are on the decrease. The Komeito itself increased its number of MPs, but the number of votes in the proportional representation constituencies was the smallest in national elections since 2001: 8.98 million votes in 2005 under the premiership of Ichiro Koizumi insisting on the privatization of Japan Post, 8.05 million votes in the previous election for the House of Representatives in 2009, and 7.11 million votes in the most recent one.

The increase in seats was affected by lowered voting rates. The Soka Gakkai had always strenuously encouraged its followers to vote as if it is a way to confirm the result of their faith. Even when the voting rate was generally low, Komeito supporters surely took part in voting; hence there were more winners. Nonetheless, the number of votes to the Komeito dropped from 2009 to 2012. What can be the reason for this decline? It can be presumed that the Soka Gakkai members have come to question the partnering with the Liberal Democratic Party, whose policies are far different from their own, notably with respect to the revival of State Shinto, and its understanding of recent history which is opposed by China and Korea.

As mentioned at the beginning of this paper, many candidates in national elections who support the Nippon Kaigi and Shinto Political Federation have been elected. The change in involvement in national elections by Buddhist organizations may imply that the traditional Buddhist community does not support the nationalist forces led by the Liberal Democratic Party. The Soka Gakkai, the supporting body of the Komeito, has a potential inclination against nationalist policies that Prime Minister Abe is seeking to push forward.

As seen so far, in the public sphere in contemporary Japan there are ideological powers aiming for the revival of State Shinto, and opposing religious powers. The former is represented by the Shinto Political Federation, Nippon Kaigi, and the Association of Shinto Shrines. Upon entering the 2000s, the Liberal Democratic Party has strengthened its inclination toward the revival of State Shinto, and there are some further sympathizers in the Democratic Party, Japan Restoration Party, and Your Party. As seen in section 2, religious forces different from or sometimes opposing nationalism and the revival of State Shinto are also moving toward increasing involvement in the public sphere.

For example, the Japan Buddhist Federation submitted a letter of request to Prime Minister Shinzo Abe titled 'Official worship visit to Yasukuni Shrine by the Prime Minister and Cabinet Ministers' on August 5, 2013 at the Prime Minister's official residence:

We Buddhist followers deeply regret that we have in the past been involved in wars against the teachings of 'dignity of life, and the spirit of compassion' by Sakyamuni, and have conducted various activities in an effort to realize a world free of disputes.

More than 70,000 temples affiliated with the Japan Buddhist Federation are politely offering memorial services for the war dead and victims who sacrificed themselves for the country in the Pacific War.

However, beginning in 1981 we have continued to express our opposition to the prime minister and cabinet ministers visiting and worshipping Yasukuni Shrine.

As we have pointed out, Yasukuni Shrine is a religious institution which played an important role as the center of State Shinto in the past. Considering the process by which the

war deceased were enshrined altogether under a specific criterion regardless of their individual faith, this act clearly violates the ‘freedom of religion’ set forth in the Constitution. It is natural that memorial services for the war deceased should be conducted according to the religions of bereaved families.

The prime minister as well as cabinet ministers are always ‘public figures’ as long as they are in these positions, therefore, we wish that the prime minister and cabinet ministers of the government of Japan, observe the Constitution of Japan and serve in their leadership positions to realize world peace.

Later, on August 10, 2013, the Japanese Association of New Religious Organizations affiliated with Risho Koseikai, the Church of Perfect Liberty, Myochikai, Ennokyō, and Zenrinkyō (including Gedatsu Kai affiliated to Nippon Kaigi) also submitted their memorandum on ‘Official Worshipping to Yasukuni Shrine’ to Prime Minister Abe:

As the anniversary of the end of the Pacific War approaches, visits to Yasukuni Shrine by the Prime Minister and other cabinet ministers are noted. The fact that ministers are involved in Yasukuni Shrine, which is a religious organization, in the form of making ‘official visits’ is against the ‘freedom of religion’ and the principle of ‘separation of government and religion’ set forth in the Constitution. We would like the Prime Minister and other ministers to pay sufficient consideration to this.

As you may be well aware, the provisions regarding ‘freedom of religion,’ and the principle of ‘separation of government and religion’ were created based upon reflection of the past wars which took a heavy toll of lives. These are fundamental elements of a modern nation based on freedom and basic human rights.

At the Budget Committee of the House of Councilors held on May 14, 2013 the Prime Minister replied, ‘Yasukuni Shrine is a core facility to comfort the souls of the war dead.’ However, the Constitution ensures people to have the freedom to comfort and commemorate the war deceased according to the religion they believe in. There is the Chidorigafuchi National Cemetery in Tokyo which was completed in 1959, and in which a memorial service was held by the government. After 50 years of existence, the cemetery is now covered with a thick bunch of trees, and is accepted widely as a cemetery of unknown soldiers where people can comfort and commemorate the victims of war without discomfort.

Considering the Prime Minister thinking of comforting the spirits of people fallen in war and the need for a ‘place where families of the deceased and people at large can pay respect’ as stated in the Budget Committee session, one would think that the improvement of the National Chidorigafuchi Cemetery, and the organization of continued non-religious memorial services for the war victims there are things that the government should be involved with.

With an understanding that the freedom and prosperity of Japan today have been built at the expense of people fallen in war, we believe that the true way of comforting the souls of the war victims would be for each and every person to pay their memorial tribute according to their own religion.

We wish the Prime Minister may confirm the ‘freedom of religion,’ and the principle of ‘separation of government and religion,’ and that you yourself and all cabinet members would refrain from paying official worship visits to Yasukuni Shrine.

The Prime Minister gave an offering of *masakaki* [a branch of the evergreen sacred tree decorated with a five-color silk flag] at the time of the Spring Festival of Yasukuni Shrine in April in the name of the Prime Minister. The *masakaki* offered to the altar in a shrine means a religiously important offering in Shinto, and the act of offering it is a religious act. Therefore, we request the Prime Minister to give full consideration to this act.

The reason the Japan Buddhist Federation and Japanese Association of Religious Organizations oppose the official visit to Yasukuni Shrine by the Prime Minister is somewhat different from the reason it is opposed by Chinese and Korean peoples. The focal point of opposition by neighboring nations is the issue of their understanding of recent history: their perception that paying official visits to Yasukuni Shrine implies a justification of Japan’s prewar aggressive and invasive activities. In contrast to this, the Buddhist Federation and Association of Religious Organizations focus on the principles of ‘freedom of religion’ and ‘separation of government and religion,’ and by reference to these, the pre-war administration under the State Shinto system is critically reviewed. Their critical framework was developed under the influence of the actions of the United States, during the post-war occupation period, which applied a policy to nullify State Shinto according to the principle of ‘separation of the state and church.’ Furthermore, it reflects the experience of people who were forced to venerate the emperor, and whose freedom of religion, thought and belief was threatened until the defeat in WWII. By 1945, many people had been severely suppressed and considered to be betraying State Shinto because they believed in specific religions or ideologies. People were forced to venerate the holy emperor, and many people voluntarily placed themselves in positions from which they could force emperor veneration on other people. Fostering the state system under the holy emperor, people took part in colonialist and militarist invasions of other countries.

The pre-war State Shinto system was initiated at the time of the Meiji Restoration, and firmly established with the promulgation of the Imperial Rescript on Education in 1890. The Imperial Rescript on Education demanded that the Japanese observe morals based on teachings of the emperor (considered to have a divine ancestor). Children were forced to memorize the document. Military forces led by the emperor became the driving force of national integration under State Shinto. In this atmosphere, sacrificing one’s life for the emperor came to be admired. Yasukuni Shrine was established to enshrine service men and soldiers who died for the emperor. It became a core shrine of State Shinto together with Ise Shrine.

After the 1890s, as a great portion of people came to accept State Shinto, religious organizations were forced to change their doctrines and were suppressed one after another. Scholars and teachers were deprived of their jobs or forced into obscurity simply because they harbored thoughts against State Shinto.

Some incidents of irreverence – by Kanzo Uchimura (in 1891, not making a profound enough bow before the Imperial Rescript on Education at the school ceremony where he worked, resulting in his resignation), and by Kunitake Kume (whose article on Shinto mythology appearing in a history magazine was blamed by Shinto leaders criticizing its impious attitude towards the deities related to Imperial Family and who ended up retiring from the Imperial University in 1892) – were early examples of suppression (Shimazono 2010). In the 1930s and onward, many religious organizations were forced to be disbanded or suspended (Shimazono 2010).

Clearly, the Japan Buddhist Federation and the Japanese Association of Religious Organizations are fully engaged in their opposition to the visits to Yasukuni Shrine by the Prime Minister and other cabinet ministers, taking into account the historic fact that State Shinto played a suppressive function. The point at issue is the freedom of religion, thought and belief. The promotion of the revival of State Shinto will mean the suppression of such freedom. It is a question of whether the government is going to compel people to live under a unitary national spiritual order, or is going to admit diversity in religions, thoughts and beliefs. This can be rephrased to be a question whether free and open public space is allowed or not.

Upon the birth of the government headed by Shinzo Abe in 2012, this question rapidly surfaced as a critical issue. It is closely linked with the other important issue of constitutional revision. The ‘Draft of revised constitution of Japan’, published by the Liberal Democratic Party in April 2012, includes proposed changes in articles relating to the position of the emperor, ‘freedom of religion’ and ‘separation of government and religion.’ These changes will be deeply concerned with the revival of State Shinto, and heated arguments are anticipated on this issue.

## **4 Religious nationalism and East Asian forms of civilization of the Axial Age**

Previous sections have shown that religious discourses and activities or discourses by religious organizations and religious leaders are occupying an increasing part in the public sphere in Japan in the 2010s. On the one hand, State Shinto

has manifested its presence, and a political movement to further its influence is in place. On the other hand, Buddhist and New Religion organizations in the Buddhist line are inclined to participate more in the public sphere, presenting their discourses against nationalist tendencies. The latter can be called pacifist religious discourses. A conflict in religious discourses is coming to the fore between those advocating nationalism and those for pacifism.

However, there is an example which does not fall on either side of the conflict. Because the Soka Gakkai supports the Komeito as a coalition partner with the Liberal Democratic Party, which is increasingly inclined toward nationalism, their criticism against nationalism and their pacifist discourses are both decreasing in tone compared to those of a few decades ago. Even so, this does not mean that the organization is inclined to a nationalist position. It is because the organization wants to maintain its force as a religious organization by taking advantage of the Komeito's partnership with the Liberal Democratic Party. It is reported, however, that there is strong opposition to the idea of downplaying pacifism within the Soka Gakkai. Therefore, the Soka Gakkai seems to maintain its influence while controlling its pacifist discourses.

The phenomenon of religions in contemporary Japan becoming more involved in the public sphere from the opposing directions of nationalism and pacifism coincides with the world trend in which religions are gaining influence in the public sphere. This is different from the structure of discourses in the public sphere during the Cold War period. During that period, the opposing axes were mainly liberalism versus socialism, and it was generally considered that secularist discourses were mainly on the socialist side, while religions joined the liberalist side.

However, while socialist and other secularist discourses have weakened their influence, and secularist discourses also have lowered their influence in the liberal side, religious discourses in terms of public policies are strengthening their influence in the following two directions. As a worldwide trend, opposing relations between externally aggressive religious powers and pacifist religious powers are widely observed. The former groups are the exclusivist tendencies in Islam and Christianity, and the religious-nationalist tendencies in Judaism and Hinduism; while the latter powers include the conciliatory sectors of the Roman Catholic Church and Islam, and most Buddhist organizations. If applied to this structure, the State Shinto supporting power can be seen to be close to the religious-nationalist tendencies of Judaism and Hinduism.

A different perspective can be taken for East Asia. In countries in East Asia, an imperial nationalist tradition is deeply rooted whereby an emperor rules an empire which includes the people's spiritual dimension. Nationalism in this case values the order governed by learned bureaucrats well versed in traditional

and spiritual learning under an emperor who conducts state rites and respects culture. Nationalism had been supported largely by Confucianist tradition until the nineteenth century. But after the nineteenth century, western knowledge exerted a stronger influence, while the influence of Confucianist scholarship fell back. These nations had difficulty in rebuilding their nationalist discourses to support modern nations.

In the case of Japan, the State Shinto discourse was developed rapidly with influences from Shinto and Confucianism, and the Meiji Restoration was executed in the wake of this discourse. In this way, State Shinto attained its supremacy in Japanese nationalism (Shimazono 2010). In China, as Marxism became the support pillar of its nationalism, religious characteristics became hardly visible. However, the tradition of rule by learned bureaucrats with an orthodox scholarly education has continued and been strengthened. In the Korean peninsula, while influenced by Marxism and Christianity, both North and South Koreans maintain the influence of their nationalism by emphasizing their distinctiveness of 'nation.' Japan, which promoted the process of modernization under the banner of State Shinto, can be a good example of religious nationalism, but it is questionable to define nationalism in China and the Koreas as religious nationalism.

The tradition of East Asian nationalism continues to exist in the 2010s, and even appears to be gaining in strength. In the process of modernization, many actors were involved, and their form of East Asiatic nationalism has come to exert great influence together with western nationalism. It follows the tradition of Imperial nationalism or the sacred imperial state system of the Axial Age civilization of East Asia while having the aspect of a modern nationalism of western origin. Confucianism and Shinto are strongly related to it. The visualization of religions in the public space in Japan can be seen as an example of a revitalization of the Axial Age civilization, either from the aspect of the revival of State Shinto, or the aspect of Buddhism as a public religion (Shimazono 2011). Religious revival and post-secularist trends are occurring in many places around the world today, and the visualization of religions in the public space of Japan today can be seen to be a common phenomenon in terms of the movements to reactivate the civilizations of the Axial Age.

In Robert Bellah's thesis 'Religious Evolution' in 1964, Japan's Shinto is said to maintain ancient elements from before the Axial Age. But if seen in terms of the present situation in which State Shinto is being revived, various characteristics of State Shinto in modern Japan rather need to be understood as Shinto adapting itself to the Axial Age civilization of East Asia (Shimazono 2014). The movement to revive Shinto in Japan has aspects similar to the revival of indigenous peoples' cultures, but the revival of State Shinto should be seen rather as a phenomenon closer to the revival of Axial Age civilization.

Relations between religion, nation, and state systems in the Axial Age civilizations are not uniform in Western, Islamic, South Asian, East Asian and other civilizations. In order to have a better understanding of the religious situation in Japan today, the perspective of comparative civilization studies must be mobilized. Religious studies and comparative civilization studies have many overlapping areas. Such aspects in religious studies should be reactivated.

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# The Tactics of (In)Visibility among Religious Communities in Contemporary Europe

**Abstract:** Situated within the broader issue of why religion is now so publicly visible within secular societies in recent decades is a more specific one about the motivations and tactics of religious communities and groups in becoming more or less open to wider scrutiny. The drivers that lead them to assert their presence in the built environment and in open public spaces are intrinsic as well as extrinsic. Religious actors have a degree of agency within the process, with their own theological, social and cultural logic and reasons for adopting particular tactics, however constrained they may be by external strategies of citizenship and diversity management. Why do they invite strangers in, publicize themselves, or engage actively with others in civil society? And why do some pursue such tactics whilst others prefer to avoid the public gaze, and to operate beneath the radar? I draw on examples from recent research projects in global cities to examine these questions.

**Keywords:** Religious communities, visibility and invisibility, diversity, place-making, identity politics, diaspora Hinduism, Europe, London

As scholars, we are prone to give attention to some concepts, debates, places and issues more than others, and indeed to follow intellectual fads or areas of public concern. ‘Visibility’ and ‘invisibility’ are concepts with currency and relevance for the study of religion and indeed for all academic disciplines. But what becomes visible to us, as both scholars and members of society, and when and why does it do so? Why do some things disappear from view? What don’t we notice, and why? In the last century, for example, both ‘religion’ as a social construction and the study of religion have been subject to processes of ‘visibilization’, of becoming more or less visible (Diez de Velasco 2010).<sup>1</sup>

Situated within broader debates about identity politics and why religion is now so publicly visible within secular societies is a more specific question

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<sup>1</sup> This paper was first given as a keynote lecture for the program on ‘Religious Communities: Innovation and Adaptation’ at the XXI World Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions, in August 2015. It was sponsored by the European Association for the Study of Religions.

about the motivations and tactics of religious communities in becoming more or less open to wider scrutiny. What are the drivers that lead religious communities and groups to assert their presence in the built environment and in open public spaces? Why do they invite strangers in, publicize themselves, or engage actively with others in civil society? Are such tactics (Certeau 1984; Woodhead 2013) merely the consequence of effective state strategies of citizenship and diversity management or is there more to it for the religious communities and groups involved? And why do some pursue such tactics whilst others prefer to avoid the public gaze, and to operate beneath the radar? The answers to these questions are necessarily contextual – historically, geographically and politically. Different spatial regimes ‘give rise to and regulate distinctions between the religious and the secular, the public and the private, the visible and the invisible, and the native and the stranger’ (Vásquez, Knott 2014, 327). But religious communities and groups also have a degree of agency within the process, with their own theological, socio-political and cultural logics and reasons for adopting certain tactics, however constrained.

It is this agency and the tactics devised in association with it, rather than state and other public strategies to which religious communities are subject, which will be the principal focus of this chapter. Following a brief consideration of the late-modern ‘new visibility’ of religion, and a theoretical discussion of the dynamics, power and drivers of (in)visibility, I will draw on examples from diaspora Hinduism to explore some of the tactics of visibilization. In a final section, I will turn to recent research in the London borough of Southwark to consider the rationale and choices made by religious communities to draw attention to themselves or to retreat from public examination.<sup>2</sup>

## 1 The new visibility: religion, culture, community

In 2008 Michael Hoelzl and Graham Ward (2008, 1) argued for a new visibility of religion rather than its re-emergence. At odds with a range of theorists who had over the years posited a ‘return of the sacred’, ‘re-enchantment’ or ‘re-emergence’ of religion from the private to the public sphere, they referred to ‘a new aware-

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<sup>2</sup> This research was conducted in association with the project, ‘Iconic Religion: How Imaginaries of Religious Encounter Structure Urban Space’, funded by HERA (12-HERA-JRP-CE-FP-224) from 2013 to 2016. Researchers: Volkhard Krech and Susanne Lanwerd, Ruhr-University Bochum, Germany, Birgit Meyer and Daan Beekers, University of Utrecht, the Netherlands, and Kim Knott and Steph Berns at Lancaster University, UK. For an introduction to some of the key concepts and issues, see Knott, Krech, Meyer 2016.

ness', whilst recognizing that what is now named or seen as 'religion' may indeed have changed. They accepted that '[w]ith the new visibility of religion thesis, we will always be confronted with what actually counts as religion and who is doing the counting' (Hoelzl, Ward 2008, 3). In their edited book, Hoelzl and Ward turned away from institutional religion and a sociological approach toward an examination of cultural hermeneutics. However, in this chapter, the focus remains on 'religious communities', which continue to offer complex challenges for analyzing this 'new visibility'.

Before I discuss these in more detail, it is important to note three arenas in which religion more broadly has been prone to either erasure or enhanced attention as a result of the underpinning theoretical assumptions and practices of late-modernity. They are simultaneously part of the same problem of (in)visibility faced by contemporary religious communities in Europe, and also part of its explanation. The first arena is the academic sector where, until the turn of the twenty-first century, in modernizing disciplines – such as sociology, psychology, anthropology and politics – secularizing discourses worked to limit, and in some cases eclipse, religion and its study. The theoretical framework of secularization dominated, premised in various iterations on the privatization and/or decline of religion and the loss of its social significance (Dobbelaere 2004). The critique of Theology, with its insider stance and confessional approach, and the rise of a new discipline, variously referred to as Religionswissenschaft, the Science of Religion, Religious Studies or Comparative Religion, were an early part of this process, and the dispute with Theology has continued both within and at the boundary of the new discipline to this day (Cotter, Robertson 2016; Fitzgerald 2000; McCutcheon 2003).

The second arena in which religion was occluded – before its renewed visibility – was in European state structures and discourses where ideological and political secularism to a greater or lesser extent held sway, often in a formal relationship with the state Church. Religion and religious communities have been understood and governed within such a secularist milieu in which religion – notably Christianity – was broadly confined to private rather than public life and the affairs of state, with religion at times marginalized and managed, but not fully erased (Berger, Davie, Fokas 2008). Since the 1980s, however, immigration and population change have increasingly impacted on national and European law and policy-making, on equality, diversity and human rights, bringing questions about religion, religious identities and communities back onto the agenda.

Arising from this, the third arena is that of state strategies of diversity (variously assimilation, multiculturalism, pillarization, integration and so on) and their associated discourses and practices. Following race and ethnicity, religion

has become the subject of such strategies, with religious communities, their places, resources and representatives accommodated, distinguished and appropriated, for example, as social welfare providers, repositories of cultural heritage, or as a route to electoral constituencies (Baumann 1999; Triandafyllidou et al. 2012).

In the twentieth century, within academic disciplines and universities, and within local and national structures and discourses, religions and their communities were subject to forces that made them more or less visible. And this has undoubtedly affected what we as scholars have studied and how our work has been viewed within the academy and wider society. Nevertheless, following Hoelzl and Ward, it is clear that religious communities, like religion and indeed non-religion (which I shall not address here for reasons of space), have become increasingly visible in the European public sphere in the twenty-first century, not least of all as a result of changes wrought by global migration. Something empirical, on the ground, has changed, in addition to its mediation in discourse, the built environment, and public policy. Social change, political strategizing, media representation, and material and spatial processes have all contributed to this new visibility.

As Gerd Baumann (1996, 1999) argued, the visibility of religious communities has been more a matter of public discourse – both dominant and demotic – than social change. Social groups – ‘communities’ as they were known in British common parlance in the 1990s – could not be constructed, imagined or represented (by policy makers, academics, practitioners or by community representatives themselves) without reference to ‘culture’ (Baumann 1996). The very concept of ‘community’ simultaneously enclosed and carried other concepts with it – of ‘culture’, but also of ‘identity’ and ‘politics’. The repeated reference to the term ‘community’ – Britain as ‘a community of communities’, for example – brought with it the enhanced visibility of culture, especially religion (as in the ‘Sikh community’, ‘Muslim community’ and so on) (Knott 2004).

Those of us who researched such communities of culture in this period necessarily contributed to the increased visibilization of religion.<sup>3</sup> In part as a reaction to this by-product of academic focus, scholars of religion, like those in cognate disciplines, turned from analysis of community and communities to other approaches, notably to a focus on diversity, governmentality, and to the study of discourses rather than groups and identities.

The scholarly move from ‘community’ to ‘diversity’ has in part been a reaction to the difficulty of writing about groups without reifying issues of identity

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<sup>3</sup> See the critique in *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Bhatt, Mukta 2000.

and culture. The concept of ‘super-diversity’ (Vertovec 2007, 2015), not without conceptual problems of its own, was developed in order to highlight the complexity of identifications, in part breaking down the notion of groups defined by a single identifier, but also challenging conceptions of social and cultural homogeneity within groups. Wessendorf (2014, 10), who has explored the idea of ‘commonplace diversity’, asks the question, ‘How to write about “groups”?’ She notes that we ‘risk taking cultural differences as a given and overlooking the fluidity of cultural boundaries’ (Wessendorf 2014, 10). Like others who favor the focus on diversity, she chooses to follow everyday interactions that may unmake communities and cultures, in her case by focusing on commonplace diversity and people’s self-descriptions. Even Wessendorf, however, finds it impossible to resist the term ‘ethnic background’ to signal a ‘shared past’.

There are several other ways in which the reification of communities of culture has been resisted. One has been to focus not on religions and religious communities *per se* but on how they are governed and managed. Here, attention turns to those external forces, policies and agents who construct, represent and discipline them, such as government, the law, education, public bodies, and media (Stack et al. 2015). In this approach, ‘they’ are produced, represented and made visible as ‘religious communities’ by such forces, policies and agents. A key problem here – I seek to address it later – is that of agency: ‘they’ are treated as entities to be worked on by others rather than as agents in their own right (cf. Van der Veer 2015). A third approach has been to focus on discourses rather than groups or institutions (Baumann 1996; Stringer 2013). In this approach, discourses of culture and community, both dominant and demotic, as Gerd Baumann suggested, are seen to emerge from and be drawn on by both religious and nonreligious people *and* state and other public actors. It is in such discourses that communities of culture, including ‘religious communities’ get defined, reified and made visible from both outside and inside.

Taken together these approaches have contributed significantly to a better understanding of the processes by which ‘religious communities’ have been forged and made visible, and resisted and critiqued as problematic social and cultural constructions. In the remainder of this paper, however, I acknowledge these constraints, but nevertheless work with the notion of ‘religious communities’ as self-identified communities of culture who organize as social groups with common interests and who participate in acts of religious identity-construction and place-making. I do so in part to right the balance of the alternative approaches mentioned above (focused on diversity, governmentality and discourse), by looking more closely at the agency of minority religious actors in response to the strategies of major state institutions, public bodies and the media.

Here I draw on the differentiation of strategies and tactics (Certeau 1984; Woodhead 2013) in distinguishing those modes of power used by strategists, who have ‘available time to plan, design, order, impose and reinforce’ (Woodhead 2013, 15), and by contrast those drawn on by ‘the weak [who] are forced to occupy the space which the powerful control, and to respond with lightning reflex ... They have to make history in spaces and conditions which are not of their own making, with tools and materials which are owned by others’ (Woodhead 2013, 15). Of necessity, the latter must give way to those with power, but need not evacuate those places controlled by them. They may find ways ‘to enter them, to appropriate aspects of them, to turn them to new uses and to gain some control over them’ (Woodhead 2013, 16). Employing the tactics of visibility is a key method of obtaining a measure of agency in an alien milieu, and – in a limited way – of rebalancing power from the bottom up. But it is not without its costs. As Saint-Blancat and Cancellieri (2014, 646) have suggested, ‘[t]he request for visibility implies a demand for social recognition which entails becoming full actors who can display their own identity and specificity in public space’. Bearing this in mind, it is important to consider the tactics of invisibility, and of temporary as well as permanent incursions into public space.

The strategies imposed by others on minority religious communities and the tactics deployed by them operate in several modes: discursive, spatial/material, temporal and social. In discursive mode, people and things become (in)visible through government policy, political rhetoric, media representations, and in the discourses of religious and other community leaders. They are also performed publicly, in political meetings, religious processions and local events. Tactics and strategies also operate through the built and natural environments, signage, mobile bodies, icons, artefacts and commodities – in spatial/material mode. Here, as in discourse, tactics may compete with strategies of erasure, closure and demolition; they may also be employed by actors to conceal themselves or their activities. In temporal mode, strategies and tactics of visibility may be used to mark time in conjunction with calendars and life cycles. Furthermore, it is not uncommon for religion and religious communities to be made invisible in historical accounts or heritage re-enactments for strategic reasons. Finally, there are multiple social practices whereby religious people and groups are included or excluded, stigmatized or reified, invited to participate, enter or share, and engaged or disengaged in various ways. These may be top-down, with religious communities made invisible by exclusionary practices, for example, or bottom up, with religious actors themselves behaving as gate-keepers, hosts or agents of social change.

## 2 Theorizing the (in)visibility of religious communities

Why use the concept of (in)visibility to signal the presence or absence of religious communities in public life, and the powers that bring this about?

(In)visibility has become a dominant trope in late modernity because it is the visual order that assaults us, and visual representations that are circulated and discussed globally. Lefebvre, in *The Production of Space* (1974) referred to three ‘formants’ of the abstract space of modernity, the principal one being the visual. In that formant, in which the façade or visual surface was taken to be ‘the truth of space’ (Dimendberg 1998, 25), the image stands in for reality, the part for the whole. Furthermore, the ‘visible’ and ‘visibility’ have become metaphors for what can be apprehended, perceived; and of all that is present to the senses. Not that the other senses are irrelevant for the presence of religion in public life: audibility and the regulation of soundscapes, for example, have been important in European debates about minarets, and in permission to congregate and hold festivals in public. But, as Donna Haraway (1997) among others asserts, it is the visual that dominates. She takes this further, however, by asking, ‘In a world replete with images and representations, whom can we not see or grasp, and what are the consequences of such selective blindness ... How is visibility possible? For whom, by whom, and of whom?’ (Haraway 1997, 202). Her words get to the heart of the politics of (in)visibility. They open up the concept beyond the binary of the visible/invisible.

Drawing on two further concepts – of presence and attention – it is possible to identify four states: the visible [A], non-visible [B], (in)visible [C] and invisible [D].

	Attention drawn	Attention not drawn
<b>Present</b> (available to the senses)	A: Visible	B: Non-visible
<b>Absent</b> (not available to the senses)	C: (In)visible	D: Invisible

**Fig. 1:** (In)visibility: Four States

In cell A, we find that which is perceivable, available to the senses, and to which attention has been drawn in some way or another, whether in discourse or practice, and whether strategically by government or the law, or tactically by local actors. David Garbin (2012) alerts us to the case of Fanfare Kimbanguiste, a young Congolese diasporan marching band whose disciplined musical performance in London’s Lord Mayor’s Parade challenged assumptions about the culture and etiquette of young British black people (commonly associated with gangs,

hip hop and criminality). They drew attention to themselves through the public nature of their performance, their self-confident black Congolese Kimbanguist identity, and their counter-tactics of visibility.

Cell B includes that which is available to be seen but to which attention has not been drawn, the non-visible. Formally present, but rarely attended to by passers-by, are the multi-faith rooms that are now commonplace in many ostensibly secular institutions and public places, from hospitals and universities, to shopping malls, airports and even football grounds (Crompton 2013). As Crompton notes, they are often mundane rather than sacred spaces, there but somehow not there, often empty, devoid of elaboration and constructed of banal materials. For users of such spaces (for prayer or quiet meditation), their presence is of functional importance; yet they are barely noticed by non-users.

Some people, things, places and events are absent, but attention is nevertheless drawn to them: cell C, the (in)visible. They are not invisible because, as passers-by, we are repeatedly reminded of their absence. Crossbones graveyard, in the London Borough of Southwark (to which I will return later in the paper) is a case in point (Berns 2016a; Knott 2015). Although there was once a visible paupers' graveyard on Redcross Way in Southwark, since the mid-nineteenth century it has been closed to burials. For most of the twentieth century it has indeed been invisible: just waste ground owned by the company, London Transport, with no overt signs or features to declare its past purpose. During an archaeological excavation triggered by the company's desire to develop the land, bodies were exhumed and the history of the site made known. Although the graveyard was on private land, a small group of local people memorialized it through story and ritual, repeatedly drawing attention to its history, purpose and symbolic meaning by tying tokens to the external gate. A memorial plaque was established, vigils held, and a website set up (Crossbones 2016). The 'outcast dead' were remembered though there was very little evidence above ground of their presence.

If the graveyard on Redcross Way is an example of an (in)visible site, nearby Southwark Towers exemplifies invisibility. Built in 1975, when it was pulled down in 2008 Southwark Towers had the status of being the tallest London building ever to be demolished. In the foothills of the highly visible and now infamous Shard (the Shard.com 2016), it is now gone and forgotten, leaving no trace and barely a memory.

Together with the four modes I mentioned earlier, these states – the visible, non-visible, (in)visible and invisible – in which people, places and things are present or absent, revealed or obscured – help to open up the process of strategic or tactical (in)visibilization in which religious communities play a part as the

objects of policy, discourse or official practice or as agents in place-making, identity politics and local and national debate and activism.

However, as Bal and Hernandez-Navarro (2011) note, in *Art and Visibility in Migratory Cultures*, it is also important to consider the dynamics of these states: things or groups *become* visible or invisible. (In)visibility is not a static condition. What are the processes by which this happens? When and why is the non-visible (that which is self-evident) disrupted or called to attention? What are the conditions by which things become visible: Is it important that space is made for disagreement or contestation, for example? Bal, Hernandez-Navarro and colleagues discuss the role of art in opening up the possibility of increasing the visibility of migrants, suggesting that assemblages of artworks themselves constitute provisional ‘communities’ which may allow migrants, legal or illegal, to acquire a status and stake a claim as full participants. But the move from non-visibility or (in)visibility to visibility may come at the price of increased suspicion or even hyper-visibility.

In *Missing Bodies*, Casper and Moore (2009) ask: ‘What can account for the fact that certain bodies are hyper-exposed, brightly visible, and magnified whilst others are hidden, missing, and vanished?’ European Muslims, for example, are identified, indeed defined by key visible markers. Nadia Jeldtoft (2013), writing on the ‘hypervisibility of Islam’, cites dress, religious practice, ethnicity and piety – but notes also how young Muslims themselves as well as external agencies such as the media have a hand in this process. Getting noticed by peers, but also by outsiders, is a sign that one has successfully produced a space, made a public statement, staked a claim, begun a process of self-authorization which may lead to one gaining legitimacy. Of course, it may also lead to increased surveillance, hardening of boundaries and conflict. This is just what happened in the case of ‘the inclusive mosque initiative’ at St John’s Waterloo, an Anglican church in London’s Southwark, in March 2015 when Canon Goddard allowed a Muslim woman, Dr Amina Wadud, to lead Islamic prayers in his Church (for which he was later made to apologize publicly) (Pocklington 2015). The hypervisibility of Islam – further enhanced with reference to Muslim women – drew attention to an otherwise non-visible church. An ‘other space’ (Foucault 1968; Soja 1996), however temporary, was produced, a claim was staked, but the cost was increased surveillance, and the policing of boundaries.

Some bodies and communities are hypervisible, but other are just ‘missing’. In 1993, Judith Butler asked why some bodies matter whilst others do not. Matter, wrote Butler (1993, 3) is ‘a process of materialization that stabilizes over time to produce the effect of boundary, fixity and surface’. Missing bodies, by extrapolation, must be those that, for whatever reason, have yet to produce or generate such an effect, either because they have not sought or been afforded such mate-

rial stabilization or because they have been prohibited from achieving it. They remain hidden, missing or vanished.

Materialization and indeed representation, giving shape and substance to entities, are socio-cultural processes which build on the embodied cognitive propensity of humans to order and distinguish things on the basis of pre-conceptual structures. In their discussion of these structures or ‘image schemas’, the cognitive philosophers Lakoff (1987) and Johnson (1987) gave particular attention to what they called the ‘CONTAINER image schema’. The representational characteristics of (in)visibility – both linguistic and imagistic – are associated with the pre-conceptual structure CONTAINER and its entailments (containment). Things that are visible are distinguished from others that are not visible, with the latter being covered or masked from view. It is not that they are not present, just that they are not visible. As Butler (1993, 3) notes of materialization, an effect is brought about of ‘boundary, fixity and surface’: all conceptions associated with containment. Prepositions associated with (in)visibility include *out, on, before, open, closed, inside, within, behind, under*, as in phrases such as ‘*on show*’, ‘*coming out*’, ‘*standing out*’, ‘*before our very eyes*’, ‘*staring us in the face*’, ‘*on the agenda*’, but also ‘*hard to reach*’, ‘*behind closed doors*’, ‘*under the radar*’. Often using metaphors of theatre and performance, but also security and surveillance, in the language of (in)visibility reference is made to things being highlighted, in the limelight, in the public gaze, but also camouflaged, masked or disguised, hidden, disclosed or uncovered.

Mark Johnson, in *The Body in the Mind* (1987), lists the entailments of containment, and the experience we get when something becomes bounded and stabilized, and its location becomes fixed in relation to that which surrounds it or abuts it. The entailments are related, with the fourth being especially significant for analyzing the process of (in)visibilization:

- The experience of containment typically involves protection from, or resistance to, external forces.
- Containment also limits and restricts forces within the container.
- Because of this restraint of forces, the contained object gets a relative fixity of location.
- This relative fixing of location within the container means that the contained object becomes either accessible or inaccessible to the view of an observer. It is either held so that it can be observed, or the container itself blocks or hides the object from view.
- Finally we experience transitivity of containment. If B is *in* A, then whatever is *in* B is also *in* A. (Johnson 1987, 22–23)

Religions and religious communities, like other cultural closures and social collectivities, are commonly described and understood in terms of containment: referred to as having boundaries which are more or less closed, and which may obscure those people, things, practices, beliefs and so on within the container from those outside it.

(In)visibility is an entailment of the (pre)conceptual process by which people routinely imagine, represent and differentiate religions and religious communities, as well as other groups, things and places. However, an important second step, with reference to any specific case, is then to establish the conditions or forces that lead to those things in question being open to observation or blocked from view. Context notwithstanding, a range of external (or extrinsic) drivers that govern the (in)visibility of religious communities in public space need to be borne in mind. These are discussed by Vásquez and Knott (2014) in their elaboration of religious place-making in different ‘spatial regimes’ in London, Johannesburg and Kuala Lumpur, and include the following: consideration of the historical period in question, the type of nation state and postcolonial regime, but also any local particularities; majority/minority relations and privileges, including those pertaining to the national church or other majority religion; the political and legal arrangements regarding religion and its public presence; patterns of migration, stages and places of settlement, and relations between communities; and the attendant opportunities that arise for religious place-making and public expression.

These extrinsic drivers are themselves interwoven and complex, not least in terms of gender, race and class, and they generate ambiguity and anxiety. In Europe, there is a tension on the one hand between the desire for minority religious communities to participate actively, to be out there in public and on display, for them to provide services to fill welfare gaps, and to be integrated into the wider social whole (visible and useful, but nevertheless commodified), and, on the other, for them to be undemanding, unproblematic and unthreatening (invisible but nevertheless contained and secured). Being quiet, moderate, liberal, and adjusting appropriately to current political agendas, e. g. on equality and diversity, are requirements; religious communities that insist on singing to the tune of other authorities, divine or human, are more of a problem in a secular polity.

But what is also clear is that religious communities contest the right to representation within the public spaces they inhabit, and this includes the right to be more or less visible.

### 3 Diaspora Hinduism and the tactics of (in)visibility

I turn to the case of diaspora Hinduism in Europe and the US to illustrate this claim. Research since the 1970s has revealed several key processes in which Hindus in various local and national settings and at different stages of their settlement have sought, at times, to minimize their visibility (to be less different) (Knott 2009). They have done so (i) by stressing areas of common interest with other religious groups, (ii) by de-emphasizing vernacular aspects and representing a standardized form of Hindu belief and practice, (iii) by claiming the moral high ground (shared with liberalism) of ‘tolerance’, (iv) by engaging in an ‘ecumenical strategy of adaptation’ (Williams 1996, 166), and (v) by participating with others in local interfaith initiatives.

At other times and places, tactics of visibility have been deployed. Prema Kurien (2012, 100), with several highly public disputes in American Hinduism in mind, noted that latterly Hindu lay leaders have ‘spoken up against what they felt were fundamental misrepresentations of Hinduism within American society: Hindu conceptions of the divine, the nature of the caste system and the position of women in Hindu society’. They have contested what they saw as unfair or misplaced visibility. Furthermore, in a heated culture war between scholars ‘historicizing Hinduism’ and American Hindus ‘defending Dharma’ (Sippy 2012, 15), ‘diaspora community organizations have asserted a right to protect what they perceived as their authentic tradition in public contexts’. Enhanced visibility through public contestation over how Hinduism should be interpreted can be added to other examples in which Hindus have challenged their marginalization vis-à-vis the hyper-representation of Muslims and Islam (Knott 2009; Zavos et al. 2012). More commonly, Hindus have simply asserted their presence in the urban environment by building traditional style temples, adding elaborate facades to existing buildings (Reddy, Zavos 2010), and by taking their rituals out onto the streets (Jacobsen 2008). In these examples, visibilization has operated in different modes according to time and place, but favoring discursive and spatial/material modes.

Whilst such interventions have undoubtedly been invoked in part in reaction to those extrinsic local, national and global conditions, forces and strategies listed earlier, they provide evidence of the range of efforts made by Hindus to draw attention toward or away from themselves in relation to their surroundings, to make themselves more or less visible. The tactics they chose no doubt depended on their confidence to speak or stand out (in turn related to such things as length of settlement, status, rights, community size and so on), on what motivated them

(theological or political drivers), and on what they believed they had to lose or gain. As Vertovec argued when writing about the Hindu diaspora (2000, 106), Hindus, like other religious and ethnic communities, participate in ‘vis-à-vis’ identity politics in which it is not just their own situation and visibility they must bear in mind, but how they are faring in relation to others (for example, in respect of public funding, public representation, media portrayals, policy initiatives, schools and educational provision, and so on).

And all the time this is going on at the level of leadership and public life, other tactics are being deployed *within* communities in which classes or interest groups advance or retreat from view as they either struggle for power or seek to draw attention away from themselves. In all these instances, public or otherwise, communities and their members – in this case Hindus – face the consequences of being represented and representing themselves as a ‘Hindu community’ (Knott 2009). In so doing they may to some degree be protected from external forces, but they may also be limited or constrained in how they may act within their own ‘community’.

## 4 Religious tactics and (in)visibility in the London borough of Southwark

Internal theological as well as socio-political factors impact on the tactics deployed by religious groups. By ‘theological’ I refer to the group’s internal vision of ‘the good’, of how members believe it should be lived, and what they do to flourish, as a community and as persons. Factors, such as how the group understands human/divine relationships, its moral code and teachings, and how it sees its place in the world and beyond, are embodied and represented in differing ways by individual members, but are also packaged by the group for external use and drawn on in negotiations for public visibility with outsiders, including authorities and neighbors. Too often this perspective and motivation for action is lost in a welter of socio-political explanations for public visibility. But living within European societies that are normatively secular (including those with a state church), religious groups routinely produce ‘other spaces’ (Foucault 1986; Soja 1996), alternative theological representations of their own community, of others and the world around them which they display in diverse ways. They imagine and construct cosmic and utopian places (Tweed 2006). They are also habitually motivated to sacralize, through ritual, to make new places and adapt existing ones (Knott 2016).

Some groups are motivated to erect sacred boundaries, to separate themselves off from the external world, to fix their location, and obscure their internal affairs from the gaze of outsiders (cf. Johnson 1987). Others, however, routinely open themselves up to outsiders, inviting others in but also getting out and about. They proceed to sacralize public space, to spread the word and deed to others. They seek through mission to exceed the bounds of their containment. More than three decades ago, Roy Wallis (1984) provided scholars with a useful typology for addressing this difference. He distinguished between new religious movements on the basis of their orientation to the world around them, identifying those that were world rejecting, world affirming, or simply world accommodating. Other historians, geographers and sociologists of religion, in modelling how religious groups respond to outsiders, have contributed to the construction of religions by distinguishing them as more open or closed, or as more ‘world’ than ‘ethnic’ (e.g. Cotter, Robertson 2016; Fitzgerald 2000; Stump 2008).

In order to investigate further why and how religious communities pursue various tactics of (in)visibility, I turn finally to the London borough of Southwark, the locality at the center of research conducted by the London team as part of the ‘Iconic Religion’ project (Iconic Religion 2016). The purpose here is not to discuss the tactics of any particular religious community in depth, but to illustrate the idea that group tactics are devised and enacted in a local field of interconnections (simultaneously religious, spatial, material, social, political and economic). In this short analysis, I will refer back to the modes and states of (in)visibility set out earlier.

In the hinterland of London’s dominant secular ‘icon’, the Shard, is Southwark Cathedral (for images, see Iconic Religion 2016; Lanwerd 2016). In the twelfth century, the church of an Augustinian priory occupied the site, which later became the Anglican parish church of St Saviour’s, and – from 1905 – the Cathedral and mother church of the Diocese of Southwark (Southwark Cathedral 2016). At street level, the Cathedral is hard to discern, drowned out in a local built environment which includes not only the Shard but London Bridge Station, an over-powering railway viaduct and Borough Market (Knott 2015). Present but often unnoticed, like many other churches in the contemporary European urban landscape, to most passers-by it is ‘non-visible’ (available to the senses but with no attention drawn to it). But get closer and it becomes clear that Cathedral clergy and staff have sought to counteract this everyday erasure. Its courtyard and graveyard offer a place to sit, away from the bustle of local streets and are used by visitors who consume food bought in the Cathedral café or nearby market; the Cathedral’s doors are always open, with tourists encouraged to enter and enjoy the peace, but also the heritage of one of London’s oldest surviving Christian places. But, despite the fact that it is dwarfed by the Shard and masked by

other local structures, within the religious field of Southwark the Cathedral nevertheless remains a seat of power. As mother church of the Diocese, it has Christian status and legitimacy, and the right to make and remake the parish and beyond. Furthermore, it draws on this power to contain, connect, mobilize and at times authorize other religious and spiritual bodies within its boundary (Knott 2015). Exploiting temporal, spatial and social modes of visibility, its festivals and processions – including the annual civic service in which Cathedral clergy bless the market and its food, beating the bounds on Ascension Day, the ecumenical walk of witness at Easter, and various interfaith initiatives – are all means by which the Cathedral extends its local reach, links with others, and visibly displays its symbolic and ritual power and religious status (Berns 2016b).<sup>4</sup>

South of the Cathedral, in an area associated in the public imagination with the life and work of the author, Charles Dickens, is the Baitul Aziz Islamic Cultural Centre. Purpose built, distinctive and stylistically set apart from the dismal vernacular housing blocks around it, the mosque is at an angle to the road to allow praying Muslims to face Mecca (Baitul Aziz 2016). It has been designed to be clearly visible (in spatial/material mode) and to represent a community which has established itself and grown out of an earlier accommodation not fit for purpose (in the basement of a shop). Yet, its outward visibility belies the reality of a community that goes about its regular business without generally engaging with others (Knott 2015). Public attention is generally not sought. Enclosed by railings, the mosque is hard to enter without invitation (other mosques in the area – in recycled buildings – have entrances which open onto the street). In architectural terms, it is visible, but not easily accessible.

However, in 2013, sometime after local Muslims had obtained permission to further extend their site to build more facilities, an archaeological investigation was scheduled.<sup>5</sup> Seeing this as a unique opportunity for minority community engagement, Pre-Construct Archaeology (the company hired for the excavation work) formed a partnership with the mosque which led to local Muslim volunteers being trained to assist in digging the site. Roman burials, wells, ceramics and animal skeletons were all found during the excavation. According to a local community website (London SE1 2013), '[t]he mosque hope[d] to use the archaeological dig to forge new links with its neighbours and demonstrate that it is a centre of learning and welcome'. After the digging was completed,

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<sup>4</sup> 'Beating the Bounds' is a custom dating back to the Anglo-Saxon period in England in which clergy and parishioners walk the boundaries of the parish to mark and show the extent of parish jurisdiction.

<sup>5</sup> In the city of London an archaeology excavation is required by law in association with a successful application for building planning and development.

an Open Day was held in January 2014, with local people (Muslims and non-Muslims) able to view the finds and hear more about the mosque and the Islamic community. With a second Open Day in May, the community of Baitul Aziz demonstrated a desire to become more visible and open to people in the local neighborhood, by making accessible what is normally hidden from view.

Not far from the Cathedral and mosque, and overlooked by the local Roman Catholic Church of the Most Precious Blood, is Crossbones graveyard. As I indicated earlier, the graveyard itself was invisible for much of the twentieth century: absent from view in waste land belonging to London Transport, with no evidence remaining above ground of having been a paupers' graveyard from the medieval period to the late nineteenth century. The land lay vacant for nearly a century. Then, in the 1990s, London Transport planned to build an electricity sub-station for the London underground Jubilee Line extension. Prior to the work, Museum of London archaeologists conducted a partial excavation (see footnote 5), removing some 150 skeletons, the majority belonging to women, children and the unborn. By the archaeologists' own estimate, these represented, 'less than 1% of the total number of burials that were made at this site', with many of the dead thought to have been prostitutes (Crossbones 2016; Berns 2016a). Since then local people, including playwright and ritual practitioner John Constable, also known as John Crow, have sacralized the site, drawing on a variety of spiritual traditions, with London Transport's own gate the focal point for regular vigils and offerings for the 'outcast dead' (Hausner 2016). A loose community has developed over the years, with many visitors attending the site, some adding to its public visibility with mementos of their own and others just marking its importance by their presence (Iconic Religion 2016; Crossbones 2016). Crossbones has visibly materialized, from waste land on what was once a graveyard, into a public garden, with its boundary and surface area now fixed, negotiated and worked by local people (Berns 2016a).

Furthermore, Crossbones has now been recognized and authorized as a stopping point on the Christian processions that take place in the parish (Berns 2016b): in 2015, Crossbones' 'outcast dead' were blessed, and its unconsecrated ground dedicated by the Dean of Southwark. It is the Anglican Cathedral and its clergy who organize these regular ecumenical events, but everyone – irrespective of denomination – participates in carrying the Cross at Easter or palm crosses on Palm Sunday, reading and reciting prayers, beating the bounds of the parish, making Christianity visible to a wider public, reinforcing ecumenical bonds, and mapping Christian Southwark in the process. Christian conceptions of the importance for all disciples of remembering Christ's suffering on the Cross, of Christian witness and of ecumenical partnership are important intrinsic drivers of visibility for this local community.

The struggle involved in striving for visibility was illustrated in the words of one Christian woman at the time of another public ritual, the blessing of the river Thames, when members of the Cathedral and the Church of St Magnus the Martyr on the north side of the river meet in the middle of London Bridge:

It's brilliant that in a city like this, and in such a secular age that we live [in], we meet on the bridge and we are all very visible. All the clergy there with their robes flowing, full regalia, the Bishop comes, everything. It's a real chance to be seen and [to be] visible as Christians. That's not so easy these days, to be visible as Christians in London. And it's not so easy to stand up and say, 'Actually, I am a Christian'... So I really enjoy it for that, because you are able to give witness to what you believe in and to what you say you believe in and other people can see it.<sup>6</sup> (Steward, Southwark Cathedral)

Her words reflect not only the theological reasoning behind the need for public visibility, but the extrinsic forces that must be engaged and overcome, in this case arising from the normative secular context in which Christians in the UK – even more than other religious communities – have felt erased and marginalized.

## 5 Conclusion

Although I have drawn attention to some of the intrinsic drivers and tactics by which religious communities have sought to overcome such constraints, to find measured ways of making themselves more visible and to open themselves up to outsiders, all such initiatives in the end result from the engagement of intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Moreover, what a focus on religious communities, as actors who pursue tactics of (in)visibility on the basis of their theological, social and political interests, has left largely unexplored is the way in which the modes of visibility they employ – whether discursive, spatial/material, temporal or social – may themselves contribute to the closure or disclosure, invisibility or visibility, and the silencing or erasure of other voices or interests (cf. Beekers, Tamiimi Arab 2016). This must be the focus of another paper.

Also neglected are the effects of (in)visibility. What is communicated to observers when something is made visible? Is it what the actors intended to communicate? What effect does visibility have on outsiders and onlookers? Does it draw them closer, make them less ignorant or unaware? Who is benefitted by

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<sup>6</sup> Interview conducted in January 2015 by Steph Berns in conjunction with the 'Iconic Religion' project.

such a process? Are agents of the state, local authorities and policymakers better served if religious communities become more visible and accessible? And what is going on when a religious group recedes from view? Is it just in decline, or does its increasing invisibility denote a problem? Does it become more dangerous, a potential threat, or is it just a question of ‘out of sight, out of mind’?

In general, however, religious communities do not simply disappear or die out when they are excluded or denied public space or attention. Yes, they turn inward and attend to their own internal business, but some at least look for the right time and place to open their doors and reassert their interests. And there is a lesson here for all strategists who deny or seek to erase others. Outcasts may go underground, even quite literally. But they may well discover renewed vigor to practice and share their beliefs in private or under the duress of prohibition, until it again becomes safe to emerge and deploy the tactics of visibility.

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# Religion Intersecting De-nationalization and Re-nationalization in Post-Apartheid South Africa

**Abstract:** What role has religion played in the post-apartheid transition to democracy and how will it be deployed in the period after 2014, the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of South African democracy? This is the question that shapes this essay. Recent research has analyzed the political and economic dimensions of ‘the South African crisis’, arguing that this current moment in our democratic transition is shaped by simultaneous processes of de-nationalization and re-nationalization. However, while this research hints at the role of religion within these processes, there is no sustained and in-depth analysis of how religion inhabits both the processes of de-nationalization and the processes of re-nationalization. The essay is framed by the period 1994–2015, but focuses on a pivotal moment within these dual processes. When Thabo Mbeki, then President of South Africa, delivered the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Nelson Mandela Lecture in July 2006 the Bible was his central source. Mbeki used the Bible, alongside a number of other literary and political sources, to present a religious argument for both de-nationalization and re-nationalization. Given that Mbeki’s public pronouncements prior to this on religion in general and the Bible in particular had tended to be rather dismissive, this turn is significant, indicating a deliberate and strategic use of the Bible and religion. The essay analyzes this moment, locating it within a trajectory that was set in motion by Nelson Mandela, given clarity by Mbeki, and has been continued by Jacob Zuma (and other political figures and policies).

**Keywords:** Apartheid, Bible, Mandela, Mbeki, re-nationalisation, de-nationalisation, economics, morality

## 1 Introduction

Since its arrival in Southern Africa, the Bible has been a site of struggle, though often in more complex ways than most post-colonial analysis has acknowledged (West 2016). This chapter reiterates some of that history but focuses on the period after political liberation, from 1994 to the present, examining the place of the Bible in the South African public realm more than two decades after liberation. In particular, this chapter examines the re-emergence of the Bible in the context

of shifts in South African macro-economic policy, with the Bible playing a significant though unlikely role.

The history of South Africa over the past three and half centuries has been ‘a history of inequality’, as coined by Sampie Terreblanche in his economic analysis of South Africa from 1652–2002 (Terreblanche 2002). Terreblanche provides a detailed account of the systemic relationship between power, land, and labor in South Africa. He identifies a number of successive systemic periods in South African history, beginning with ‘the mercantilistic and feudal system institutionalised by Dutch colonialism during the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> and most of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (1652–1795)’ (Terreblanche 2002, 14). This was followed by the system of British colonial and racial capitalism (1795–1890) and a related system of British colonial and mineral capitalism (1890–1948) (Terreblanche 2002, 15). Unfree labor patterns were intensified when the Afrikaner-oriented National Party won the general election of 1948, and although it ‘did not drastically transform the economic system of racial capitalism institutionalised by the English establishment, it used its political and ideological power to institutionalise a new version of it’ (Terreblanche 2002, 15). ‘Since 1990’, continues Terreblanche, ‘we have experienced a transition from the politico-economic system of white political domination and racial capitalism to a new system of democratic capitalism’ (Terreblanche 2002, 15). South Africa’s economic system has moved, Terreblanche argues, ‘over the past 30 years from one of colonial and racial capitalism to a neo-liberal, first-world, capitalist enclave that is disengaging itself from a large part of the black labour force’ (Terreblanche 2002, 422). This transformation, though it has ‘coincided with the introduction of a system of representative democracy which is effectively controlled by a black, predominantly African, elite’, still exhibits ‘an ominous systemic character’ (Terreblanche 2002, 422–423).

If, as Margaret Legum has argued, ‘It doesn’t have to be like this!’ (the title of her book on alternatives to the Washington Consensus) (Legum 2002), how then has South Africa’s socialist-leaning liberation struggle brought us to this socio-economic state? Strangely, the Bible has had something to do with this shift.

The long association of nineteenth century mission and colonialism with capitalism is well documented. While the primary objective of the missionaries who came to Southern Africa from the late 1700s was to awaken the dormant intellect of the African through the direct power of ‘the Word’ (Comaroff, Comaroff 1991, 230), Africans were always more interested in the other items the missionaries brought with them, including items such as guns, tobacco, and candles, but most of all access to the chain of trade (and later the potential of protection) the missionaries provided between the interior and the emerging European colony on the coast (West 2004). Given only muted African interest in the Word, missionaries were forced ‘to take a more circuitous route via the laborious reform

of habit' (Comaroff, Comaroff 1991, 230). In the words of the Rev. John Philip, the London Missionary Society Superintendent at the Cape in the early 1800s:

The elevation of a people from a state of barbarism to a high pitch of civilization supposes a revolution in the habits of that people, which it requires much time, and the operation of many causes to effect. By the preaching of the gospel, individuals ... may be suddenly elevated to a surprising height in the scale of improvement, and the influence of such a person, on a savage tribe, must be great; but those on whom the power of divine truth operates in a direct manner, bear but a small proportion to the numbers who are only the subjects of an indirect or reflected influence. ... [The] mass of people ... are but slightly affected with divine truth (Comaroff, Comaroff 1991, 230, citing Philip 1828, 2, 355).

Because of this conviction concerning the need to revolutionize the habits of Africans, missionaries were particular about performing 'the mundane signs and practices of European modernity', accompanied by preaching and praying, conversation and exhortation, in the firm hope that the childlike Africans would not only learn by imitation (following Ephesians 5:1) but also benefit from the temporal benefits of civilization (Comaroff, Comaroff 1997, 120). Hard work and the material benefits that it produced were central to the missionary vision; 'commerce' was an alternative and antidote to both slavery and primitive African communism (Comaroff, Comaroff 1991, 79–80), and the missionaries were determined to save the African from both. For the missionary the political economy was a form of 'secular theology' (Comaroff, Comaroff 1997, 167), and so the missionaries set out to establish economic reform with religious zeal, persuading with word and deed the Africans 'to accept the currency of salvation, a task involving the introduction, along with the gospel, of market exchange, wage work, sometimes even a specially minted coinage' (Comaroff, Comaroff 1997, 168).

This transformation of the African economy did not always proceed as planned, nor did it always match the imagination of the missionaries, but over the course of the nineteenth century, the majority of Southern Africans were 'drawn into the net cast by the commodity *form*: all came to partake of relations and transactions involving money and manufactures, whether as wage earners, as consumers, as the sellers of produce, as taxpayers' (Comaroff, Comaroff 1997, 216). And the Bible, as we have witnessed, played a part in this alteration.

## 2 De-nationalization and re-nationalization

How ironically fitting then that after more than a century and a half of racial capitalism, the first macro-economic policy of a liberated South Africa, the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), should be declared to have an 'al-

most biblical character' by the then Deputy President Thabo Mbeki (Mbeki 1995, 1).

The RDP originally emanated from the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), and particularly its most powerful affiliate, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), and was envisaged as 'a set of socio-economic benchmarks against which the performance of a new democratically elected government would be judged' (Terreblanche 2002, 108). Driven by COSATU, many members of the democratic movement made contributions, including the African National Congress, though the bulk of the work was done by members of the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) (Terreblanche 2002, 108).

The RDP stated that 'the democratic government must play a leading and enabling role in guiding the economy and the market towards reconstruction and development' (cited in Terreblanche 2002, 108), and warned that policies concentrating primarily on promoting economic growth 'would accentuate existing inequalities, perpetuate mass poverty, and soon stifle economic growth' (Terreblanche 2002, 108). Thus the government was tasked with actively integrating economic growth with economic reconstruction and social development, being ever mindful of the distortions and injustices that had become endemic during racial capitalism and white political domination (Terreblanche 2002, 108–109).

Swept to power in the 1994 election, with the RDP as its election manifesto, the ANC and its national President Nelson Mandela declared the RDP to be 'the cornerstone on which the ... GNU (Government of National Unity) is based', and 'the centerpiece of its socio-economic policy' (cited in Terreblanche 2002, 109). As Sampie Terreblanche argues, '[i]ts symbolic importance and consensus it created cannot be overemphasised, because it formed an important part of the nation-building and healing process after centuries of deep divisions and conflict' (Terreblanche 2002, 109). The RDP provided a 'bold new social democratic vision', based on a state which would take the lead in promoting major structural adjustment toward a high-wage, high-productivity economy, while at the same time providing 'basic welfare rights', including 'the right to basic needs such as shelter, food, health care, work opportunities, income security and all those aspects that promote the physical, social and emotional wellbeing of all people in our country, with special provision made for those who are unable to provide for themselves because of special problems' (cited in Seekings, Nattrass 2006, 347).

What, then, did Thabo Mbeki mean when he said in 1995 that the RDP had an 'almost biblical character'? Mbeki acknowledges that the RDP had 'established a unique national consensus on the need for prosperity, democracy, human development and the removal of poverty'. 'However', he goes on to say, 'despite its almost biblical character, the RDP Base Document did not provide us with all

the answers'. This is because, he continues, '[w]e have always known that its many many priorities and programmes need to be distilled into a series of realistic steps, guided by a long term vision and our resource constraints' (Mbeki 1995, 1). What Mbeki seems to be saying here is that the prophetic vision of the RDP, like the prophetic vision of the Bible, is not really realistic.

Within two years of its adoption, the RDP was replaced, with almost no consultation – and consultation had been the hallmark of alliance liberation politics up to this point – by a new, pro-capitalist, macro-economic policy: GEAR (Growth, Employment and Redistribution). Indeed, writes Martin Legassik, though the name of the RDP continued to be invoked by the ANC up to the 1999 election campaign and even later, 'the economic leadership of the ANC had from the start no intention of implementing the RDP where it clashed with their pro-business aims of export-orientation, trade liberalisation, fiscal austerity or privatisation' (Legassik 2007, 457).

This shift from 'racial to class apartheid', to use Patrick Bond's characterization (Bond 2005, 253–308), and the economic logic behind South Africa's thousands of 'service-delivery protests' both have a long gestation (Hart 2013, 3, 47–50). Hein Marais argues that the shift from the RDP to GEAR, though politically and economically substantive, is part of 'a longer narrative' that dates back beyond Mbeki to 'the halting efforts of the apartheid regime in the early 1980s' (Marais 2011, 137). Picking up on Marais' analysis, Gillian Hart agrees that overstating the shift from the RDP to GEAR 'downplays the extent to which alliances between corporate capital and a powerful faction of the ANC had sidelined alternatives' (Hart 2013, 181–182; see also Fine, Padayachee 2000).

Hart recognizes the role of elites, whether the elites of white capital or ANC elites, but argues that '[r]ather than *just* an elite pact – although it was in part that – the transition [from apartheid] is more usefully understood in terms of simultaneous processes of de-nationalisation and re-nationalisation that have been playing out in relation to one another in increasingly conflictual ways' (Hart 2013, 156).

Instead of focusing primarily on the ANC's adoption of conservative neoliberal macro-economic policies in 1996, I am using the term de-nationalisation to encompass the terms on which heavily concentrated corporate capital re-engaged with the increasingly financialised global economy starting in the early 1990s, and the ways in which these forces are driving increasing inequality and the generation of surplus populations. While successive ANC administrations have moved in more interventionist directions since the early 2000s and now declare themselves strongly anti-neoliberal and passionately pro-poor, the ravages wrought by processes of de-nationalisation continue apace (Hart 2013, 156).

‘Re-nationalisation’, Hart goes on to argue, ‘engages ... crucial questions about how the post-apartheid “nation” came to be produced, as well as the ongoing importance of articulations of the “nation” to the ANC’s hegemonic project’ (Hart 2013, 156–157). And while Hart does not deal with the role of religion in de-nationalization, she does note how religion has been deployed within re-nationalization. Drawing on the work of Ari Sitas (Sitas 2010), Hart argues that the transition from apartheid ‘required discursive shifts – a process of scripting the “nation” through what Sitas calls “conflicting and competing narratives of commonality and indigenerality”’ (Hart 2013, 168). Key to this scripting were the ‘inclusive discourses of the “rainbow nation” associated with Nelson Mandela’, which Sitas characterizes as ‘indigenerality’ – ‘the liberal, ecclesiastical discourse of forgiveness that made possible the negotiations to end apartheid, and found further expression in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission [TRC]’ (Hart 2013, 7). Like the ‘national question’, ‘discourses of inclusion’, Hart argues, ‘were not just imposed from above’, but had ‘popular appeal’ (Hart 2013, 7); and again the religious terrain was crucial, presided over by the enigmatic prophet Desmond Tutu, the high-priest of the ‘rainbow people of God’ (Tutu, Allen 1994, see the discussion in Hart 2013, 169–171).

I turn now to examine in some detail the Bible’s presence in public discourse on the related processes of de-nationalization and re-nationalization, with an emphasis on the former.

### 3 Mbeki’s deployment of the Bible

While we should not overstate Thabo Mbeki’s role in the shift from the RDP to GEAR, we should recognize his role in returning the Bible to the South African public political and economic realm.

Thabo Mbeki has shown a rather ambiguous attitude to the Bible in his public speeches. His Mfengu (or Fingo) missionary-Christian education in the East Cape and his love for classic literature would have made Mbeki thoroughly familiar with the Bible, but his upbringing in the staunchly African Marxist home of Govan and Epainette Mbeki, and his expulsion from his missionary-Christian school, Lovedale College – in his matric year for his active involvement in the African Students’ Organization – would have made him deeply aware of the Bible’s ambiguity. And yet an analysis of his public speeches during his tenure as Deputy President and President demonstrates a gradual shift in his attitude to the Bible and in his use of the Bible.

In a speech to the International Labor Conference in 2003, Mbeki, now the President of South Africa, develops these ideas, engaging in an extended way

with ‘the Parable of the Talents in the Biblical Gospel according to St Matthew’ (Matt 25:14–30) (Mbeki 2003). Here too the Bible and economic matters are brought into explicit conversation. He introduces the parable as follows, saying:

In the Parable of the Talents in the Biblical Gospel according to St Matthew, a money merchant, angry that one of his servants did not discharge his duties as a fund manager, by using the Talent given to him to trade in the money markets, said:

‘Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed;

Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.

Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents.

For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.

And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth’ (Mbeki 2003).

He then immediately demonstrates that he understands how this parable might be read as a critique of the money merchant, locating Africans in solidarity with the ‘unprofitable servant’, saying:

Among the hundreds of millions of the African world from which we came, as we travelled to Europe, the outer darkness into which the money merchant cast his unprofitable servant, there is much weeping and gnashing of teeth. Those who do not hear and do not see the agony, have neither ears to hear nor eyes to see.

But I am certain that even they who do not see or hear the people, have seen the great volumes of literature that describe in the greatest statistical detail and graphic language, the extent of the poverty that afflicts billions in Africa and the rest of the developing world. ....

The surfeit of information available to all of us says that we live in a world defined by a deep economic and social structural fault that mirrors the angry outburst of the money merchant of the Parable of the Talents, when he uttered the ominous curse not just to his servant, but to the poor of the world: ‘For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath’ (Mbeki 2003).

Recognizing, perhaps, that his appropriation of the Bible may seem a little out of place in such a context, he goes on to say, ‘Obviously, we have to explain what we have just said, lest we are accused of special pleading and being overly dramatic’ (Mbeki 2003). Mbeki then does just this, engaging in an extended appropriation of the biblical text in the context of economic matters.

This remarkable extended ‘exegesis’ of a biblical text demonstrates rather well Mbeki’s ambivalence towards the Bible. Like other classic literature, the Bible has the capacity to generate a surplus of meaning that exceeds its contexts

of production: meanings which have formed a reservoir within the public imagination and from which those who have an ear to hear might draw. Having been somewhat cautious about engaging this reservoir of meaning in his early public persona, Mbeki chooses on particular occasions to plunge in and exploit the capacity of the Bible to provide a shared memory. However, Mbeki's interpretation of this parable is not a typical interpretation, for he tends to read against the grain of Matthew's redaction of the parable, discerning perhaps the 'original' meaning conveyed in Jesus' telling of the parable to the indebted peasants of his day. And yet Mbeki, unlike Jesus (Herzog 1994, 150–168), is not calling for a radical revolution of the world economy from the perspective of the unprofitable servant who refuses to participate in the exploitative system of the money merchant, for he embraces elements of Matthew's appropriation of the parable, in which the money merchant might reasonably expect a return on his investment.

Mbeki's use of the Bible is a form of problematized appropriation. Appropriate he must, using the common silo that is the Bible to re-nationalize his people. But its capacity to speak to the South African public realm is restricted to its capacity to address the moral dilemmas of our day rather than to advocate for a radically different economic dispensation. Norman Gottwald is right to caution those of us who would mobilize around the Bible for economic transformation of the limits of our analogies. 'Given the reality that economic systems cannot be "imported" from the Bible to meet our needs', he says, 'the ethical force of the Bible on issues of economics will have to be perspectival and motivational rather than prescriptive and technical' (Gottwald 1993, 345). Yet this kind of force is considerable, particularly if we agree with Gottwald that '[t]he dominant voices in biblical economic ethics are emphatically communitarian, resolutely critiquing tributary power by seeking state reforms, urging resistance to oppressive power, upbraiding ruthless exploiters and speaking to the collective religious conscience of a nation with a communitarian premise at its base' (Gottwald 1993, 345). And, '[w]hen we interface communitarian biblical economic ethics with our own economic systems, the results are instructive', says Gottwald. 'The biblical premise of the primacy of communal welfare over individual achievement is much closer to the premise of socialism than to those of capitalism' (Gottwald 1993, 346). However, the Bible's sphere of influence for Mbeki is in the domain of the soul, and in its capacity to foresee, in broad terms, the moral shape of the predicaments that we must confront. For Mbeki the Bible has none of the perspectival potential that Gottwald envisages. The Bible is used, and its very use is a form of re-nationalizing, but how it is used plays a role in Mbeki's attempts to de-nationalize the South African economy.

The most marked use of the Bible by Mbeki was in the 4th Annual Nelson Mandela Lecture (Mbeki 2006a). What makes this occasion so significant is not only the substantial use he makes of the Bible, but how he creates a metaphor out of 'the RDP', dislocating it from economic matters and relocating it to moral matters. As indicated, so extensive is his use of the Bible in this lecture that he felt the need to point out in the oral presentation of the lecture that this did not mean that he was 'about to become a priest' (Mbeki 2006b). Somewhat embarrassed by his constant reference to the Bible in front of the elites who attend such events, Mbeki nevertheless crafts a lecture deeply dependent on the Bible, mindful of the masses watching television or listening to the radio, for whom the Bible is a significant and sacred resource.

In the first two-thirds of the speech he uses the Bible primarily to de-nationalize: making the argument via a dialogue between Marx and the Bible, materialism and idealism, that though materialist concerns are important, they cannot be allowed to be our only concerns. In the context of our South African challenges, he argues, the 'idealism' of the Bible (citing Genesis 3:19) 'must serve to focus our attention on issues other than the tasks of the production and distribution of material wealth' (Mbeki 2006a).

Mbeki interrupts his argument at this stage in his speech to deal overtly with his prolific use of the Bible: 'I am certain that many in this auditorium have been asking themselves the question why I have referred so insistently on the Christian Holy Scriptures. Let me explain' (Mbeki 2006b). The crux of his explanation is that in the context of South Africa's daily economic deliberations, the debate itself 'must tell us that human life is about more than the economy and therefore material considerations'. This is important, Mbeki continues, because, he says, 'I believe that as a nation we must make a special effort to understand and act on this because of what I have said already, that personal pursuit of material gain, as the beginning and end of life purpose, is already beginning to corrode our social and national cohesion' (Mbeki 2006a).

What this means, Mbeki goes on to state, is 'that when we talk of a better life for all, within the context of a shared sense of national unity and national reconciliation, we must look beyond the undoubtedly correct economic objectives our nation has set itself' (Mbeki 2006a). It is not GEAR, the government's neo-liberal capitalist macro-economic policy, Mbeki implies, that is to blame for the systems that enable the personal pursuit of material gain. It is some moral failing that requires, as he will go on to argue, a Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) of the soul. The RDP as a macro-economic policy has been rhetorically replaced by an RDP of the soul.

And it is the RDP of the soul that forms the focus of the final third of the speech, as Mbeki turns directly to re-nationalization. In the final few pages of

his speech he emphasizes South Africa's need for a 'cohesive human society' (Mbeki 2006a), praising the South African nation's gains and pointing to the dangers that persist from our past. In the case of South Africa, he concludes:

We should say that we are fortunate that we had a Nelson Mandela who made bold to give us the task to attend to the 'RDP of the soul', and lent his considerable weight to the achievement of the goal of national reconciliation and the achievement of the goal of a better life for all our people.

.... In this regard, he was conscious of the task we share as Africans to end the conflicts on our Continent, many of which are driven by the failure to effect the RDP of the African soul, to uphold the principles of Ubuntu, consciously to strive for social cohesion, human solidarity and national reconciliation' (Mbeki 2006a).

The Bible and Nelson Mandela, together with a host of other more minor sources, construct a path for the recovery of the African soul. The cost is that the Reconstruction and Development Programme has become a cipher – 'RDP'. The forced displacement of 'RDP' from the economic to the moral sphere has been accomplished, eloquently, and the Bible has played a prominent role.

The Bible is used by Mbeki both to de-nationalize and re-nationalize. Its role in re-nationalization is to claim it as a communal South African nation-building resource, but in strictly moral terms. Its role in de-nationalizing is to make it clear to adherents of South African Black Theology and South African Contextual Theology that socialist economic policies are unrealistic and that the government (together with the business sector) has the macro-economic context in hand, having decentered the market while accepting that some compliance with global capitalism is not only inevitable, but also responsible.

In all of these examples, we see a growing awareness in Mbeki that he is addressing at least two audiences: a small classically literate and vaguely liberal elite who are somewhat embarrassed by religion (as is Mbeki himself), and a large mass of religious believers, most of whom are Christians. Mbeki wants to address them both, and the Bible lends itself to this task. It remains classic literature, even for the post-religious post-colonial African elite. And it resonates with the believing religious masses, for it remains a favored and useful sacred silo (Mofokeng 1988, 40).

## 4 Mandela's 'RDP of the Soul'

Nelson Mandela has said very little about religion, in the public sphere. Honoring our religiously neutral state (van der Vyver 1999), Mandela has been cautious about saying anything too explicit about the role of religion in the public realm.

But we can find important fragments, which taken together constitute the beginning of the theological trajectory that Mbeki consolidates and deploys in the public realm.

In an address to the South African parliament on the February 5, 1999 Nelson Mandela stated: ‘Our nation needs, as [a] matter of urgency ... an “RDP of the Soul”’ (Mandela 1999a). This very brief assertion, with its deliberate allusion to the government’s inaugural (but, by this time, abandoned) macro-economic policy, the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) also has clear allusions to religion. The religious dimension becomes clearer when, five days later, Mandela reiterates this phrase in his closing address to the debate on his 1999 State of the Nation speech, claiming that ‘many sectors have resolved to join hands to work for the moral regeneration of our society, its “RDP of the soul”’ (Mandela 1999b).

Four days later he is much more explicit, having moved from the political realm to the religious realm. In a speech to a Methodist church in Langa, Cape Town, he delves more deeply into how he understands the role of religion in the public realm:

In Parliament last week we discussed the need for an RDP of the soul. These last years have shown how deep the poison of an inhuman system seeped into the fabric of our society. We have been distressed to learn that amongst those who fought for freedom are people who have turned out as corrupt or self-seeking, if not more so, than those they replace. The best efforts of government to bring lasting change for the better will fail if we do not repair the moral fabric of our society. Greed and disrespect for others; a lack of community feeling and social responsibility – these are spiritual enemies of our efforts to build a new society in which we can live in harmony with one another, in peace and prosperity. As religion fortified us in resisting oppression, we know that it can help strengthen us to carry out the mission that history has given to our generation and the next – to make a reality of our hopes for a better life for all (Mandela 1999c).

The elements of what would constitute Mbeki’s argument are apparent. Corruption and ‘self-seeking’ are individual traits, formed in part by ‘the poison of the inhuman system’ of apartheid, but unrelated to the systems of the government’s macro-economic policy. Indeed, the systems put in place by the government in order to bring about ‘lasting change’ are represented as good, but destined to fail if the religious sector does not make its contribution in repairing ‘the moral fabric of our society’.

Not only was Mandela the one who seems to have called for the return of religion to a national public role, he is also the one who has set the parameters of religion’s public role. First, it is clear that the religious sector has a primary role in working towards an ‘RDP of the Soul’. This is evident in the above address to the Methodist church in Langa and is restated, with a wider scope, in the Af-

rican National Congress's 1999 Election Manifesto, where it is stated that '[t]he struggle to build a better future for all requires, not just material transformation, but an *RDP of the Soul*. The ANC calls upon all communities of faith, to be active *partners in shaping our moral vision*, and in fostering the moral renewal of our society' (ANC 1999). And while the call for an 'RDP of the Soul' is not directed to the religious sector exclusively (Gigaba 2010), it is clearly the primary sector being addressed.

Five years later, in delivering the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Steve Biko Memorial Lecture, Nelson Mandela elaborates on what he sees as the moral substance of an 'RDP of the Soul':

We South Africans have succeeded quite admirably in putting in place policies, structures, processes and implementation procedures for the transformation and development of our country. We are widely recognised and praised for having one of the most progressive constitutions in the world. The solidity of our democratic order, with all of its democracy supporting structures and institutions, is beyond doubt. Our economic framework is sound and we are steadily making progress in bringing basic services to more and more of our people.

It is at the level of what we once referred to as the RDP of the soul that we as a nation and people might have crucially fallen behind since the attainment of democracy. The values of human solidarity that once drove our quest for a humane society seem to have been replaced, or are being threatened, by a crass materialism and pursuit of social goals of instant gratification. One of the challenges of our time, without being pietistic or moralistic, is to re-instil in the consciousness of our people that sense of human solidarity, of being in the world for one another and because of and through others (Mandela 2004).

The two paragraphs neatly separate the spheres of South African public life. At the level of social systems, we 'have succeeded quite admirably in putting in place policies, structures, processes and implementation procedures for the transformation and development of our country'. This is 'beyond doubt', Mandela insists. Singling out the economic domain, Mandela is confident that '[o]ur economic framework is sound'. It is at the level of the soul that we 'have crucially fallen behind'. And although reluctant to appear 'pietistic or moralistic', Mandela invokes these terms in order to demarcate the domain of '[o]ne of the challenges of our time'. In Mandela's conceptualization of the trajectory of an 'RDP of the Soul' is a separation between social spheres, with the legal, political, and economic on one side and the moral on the other side. The legal, political, and economic domains, the domains of the government sector, Mandela asserts, are working well. However, the moral domain – the responsibility (primarily) of the religious sector – lags behind, and requires more attention.

Significantly, in his speech to the Langa Methodist church cited above, Mandela laments 'the poison of an inhuman system' that has 'seeped into the fabric of our society'. Apartheid is recognized as a 'system', but the 'crass materialism'

referred to in his Steve Biko Lecture is a personal, not a systemic, problem. An ‘RDP of the Soul’ is therefore about a personal and a collective-national morality; it assumes that the problem lies in part with individuals who have lost their ‘sense of human solidarity’.

It would be from these fragments that Mbeki would forge his more carefully crafted argument, utilizing the Bible as one of his tools, as we have seen. And, as South Africa would see, religious rhetoric would become religious policy (West 2009).

## 5 From rhetoric to policy to...

The religious trajectory that Nelson Mandela inaugurated was consolidated by Thabo Mbeki, with the Bible as his primary tool. What Mbeki consolidated then became ANC official policy. While Mbeki’s Nelson Mandela Lecture prepared the ground rhetorically for a shift from an RDP of the economy to an RDP of the soul, the ANC’s 2007 policy document, ‘The RDP of the Soul’ (ANC 2007), turns rhetoric into policy. ‘The RDP of the Soul’ Policy Discussion Document was produced by the ANC Commission on Religious Affairs, and sets out to frame the ANC’s understanding of the role of religion in the public realm.<sup>1</sup> And though offering a broader conceptualization of both religion and morality, the Document remains within the basic trajectory invoked by Mandela and established by Mbeki. Jacob Zuma, the current President of the ANC and South Africa (West 2010), and Cyril Ramaphosa (West [forthcoming]), the heir apparent to both, have deviated very little from how religion, particularly the Bible, are used within the South African public political and economic realm.

That the Bible will be a part of our public political discourse is clear. The trajectory of how it will be used within the public realm to separate the moral and the social spheres of life is also clear. What is not clear is how ordinary Bible readers, the masses invoked by the use of the Bible, will engage with this discourse.

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<sup>1</sup> The information included on the production of this document and its reception and discussion within the ANC is based on discussions with, and correspondence from, Cedric Mayson, the Coordinator of the ANC Commission on Religious Affairs at the time. While writing this I learned of his death on May 23, 2015; hamba kahle comrade, may your yearning for a form of religion that brings liberation find us faithful. Much of the analysis and many of the arguments found in this document were presented for discussion by the ANC Commission for Religious Affairs in the November 2006 edition of *Umrabulo*, a journal of the African National Congress; see (ANC 2006).

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Peter Beyer

# Forms of Religious Communities in Global Society: Tradition, Invention, and Transformation

**Abstract:** Taking as its point of departure the idea that community refers primarily to the identification of groups of human beings, the presentation enquires into the changing relation of religion to collective identities in contemporary global society. After an introductory portion that uses world maps as illustration of the general question, a first part presents an historical analysis tracing the rise to global dominance of a peculiarly modern notion according to which there is a strong, but also contested, ambiguous, and incomplete isomorphism between state-centered and religious collectivity, in particular between (nation-)states and religions: the '(national-)societal community' and the 'religious community' are seen normally to be largely overlapping. A second part then considers how later twentieth century global developments especially have begun to strongly undermine the dominance of this assumption and its socio-structural correlates to yield an uncertain situation in which the very idea of religious community is transforming in directions that encourage much more diverse forms of collective religious identification, an increasing proportion of which are deemed to be subjective, chosen, and exhibiting fluid boundaries of religion, and relatively less inherited, attributed, kinship based, and exhibiting stable and clear boundaries. The paper concludes with empirical examples of such transformation drawn from the author's current research on religious identity in the Canadian context.

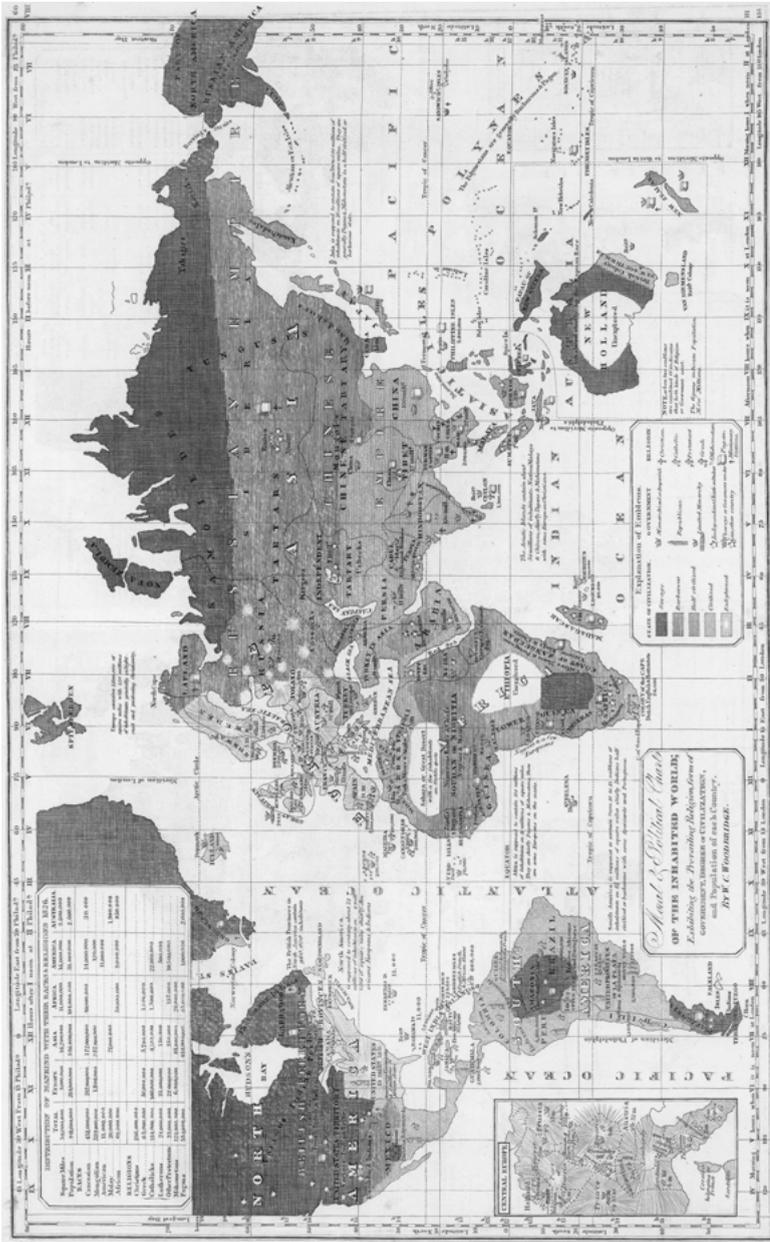
**Keywords:** religion construction, Westphalianism, globalization of religions, religion and state, religious identity, religious communities, global migration, post-Westphalianism, Canada, religious change

## 1 Introduction: 'Mapping' religious communities

There are many ways to understand what constitutes 'religious communities'. Rather than rehearse even a portion of them, I begin my analysis with one that is not only quite common but also often translates itself into and onto maps, and specifically maps of the world. Maps of the world are most frequently composed according to geography and political state boundaries, but it is not at all difficult to find ones that divide the world's land masses according to reli-

religious identities or communities. This means, in brief, that we often associate religious communities with locality, with land and territory, and this in such a way as to cover the entire globe. It is a global vision and a global understanding. One interesting source of such maps is the internet site, Wikipedia, in the article entitled, 'Major religious groups' (n.d.) and on Wikipedia more generally. This source is of interest for my purposes because, as a 'creative commons', it reproduces a kind of global public discourse knowledge that is neither 'expert' (read: scientific) knowledge nor is it simply 'common' or 'popular' knowledge. It is, one might say, 'useable' without being 'reliable', and therefore a good place to start a discussion about how 'religion', and more particularly the idea of 'religious communities' is understood and perhaps used in the contemporary global society that we all inhabit.

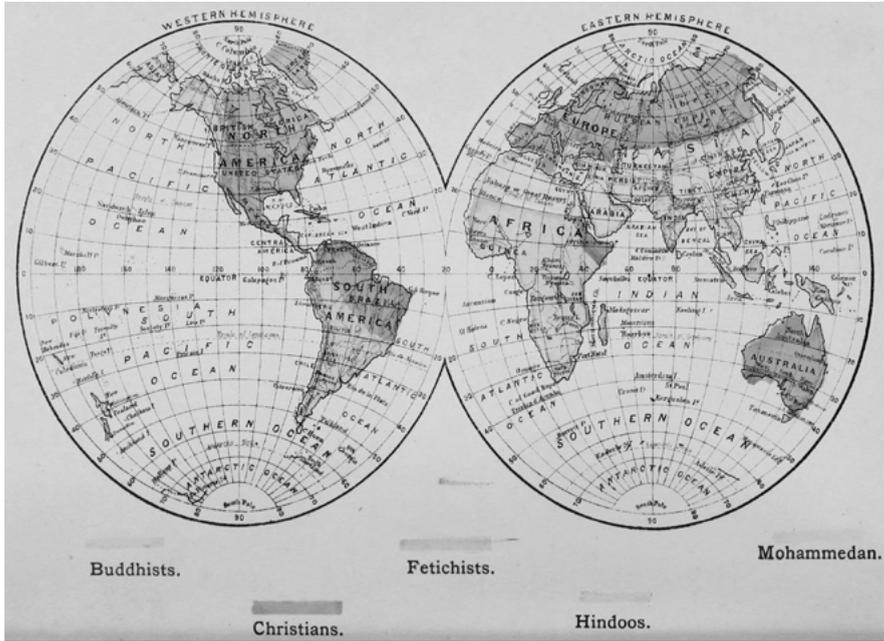
The maps in question are both contemporary and historical. The historical ones are of special interest because they offer a hint as to the development of our contemporary understandings: where these first arose, how they came about, and who was more involved in their construction. In that light, it is significant that the historical maps that one finds on Wikipedia are generally ones produced by people from Western countries with a noticeably 'missionary' impulse. To illustrate, fig. 1 shows one such map. It dates from the beginning of the nineteenth century, and not before. It is of American provenance, produced during a time when the British and European colonial empires were well on their way to developing, but had not reached the apogee of their influence. Of particular note is, first of all, the obvious: it is a map of the entire world; there is a universal impulse and vision expressed here. Then there is the title of the map: 'Moral and political chart of the inhabited world, exhibiting *the prevailing religion, form of government, degree of civilization, and population of each country*' (emphasis added). One notes that there is a substantial overlap between 'civilizational level', country or political subdivision, form of government, and religion, without these being isomorphic. One might say that the map tries to present polity, religion, culture, and typology of human bodies as strongly correlated as well as being located by geographic region. In this regard, a few details are of particular note. The 'religion' mapped here is a matter of substantive units, that is, the religions. It is also a matter of bodies, populations, and numbers of adherents. There is no effort to distinguish the two. In other words, religious collectivity or community and religion are treated as alternative ways of designating the same thing: religions *are* their collectivities of human beings or at least the two can be spoken about interchangeably. Moreover, there are only six possibilities for religious identities or religions: four of them are Christian (i.e. Christian, Catholic, Protestant [Lutheran and Other Protestant], and Greek [Eastern or Orthodox]). Then there is Islam (called Mohametan), and the residual category of



**Fig. 1:** William C. Woodbridge 1821. *Moral & Political Chart of the inhabited world, Exhibiting the Prevailing Religion, form of Government, Degree of Civilization, and Population of each Country*  
 Source: [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Major\\_religious\\_groups](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Major_religious_groups). Accessed December 18, 2015.

'Pagan'. One might say that for the map maker only Christianity and Islam count as 'defined and distinct' religions. In this regard, no part of the map that is not dominated by Christians is deemed either civilized or enlightened, the upper 'degrees of civilization'. Eastern Europe contains some 'islands' of enlightenment in a barbarian sea, and from this we can surmise that the map considers Eastern Christianity as less civilized than Western Christianity. The best the non-Christian parts of the world can do is 'half-civilized'. The map divides the world's people by race, peoples, and what it considers 'countries' or political units. Christian countries are all classified according to which version or versions of Christianity dominate there. Few have more than one. And, of perhaps equal note, one of the 'religious' categories listed is 'missionary stations' adding a kind of dynamic element to the map: Christianity's contours include its effort to spread around the world. In consonance, one of the government categories is in effect 'colonial', but in relatively few areas as of yet: the European colonial empires, like their religions, are still expanding. Outside of these classifications, most of the world is actually governed monarchically or by 'chiefs and tribes', the latter regions being mostly 'pagan'. Again the religion and the polity correlate even at the level of residual categories. Finally, the map is very focused on 'numbers' (how many millions of each category) and, in that regard, religiously the majority of the world's estimated one billion people are 'pagans'. They are the clear majority everywhere except in Europe and the Americas (where, it seems, the vast majority of the aboriginal populations are deemed to have been Christianized). Put slightly differently, most of the world's population falls outside 'the religions' and are therefore, strictly speaking, outside of expressly religious communities. 'Religion', one might say, for the American William Woodbridge in the early nineteenth century, is not (yet) global.

Another map, reproduced in fig. 2, was created by another American, the Baptist missionary, F.S. Dobbins, but toward the end of the nineteenth century, in 1883. This map is more purely 'only about religion', but it is now much more global. Unlike the previous map from the early nineteenth century, this one includes Hindus and Buddhists, meaning in effect that these religious collectivities – the map divides the religions in terms of their adherents – have moved out of the 'pagan' category. Those that have not are here but in a new residual category, called 'fetishists'. The map therefore shows the 'progress' of the 'world religions' category, whose presumed adherents now are deemed to dominate in most of the world. Only sub-Saharan Africa and portions of the Americas are seen as the domain of the residual 'fetishists'. In that regard, like the map in fig. 1, the decidedly missionary motive behind the construction of this map is quite evident, especially when one considers that it was published in a book entitled, *Error's*

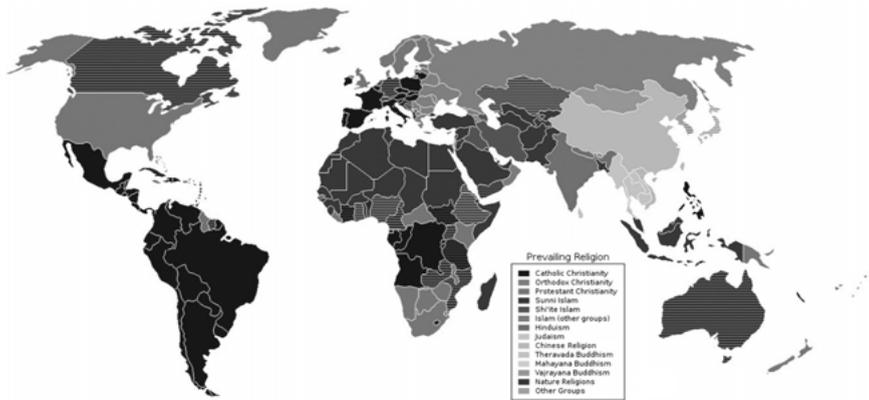


**Fig. 2:** An 1883 map of the world divided into colors representing ‘Christians, Buddhists, Hindus, Mohammedans and Pagans’ (in: Frank S. Dobbins 1883. *Error’s Chains: How Forged and Broken*. New York: Standard Publishing).

Source: [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Major\\_religious\\_groups](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Major_religious_groups). Accessed December 18, 2015

*Chains: How Forged and Broken*. It is in that sense just as much an ‘imperialist’ or ‘colonialist’ map as the previous one.

If we move now to the present era, the next two maps portray a remarkable completion of the logic inherent in these first two. They date from the beginning of the twenty-first century and their provenance is less certain. They are, however, two of many such maps that one can find both on Wikipedia and the Internet more generally. Regarding the first (see fig. 3), the basic structure of that peculiarly post-World War II political division of the entire world into (sovereign) states is noteworthy: extremely few ‘colonies’ are left and all of the world’s land mass belongs to one or another of these states with, moreover, very precise (and very stable since the late 1940s) boundaries. It is onto this political division of the world that the ‘religions’ are now mapped; and this is more or less the case for the vast majority of these sorts of maps that one can find so easily in this public domain. On this map of ‘Prevailing world religions’ – one notes that this is not the same as ‘dominant’ – the religions ‘prevail’, not just in regions, but within the precise boundaries of these states. Mostly each state is deemed



**Fig. 3:** Predominant religions of the world, mapped by state.

The original uploader was LilTeK21 at English Wikipedia

Source: [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Major\\_religious\\_groups](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Major_religious_groups). Accessed December 18, 2015

to have only one ‘prevailing religion’, and at most two. Of note as well is that the ‘residual’ category, which is here either ‘other’ (restricted to North Korea [Juche] and Japan [Shinto]) or ‘nature religions’ (only Madagascar), is now deemed prevailing in very few places. For this map, the ‘world religions’ now prevail globally, their numbers have increased slightly and some other world religions beside Christianity are now recorded according to their basic subdivisions.

The last map, in fig. 4, introduces a number of important ambiguities into the picture, and in this regard shows interesting continuities with the nineteenth century maps. First, while maintaining the state boundaries as basic, it avoids ideas like ‘prevailing religion’ by introducing shading to show what we might call ‘degrees of prevalence or dominance’ and by using ‘provincial’ boundaries wherever possible in order to further track this variation in dominance or prevalence. Second, it seems thereby implicitly to introduce the idea of ‘no religion’, the possibility of people being identified with ‘none of the religions’, by using lighter shades. It does not, however, also seem to include the idea of being ‘less religious’, of the category of religion applying ‘more or less’. People are, it seems, either inside or outside the religious collectivities. Third, this map appears to revert a bit to the early nineteenth century vision of the first map in which there are really only two religions: magenta for Christian and cyan for Muslim. The category of ‘pagan’ is replaced with ‘other religions’, in yellow. One notes that Judaism is represented, not by a different color, but as a combination of the ‘Christian’ and the ‘Muslim’ color.



**Fig. 4:** Map showing the distribution of world religions by country/state, and by smaller administrative regions for the largest countries (China, India, Russia, United States). % of MAGENTA stands for nominal adherents of Christianity, % of CYAN stands for nominal adherents of Islam, % of YELLOW stands for nominal adherents of Buddhism, Chinese religions, Hinduism and indigenous religions.

Source: [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Major\\_religious\\_groups](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Major_religious_groups). Accessed December 18, 2015

I have begun the analysis with a look at these world maps depicting the distribution of religions not because they somehow represent in some convincing fashion the ‘way things are’ or the ‘way things were’, let alone how they ‘ought to be’. They are in fact just someone’s idea or projection from a given place and a given time; they are neither authoritative nor necessarily even all that convincing. Yet they are by that token also not simply ‘wrong’ or ‘illusory’, although definitely invented and constructed. Instead, what they offer is a visual way of entering the question of religious communities in the contemporary world, of religious collectivities in today’s global society. Going further, they are visual representations of an important part of the main arguments I want to make concerning the history, the construction, and the transformation of understandings of religious collectivities or communities in our world, and of the institutional, structural, and lived realities of those religions and religious collectivities for a great many, perhaps most, but by no means all, of the people and societal regions of the world today. In particular, there are four aspects of these maps that are important for the analysis that follows. First, all these maps elide the units called ‘religions’ and the sets of human beings that are identified with those religions, what we often refer to as the religious communities. Second, each of them tries to map religious collectivities onto geography. Together they show a certain consistency of association of territory, people, and religion; even though they thereby also reveal ambiguity, a kind of taken-for-granted po-

sition that is not quite sure of itself. Third, these mappings change over time and vary from one attempt to another; that is part of the ambiguity. Finally, fourth, the apogee of precision in this regard is presented on the third map, a very recent one; but there is also the odd continuity of the first and last maps with regard to ‘which religions really count here’, another ambiguity.

Another characteristic of the ‘religion’ that these maps present, while perhaps more implicit, is nonetheless just as important. This is the assumption that religion, and therefore religious communities, are ‘foundational’. Religious identity is a fundamental identity that can and does characterize entire states, regions, societies, as well as individual people. It is not the only such foundational characteristic, however. Another is quite evidently political or ‘national’ identity. The entire world, without remainder, is divided into collectivities whose fundamental distinguishing features – what differentiates one from the another – include religion and polity.

## **2 The historical construction of religions: a narrative**

From this starting point, I now unpack this somewhat odd combination of assumptions as portrayed in these maps, and this through an historical analysis of how we got to this point. A key assumption in doing so is that these portrayals of seeing and doing religion did not have to be this way; what we mean by religion is not anything essential and particular, simply ‘out there’ challenging us to observe it in the way that it is. Religion, to arrive at this point, had to be socially and consciously – which is to say contingently – constructed that way. And this has been a more or less accidental outcome of recent and not so recent history. As such, like all social constructions, it will be open to contestation, implicated in the nexus of power relations that are subject to challenge, and therefore could be otherwise and could change over time.

One could start the historical narrative at almost any time and any place, because as the maps pretend, the development eventually is supposed to cover the entire globe. Each region of the world will therefore have its own history in this regard, its own path-dependent and long-term journey. In addition, the story will be necessarily selective, since we know what we are looking for: the antecedents of a particular development whose outcome we know. Saying this is also another way of pointing to the contingency of the development, meaning among other things that there is really no way of telling in early parts of the history in what direction things were going to move thereafter. The history of development

is accidental and does not follow some sort of internal, teleological logic that simply ‘works itself out’.

Therefore, for practical purposes, we can start with that ‘religion’ that we now call Christianity, already in its early history. The key Christian idea, present from very early on, is the idea of ‘church’ or ‘ecclesia’. This is a notion that the Christian movement appropriated and developed early on and it designated from early on the ‘community’, the collectivity of Christian followers, meaning that the idea of being Christian included a communal dimension which was deemed defining. In addition, however, the Christian idea of church also carried from relatively early on an organizational meaning: the Christian communities were organized communities, under a progressively more defined leadership and with normative structures that defined who was inside and who was outside the community. The possibility of being considered a heretic or a pagan/heathen occurred early in this development. Being a Christian was also a totalizing idea: it involved all of a person’s life and not just a partial identity beside others. In that regard, and even more important, being Christian, as a deliberately religious identity, abstracted from other, what we might call ‘cultural’ or ‘ethnic’, identities: in that sense it could be, and was seen as, overarching all these other possible identities, as opposed to being subordinate to them. This was distinct from the way Jews thought about themselves – and much of this development was of course modeled on and distinguished itself expressly from the way Jews identified their collectivity and collectivities – or, even today to a significant extent, the way being Hindu often still carries simultaneously a ‘religious’ and a ‘cultural’ meaning (cf. Dalmia, von Stietencron 1995). Not surprisingly, therefore, we can witness how, in the late Roman Empire period, when the Christian religion had become the official as well as increasingly the practical religion of the empire, the already implicit idea solidified that the Christian religion and thereby the Christian community was one such religion beside others – albeit the only ‘true’ one – the others being designated as Jewish and Pagan (Boyarin 2007).

During roughly the same era, another movement arose and developed which incorporated a similar idea, and that is Islam. Although this movement may have begun more as a religion of the Arabs, of a, broadly speaking, cultural identity, we find that here as well it soon developed in this same direction as a religious community – here designated by the word ‘*ummah*’ –, a societal grouping defined in terms of its religion, its ‘*din*’ (Gardet 1960 [1980]), along with the understanding that there were other ‘*din*’: notably and unsurprisingly, the Jewish and Christian ones. Like the Christians, moreover, the Muslims also defined themselves over and against these other religions, which included a category corresponding to ‘pagans’, who were basically without religion or the practitioners of an anti-religion: here simply infidels who could and should become members

of the religion. In the Islamic case, a critical aspect of the process is even clearer than it is in the Christian case: the early development depended in part on the close association of the religious religion with political empire, the Roman one(s) in the case of Christianity and, of course, the Muslim empires in the case of Islam. In neither case, however, is the development dependent on empire. It is still 'about' religion. Nonetheless, this feature shows how these very much self-identified religious communities already carried with them a practical territorial reference: they were territorially based to a large extent, even if they were not also what we today might call culturally specific.

Outside the Christian and Islamic spheres, I am aware of no other instance of this kind of religion formation in other parts of the world during this era, essentially before the end of the first millennium CE. This is a way of saying that the Christian and Islamic developments were not simply a further expression of the advent of the so-called Axial Age (Eisenstadt 1986). Religions like these two had not developed already in the middle of the millennium before the Common Era, although the traditions out of which they eventually did develop will have seen certain critical developments, and maybe even arguably starting points, during those centuries. In this context, it is to be noted that the Buddhist idea of 'sangha' is not a parallel development since it quite specifically included only the monastics and not also the laity as was the case in the Christian and Islamic cases.

Jumping ahead now, to several hundred years later, the scene of the narrative, again somewhat but not entirely arbitrarily, shifts to Christian Western Europe. What is rather unprecedented, but also highly consequential in this case, is that the Christian religion, as what one might call a societal collectivity, continues to develop in spite of the gradual disappearance of its former imperial political carrier, the Roman Empire, whether eastern or western. This is not the case in the (still) core Islamic areas, where empire – even if not single and united – continues as a very important political substratum for the religion. This is where the organized feature of the Christian idea of 'church' takes on critical importance, since it was the church organization that carried on the possibility of identifying the Christian collectivity as foundational to the identity of an entire regional society, only partially aided by political structures. Thus did the Christian church, now seen primarily as the organization, develop (until at least the eleventh century at the time of the so-called papal revolution) as both a religious and, increasingly, as a quasi-state structure, with something close to state pretensions, as exemplified in the idea that the church was an entire and distinct society or 'societas' (Berman 1983). This society of the church, however, conceiving of and structuring itself as expressly religious, understood itself as still needing political structures in the form of the 'secular' arm of the

political state. But this arm not only did not have to be unified as the church had to be, it did not have to be and indeed could not be identified with the church: the two could be, and indeed were, conceived to be necessarily differentiated – two ‘swords’, each a *societas perfecta*. This idea of differentiation is critical. Of particular note, in this regard, is that this era in Western European society also saw the beginnings of the development of more than one of these ‘secular’ spheres, notably one for science, especially in the universities (Huff 2003), for law (Berman 1983; Berman 2006), and somewhat later especially for capitalist economy (Wallerstein 1974). Still, the society as a whole was, if at all, identified through the idea of religious collectivity as Christendom, somewhat coterminous with the geographical designation of Europe, which during this time meant mostly Western Europe (cf. Cantor 1993, chapter 7). As this last expression indicates, the religious designation did not also have a uniform political one, polities during this time increasingly and contestably being structured as multiple states, kingdoms, etc. within Europe; Christendom was not a political so much as a cultural, and by implication a religiously designated, territory.

The early modern revolutions, generally beginning with the Protestant Reformation but extending until the end of the seventeenth century, then brought a subtle but highly significant change in this situation. The main sections of the Protestant Reformation sought to ‘purify’ religion, at least in the sense of making the ‘church’ less ‘of this world’, thereby contradicting the direction the main Roman Church had taken. In this sense the Reformers were working toward a clearer differentiation of religion from the, by contrast, ‘secular’ sphere. Yet in so doing, they did not deny the ‘foundational’ quality of religion, but rather sought the transfer of the ‘worldly’ or ‘secular’ functions of religion to precisely that secular sphere, namely the state, law, and one could argue to the universities and to economic enterprise. In this development therefore, it is as much the ‘princes’, the ‘lawyers’, the ‘businessmen’ and the ‘scholars’ who were the movers of the revolution that the Protestant Reformation represented as it was the religious Reformers themselves. In other words, the ‘princes’ did not so much ‘hijack’ the Reformation to get Rome and the Emperor ‘off their backs’ as they were the executors of the Reformation in the ‘secular’ realm. Through the Counter- or Catholic Reformation, the Roman church tried to counter this development in those parts of Europe that did not ‘go Protestant’, but the result over the longer period was not that different given that the states in these areas also abrogated to themselves more of the functions that the church had claimed for itself in the preceding period. The states moved to becoming themselves a more and more ‘foundational’ sphere, like religion and with religion, but also differentiated from religion.

Under the circumstances, this Reformation eventuated first of all in a very protracted period of violence, within states, between states, and only in that context between Reformers and Catholics. The upshot of the development was presaged, symbolized, and to some extent embodied in the eventual solution to the violence as expressed in the Peace of Augsburg in the sixteenth, and then the Peace of Westphalia in the seventeenth, century. These agreements contained a double feature which in effect reordered the relation between the two sides of the explicit and implicit distinction that informed the entire development: the distinction between the ‘religious’ and the ‘secular’. As expressed and intimated in that famous phrase, *cuius regio, eius religio*, the state plurality that these peace agreements helped on its way to solidification, the state ‘sovereignty’ that they envisaged, was to be paralleled by a more or less coordinated religious plurality, with the states, in the form of their rulers, determining which ‘religion’ would ‘reign’ in which ‘realm’. One notes the peculiarity of this arrangement or attempted arrangement. There was a plurality of more or less arbitrary political units, which were seen as ‘sovereign’, which means and meant legitimately distinct and not subordinate to some overarching political unit, perhaps as represented by an empire with its emperor. These states were to be sufficiently foundational that they should and could determine which version of religious foundationalism they would embody, the options in this regard also being limited to equally more or less arbitrary, but now plural, religious units, all (Western) Christian: the states could choose to be Calvinist, Lutheran, or Catholic. England then added its own somewhat hybrid version to this list. The addition of the Eastern Christian possibilities, for practical reasons, had to await the nineteenth century, even though the basic plural structure of the Eastern Churches was already there to be eventually appropriated for this purpose (Roudometof 2014). In sum then, these ‘Westphalian’ solutions effected double, and in both cases plural, religious and political foundationalisms, which were to be more or less parallel, if not exactly isomorphic, since, although each political unit was to be designated by a single religious identity – something which in practical fact never quite happened in most of the states – the religions or confessions in fact followed different boundaries, each being or becoming the ‘prevailing’ religion of more than one state, even to some extent the Anglican version. Westphalian coordination of this sort did not negate differentiation of religion and polity: it was a way of structuring it further, of expressing and developing it.

At this point, it must be pointed out that these Western European developments were from very early on increasingly ‘not just Western European’. The sixteenth century, besides being the century of the Reformations, was also the century in which European imperial expansion had its real beginnings. While these

two developments were not the same thing, they occurred together and mutually conditioned each other. Therefore, what I am calling the global appropriation – always including adaptation or particularization – of this initially European development with regard to state and religion began early. It was quickly appropriated for the colonial territories that some European powers acquired in the so-called ‘New World’, eventually to include not only the Americas, but also Australasia and parts of southern Africa and, if we want to extend it, the contiguous expanding Russian empire into most of northern Asia. These ‘settler’ society examples are important because they show that such appropriation was never simply a diffusion of things European, but rather at the same time a transformation and development, different in the various cases. The examples of North American and eventually Australasian ‘denominationalism’ – the division of the religious domain into organized and distinct units – are particularly telling of how such appropriation could work, although here cannot be the place to go into detail of what exactly this means.

In other parts of the world, the appropriation and transformation was just as and even more complicated. Particular examples include the consolidation and eventual transformation (reform!) of Islam in its various contiguous territories, the nineteenth and twentieth centuries’ constructions of Hinduism in the process of eventual state formation in South Asia, and what I have elsewhere called the appropriation through partial refusal of the whole idea (Beyer 2006, ch. 5) in East Asian parts. This manifests itself today in the fact that, measured internally by the states concerned, these countries are the only ones in the world where from half to the vast majority of people today consider themselves to be of ‘no religion’, even though they have a corresponding understanding of what that word means. The East Asian states, in the process of their modern re-formation, have a complicated history of trying out different, but not unrelated, approaches, generating such various foundational quasi-religious ideologies and practical programs as, for instance, State Shinto in Japan and Maoism in China.

Out of this accidental, complex, and ambiguous development since the sixteenth century, probably reaching a high point or apogee in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, has emerged what I have been calling a ‘Westphalian’ modeling of religion and polity (Beyer 2012). Briefly put, this modeling differentiates religions and states, not simply from each other, but in relation to each other while maintaining and developing the difference. An important intermediary or connecting idea in this process has been that of a kind of double collectivity, which manifests itself in a double foundationalism. It is through the collectivity of adherents or citizens that the actual modeling has taken place. In other words, the idea of peoples or nations, collectivities of persons, has come to act as the intermediary by which two different socio-structural entities, reli-

gions and states, are carried. Both religions and states have come to be seen as particular entities, but also as entities embodied horizontally by the persons that are deemed to belong to them and that think of themselves as belonging to them. Hence results the idea that a (nation-) state has a dominant nation that it represents, usually carrying the same name as the state itself; but it also has a 'prevailing' religion which consists of most of the same people, the adherents, the believers, the members, or similar term. Such modeling leaves room for a great many variations, because it is not and never was complete or precise. It never was a question of isomorphism of political and religious foundationalisms. And therefore one can conclude from the variations either that by the twentieth century there were few exceptions or a great many, because no particular way that a particular state carried out this modeling has become, or ever has been, normative or, in turn, the dominant model for all the others.

At the core of this Westphalian modeling are thus the following ideas: each state is sovereign in its own precisely defined territory and is characterized by a single dominant collectivity, usually called a nation, as well as, 'incidentally' or not depending on the particular understanding, a typical or 'prevailing' religion or 'confession' of a religion, sometimes two or a very limited number of religions or confessions. Furthermore, as a reflection of the foundationalism of each quality (polity and religion), mediated through the people who compose the two foundational collectivities, each person 'normally' will only have one of each of the two types of belonging: they will be members or citizens of one and only one state, national community or nation, and they will be members or adherents or practitioners of one and only one religion or subdivision like a confession. The religious identity will in most cases be the one associated with the state in question, but not always. Therefore, peoples (religious or political) will have states that culturally embody and allow for the expression of a typical or national way of life. Religions, largely overlapping but not isomorphic, will also be ways of life and each of these communities, the religious community and the national community, will be cohesive and integrated and thereby 'proper', solid, stable, dynamic or simply put, healthy.

Having so stated this thesis, it must also be qualified because, as I have been emphasizing from the outset of the analysis, while there has definitely been this pattern of religions formation in relation with polity or state formation, there has also always been much more going on, for most of which there is not sufficient space for further discussion here. Two ways of now approaching this 'much more going on' are, however, on the one hand, to look at what one can call the question of religious minorities, and on the other, to examine religions under the rubric of globalization and the globalization of religions specifically.

The idea that there are such things as religious minorities is quite evidently a key part of the picture that I have been painting: creating ‘dominant’ religions implies the comparative existence of other religions that are not dominant and, using the collectivity principle of what constitutes a religion, there will therefore also always be religious minorities. This is not just or even primarily in a numerical sense of counting heads, but more importantly in a ‘political’ sense of being marginalized, de-privileged, and even ‘not belonging’ (here). Correspondingly, as the Westphalian system of states with their dominant religions or dominant religious communities built itself up around the world over the last centuries, each state thereby also created within itself, by default, religious minorities. In a real sense, these religious minorities were indicative both of the arbitrariness of this way of doing things as well as its ambiguity and indeed internal contradiction. Such minorities could be ‘confessional’: divisions of the dominant religion that do not ‘belong’ in the particular state (but may or may not belong in another state). They could also be minorities of other recognized religions. Whatever the case, within the Westphalian logic, they called for an orientation or policy with respect to them, thereby introducing, again almost by default, the idea of ‘toleration’ (or no toleration). Much like this word carries a certain negative connotation, it reflects the fact that in many cases, these minorities were viewed in their various states in at best a neutral fashion, and often in a very negative one, being called by such monikers as ‘dissenters’, ‘sectarians’, or even ‘heretics’. One might even see the idea that religions have denominations or confessions as itself an indicator of the constant insufficiency or instability of this way of conceiving and structuring what we call ‘religion’. Nonetheless, as this last example shows, the religious minorities, their idea and their concrete reality in states, were also an outcome of the logic of the system, a constant ‘problem’ or ‘question’ perhaps, but not as such a symptom of the undoing of Westphalianism or of its nonexistence in the first place.

### **3 The reconstruction of the religious system: a post-Westphalian condition**

The globalization of religions introduces another complexification. In this context, one can again refer to the first two maps discussed above, the ones from the nineteenth century drawn up by Christian Americans with an implicit or explicit ‘missionary’ bias (figs. 1 and 2). Those maps show not just the ‘imperialistic’ or ‘colonialist’ aspect of the construction of these worldwide religious and political systems, but also implicitly point to the fact, already adumbrated

more than once, that religious boundaries – the boundaries of the religions, the boundaries of their respective collectivities – were not and never were simply co-terminous with political boundaries, even if the social construction of these religions did to a real extent depend on the simultaneous construction of the political entities, especially the modern states. This globalization of religions, in the sense of global spread, was mostly an affair of the late eighteenth to twenty-first centuries; and in its earlier stages it was mostly, but not entirely, a case of the spread of one particular religion, namely Christianity and its various ‘confessions’. The more partial globalization of Islam has its main temporal center of gravity before this time, but also has a strong nineteenth and twentieth century history (see e.g. Lapidus 1988).

The more recent chapters of this story, especially from the late twentieth and into the twenty-first centuries, are seeing a much more complete geographic globalization of most of the religions out of their erstwhile dominant geographic heartlands; so much so that this development has brought about a new and increasingly dominant concern among observers of the scene, especially including academic or scientific observers, with the question of ‘religious diversity’ (see e.g. Meister 2011). This concern with religious diversity is not only a reflection of the geographic globalization of religions (including of course the physical displacement of their ‘adherents’ through global migration). It is also a reflection of the complexity of the story that I have presented here in greatly simplified form. What has been going on in the development of religions over the last few centuries is in fact not just the Westphalian patterns and modeling. There have always been developments in the religious domain that have not been subsumed in this Westphalian direction. This is the case not just with respect to minorities, but also with respect to developments that did not and do not follow the boundaries of the religions. These can perhaps be subsumed under such terms as ‘hybridizations’ – which in many cases simply resulted in the construction of more religions, but not always – and what one might call ‘doing religion’ differently, even though this ‘differently’ might not always be recognized or understood or enacted as religion or one of the religions by its carriers or other observers. This points to the idea and the possibility that current phases in the historical process of globalization may actually be undermining the dominance of the Westphalianism that I have been attempting to describe.

Above all, the globalization of religions loosens – but does not undo – the Westphalian assumptions about the coordination of boundaries: religious and political or societal. It does so especially in the sense that ‘diaspora’ or non-‘heartland’ manifestations of any given religion are not thereby less authentic, legitimate, or recognized by virtue of being reproduced outside those countries with which a given religion is strongly associated under the Westphalian as-

assumptions (Beyer 1998). What this multiplication of centers of authenticity – and authority – accomplishes is that it challenges above all the ‘foundational’ assumptions attributed to religion, as more religions locate in more places, especially those locations not hitherto associated with them in Westphalian fashion. Belonging to a particular religion thereby comes to appear more and more ‘voluntary’ in the sense of optional for ‘national societal’ membership. As more and more religions establish a presence in more and more countries, it can become more and more apparent that there need be no close association between a particular religion, or at least a very small number of them, and the ‘health’ of a particular society. Indeed the conviction that ‘national societies need to be nationally integrated’ itself can come under challenge. As Roland Robertson puts it, this sort of ‘relativization’ of identities – at the national and by extension also at the personal, individual level – is in fact a critical aspect or consequence of more recent globalization (Robertson 1992). Intensifying communicative links among all parts of the globe present a challenge to all particular local/national identities, without thereby necessarily or even strongly undermining their possibility. Such particular identities need, however, to be rethought and reconstructed over time. I hypothesize that this sort of challenge is one that we are currently undergoing all around the world. Its outcome, of course, is not in the least bit determined, any more than the contingent developments of earlier phases of globalization were in some teleological sense determined by essential characteristics of the historical globalization process.

What consequences would this relativization have for religious communities or collectivities? While the contingency of this process disallows us from predicting anything with any confidence, a few aspects can probably be foreseen. First, overall, it likely will mean that the self-conception of most religions and their religious communities will become more and more simply global, all the while still recognizing historical centers of gravity in these self-conceptions. The ‘houses’ or ‘doms’ of the religions may well trend more to becoming simply global, all the while recognizing an increasing number of ‘local’ variations, which do not necessarily have to be physically all that localized. This may mean not the reduction of subdivisions, of ‘confessions’, but rather their multiplication as the ‘discipline’ of the boundaries of regions and states becomes more and more attenuated. Religious communities should thereby become more multi-local, transnational, and global. This may eventuate into something like what José Casanova probably means by ‘global denominationalism’ (Casanova 2010).

Nonetheless, this new situation does not mean that the possibility of ‘national religious communities’ in Westphalian style cannot or will not continue. They may weaken, they may strengthen; the latter possibility demonstrated and forecast, for instance, in the late twentieth century rise and success of

quite a number of religio-political movements at the state level: movements intent on reasserting the national society/national religion bond, even under the guise of seeming to question the legitimacy of the (secular) nation-state (cf. Juergensmeyer 1993; Juergensmeyer 2008). In addition, however, and somewhat in contrast to these two possible trends, we might also foresee the greater multiplication of small, face-to-face and local religious communities that make little reference to either the national state or the global societal levels. These sorts of communities have continued to exist all along in this historical process, but it may be that the comparative decline of the Westphalian arrangements, at least in terms of being the prevailing and relatively unquestioned pattern, will make these micro-communities both much more common and much more visible to us as observers.

More generally, under the heading of speculative ‘post-Westphalian’ trends, attendant upon this more intense and different globalization that we have been experiencing in the course of the last few decades, there are a few other developments in the realm of religious communities that we might intimate. As the Westphalian model loses its dominance – but certainly not its concrete possibility and presence in most if not all areas of the world – it may be that not so much entirely new trends will develop, but possibilities that have been marginalized hitherto will become more prominent. One of these is the further development of what one might call (local) religious cultures, which is to say ways of doing what we call religion that have not been much observed as religion, or at least not as religious, whether by outsiders or insiders. The cogent critique of the idea of religion, and the world religions especially (see e.g. Masuzawa 2005; Mendieta 2001; Peterson, Walhof 2002), points in this direction, namely that religion does not have to work this way, and that there is much in all societies that is perhaps religious but does not get observed nor structure itself as differentiated religion. Such a trend might include the so-called ‘rise of spirituality’, about which much has been written lately (e.g. Batstone 2001; Heelas et al. 2005; Houtman, Aupers 2007), the greater prominence of what sometimes get called the ‘marginally religious’, or even the so-called ‘religious nones’: people who may ‘belong’ to a religious community or not, but who in any case do not perform much that would reproduce the religions, or do so only very occasionally (Davie 1993; Kosmin 2008; Lim, MacGregor, Putnam 2010). Other trends might be even more interesting. Two in particular, about which there is currently a growing and controversial literature, are what are often called the ‘consumerization’ of religion and the ‘mediatization’ of religion (Campbell 2010; Gauthier, Martikainen 2013a; Gauthier, Martikainen 2013b). This is religion that genuinely deviates from the hitherto dominant Westphalian forms (centered on such things as exclusive and single religion involvement and identification) to make the

practice of religion resemble more the consumption of products and services in a marketplace rather than the faithful reproduction of an often national religious community with clear boundaries and standard orthodoxies, orthopraxies, and authorities. This is religion less like patriotism and more like shopping. Or it could be religion that takes a form resembling more closely a mediated performance, including virtual on-line religion that transfers its collective structure to the virtual sphere and, by that token, also to the highly individualized and perhaps even anonymous level (Dawson, Cowan 2004). Again, this would be religion less like disciplined, mobilized, and patriotic engagement and more like episodic, if still very serious and perhaps very regular, program loyalty and dedicated ‘watching’: moving from regular attendee to regular audience, as it were.

## **4 Post-Westphalian structuring of religion: some Canadian research**

These observations are admittedly rather speculative, but I think there is at least room for seeing these more recent developments, with intimations and starting points often much earlier in recent history, as signs of changing times when it comes to the imagining and structuring of religion, religions, and religious collectivities or communities. To put flesh on these observations in a more concrete fashion, I want now, in a final section, to look at some of my own research results on these and related questions in Canada. To do this, I have to begin by presenting the extent to which Canada has formed a very particular example of all that I have been talking about, both with respect to the historical construction of Westphalian arrangements, and with respect to the current and ongoing challenging of those arrangements in light of the global developments I have just discussed.

Canada as a country and a (nation)-state is a rather clear outcome and expression of modern globalization. It is a ‘settler’ society, the product especially of seventeenth to twentieth century European migration of people, power, and understandings. It has also been a very Westphalian state, with Protestant and Catholic forms of Christianity dominating in every way, albeit not as formally ‘established’ religion after the mid-nineteenth century. In the settlement process, people who were culturally and religiously ‘too different’ were more or less excluded, kept out, and the ‘difference’ represented by indigenous peoples was overrun and actively suppressed, at least until the late twentieth century. Since the 1960s, things have changed, not totally, but gradually and significantly.

After 1967 the doors to truly global migration were opened with, among other effects, an attendant increase in religious diversity: both intra-Christian diversity and in terms of the world religions. The country officially and popularly considers itself multicultural and multi-religious, and recognizing and incorporating the difference of indigenous peoples has increasingly become an important priority. The Canadian province of Quebec is somewhat of an exception, but more as a variation on these themes than a clearly different case.

In order to try to better understand aspects of this situation of transformation, my colleagues and I have been conducting research primarily among the second generations of post-1970 immigrants, a portion of the population that can arguably be seen as the embodiment of these changes to the extent that they are happening: the second generation is religiously and culturally very diverse, does not reflect the old Westphalian Canada, and yet is 'from here'. In the Canadian case they are also relatively young, having been born only after 1970. Together with the larger post-1970 cohort, which we have also begun researching on the same basis, they are arguably what Canada is becoming. The question we asked of all of them is, how are they expressing religion in the context of a factually increasingly multicultural Canada?

In very summary fashion, this 'up and coming' Canada regards the country as multicultural in its fundamental identity, and by that token also multi-religious, this latter in two senses. First, while recognizing both the historical dominance of Christianity in Canada, and the continuing ways in which this religion is still in some ways privileged as a result, generally the new generations consider that all religions are, or are becoming, increasingly at home in Canada, including the religion that each of them may be practicing. That is also and even especially the case for non-Christian religions. Second, however, most members of the generation also recognize Canada as a now secular country in which religion, in whatever form or expression, is (and for most, should be) a private and community affair. National identity and religious identity have little to do with one another except, perhaps, in so far as to be Canadian is to be diverse. This diversity includes the fact that one does not have to be religious at all: that identities like atheist, spiritual and not religious, and marginally/eclectically religious are just as Canadian as being Christian (in increasing varieties), Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist or 'whatever'. It is also entirely possible and acceptable to be multi-religious in whatever way one understands this idea. In this context, large, let alone overarching, institutional religious structures are not part of the picture. There is not, or at least should not be, any dominant religion or even a dominance of religion outside personal and community life. Matters are somewhat different in Quebec, but only to the extent that the 'national' iden-

tity here is still strongly a French-speaking cultural identity that includes secularism (*laïcité*) and a continuing cultural presence of Catholic public symbols.

## 5 Conclusion

Overall, one can conclude from this research that religious communities in Canada – at least to the extent revealed among these younger generations – are following the trend toward smaller, more diverse, and horizontal egalitarian communities, in contradistinction to large, dominant, and authoritatively hierarchical communities that include a national, or even a subnational, religious community to which all but minorities putatively belong. This is an example of a post-Westphalian condition: one that is rapidly succeeding a previously Westphalian condition of, if not a Christian Canada with an established religion, then certainly one whose self-identity was foundationally Christian with a ‘shadow establishment’ (Martin 2000).

Canada is in global context, of course, just one country, and a demographically rather small one at that. Nonetheless, I would suggest that it is one that at least presents one variation on what is a larger, even global, trend toward the increase of post-Westphalian circumstances when it comes to the role, form, and importance of religious communities. The ‘old’ Westphalian forms are very much still possible and actual in many parts of the world, but I would argue that they are no longer the prevailing trend to which there are some exceptions. Rather, the exceptions have not just become the rule, the rule is that all is exception, and that we have entered a fluid and uncertain era in the global formation of religions, the religious, and religious communities.

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# Subversive Spirituality: Political Contributions of Ancestral Cosmologies Decolonizing Religious Beliefs

**Abstract:** References to an indigenous spirituality pervade contemporary Meso-american socio-political movements' struggles. Indigenous peoples are preserving and recreating ancient traditions through the sociopolitical changes in which they are immersed. Most of their demands, as well as their criticism of colonialism, are rooted in ancestral cosmologies. A review of the demands and critiques expressed at the key meeting *First Indigenous Women's Summit of the Americas* are analyzed here. Salient philosophical and epistemological underpinnings will be analyzed taking as a source the diverse discourses, live presentations as well as publications emerging from this ground-breaking first indigenous women's meeting in Oaxaca, Mexico.

**Keywords:** gender duality, equilibrium, gender fluidity, embodied thought, collectivity, earth interconnectedness, indigenous spirituality, eco-feminist theology, decolonizing epistemology

The indigenous women's movement has started to propose its own 'indigenous spirituality.' The basic documents, final declarations, and collective proposals from the *First Indigenous Women's Summit of the Americas*, as well as other key meetings, reveal an indigenous spiritual component that differs from the hegemonic influences of the largely Christian, Catholic background of the women's respective countries. The principles of this indigenous spirituality also depart from the more recent influences of feminist and Latin American eco-feminist liberation theologies. The participants' discourses, live presentations, and addresses brought to light other expressions of their religious backgrounds.

Drawing on several years of interaction and work with women in Mexico's indigenous worlds, my intention in this essay is to systematize the principles that have begun to emerge from a distinctive cosmivision and cosmology. Religious references to an indigenous spirituality are inspired by ancestral traditions re-created today as the women struggle for social justice. The inspiration for their fight for social justice is often anchored in these beliefs. They stem from ritual, liturgical, and collective worlds of worship that, though often hidden under Catholic Christian imagery, reflect a significant divergence from Christianity, revealing their epistemic particularity. Working, as some authors have suggested,

from ‘cracks of epistemic differences,’ (Mignolo 2007, 111) I characterize the indigenous women’s movement as undertaking a ‘de-colonial’ effort. These women are actively recapturing ancestral spiritualities in order to decolonize the religious universes they were forced to adopt during the historical colonial enterprise.

The *First Indigenous Women’s Summit of the Americas* was a United Nations meeting that took place in December 2002. It was promoted and organized by a collective of indigenous leaders of international reputation, such as Rigoberta Menchú, Myrna Cunningham, Calixta Gabriel, and other regional indigenous women from communities in the Americas. They were joined by Pauline Tiongia, an elder from a Maori community in New Zealand. The meeting consisted of around 400 indigenous women representing most countries and many indigenous communities.<sup>1</sup> In attendance were women from remote and isolated places such as the delta of the Orinoco River in Venezuela, where there are no roads, and the Amazon River basin. Prior to the summit, the organizers arranged a series of focus groups designed by the *Centro de Estudios e Información de la Mujer Multiétnica* (CEIMM) from the *Universidad de las Regiones Autónomas de la Costa Caribe Nicaraguense* (URACCAN), Nicaragua’s indigenous university. The focus groups’ methodology aimed at bringing together indigenous women representatives of the whole region to foster discussions on five main areas of interest: 1. spirituality, education, and culture; 2. gender from the perspective of indigenous women; 3. leadership, empowerment, and indigenous women participation; 4. indigenous development and globalization; 5. human rights and indigenous rights.

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<sup>1</sup> There are numerous definitions of the term, ‘indigenous.’ To give just a few examples, according to Linita Manu’atu (2000, 80), writing on Tongan and other Pacific islands peoples: ‘Indigenous refers to the First Peoples who settled in Aotearoa (New Zealand), United States, Canada, and so on. Other definitions that have been proposed are Tangata Whenua, First Nations or simply the People’. According to Kay Warren’s writings on Guatemala, ‘indigenous ... is itself, of course, a historical product of European colonialism that masks enormous variations in history, culture, community, and relations with those who are considered non-indigenous’ (Warren 1998, 112). The UN ILO Convention, No. 169, specifies: ‘... indigenous communities, peoples, and nations are those groups who have a continuous history that originates from earlier stages to the presence of the invasion and colonization. Groups that develop in their territories or part of it, and consider themselves different to other sectors of the society that are now dominant. These groups are today subaltern sectors and they are decided to preserve, develop, and transmit to the future generations their ancestral territories and their ethnic identity. These characteristics are fundamental to their existential continuity as peoples, in relationship with their own cultural, social, institutional, and legal systems’ (‘Movimientos étnicos y legislación internacional’, UN. Doc./ICN.41/Sub.2/1989/33 (1989), add.3 §4, in *Rincones de Coyoacan* 5, February-March 1994. UN ILO Convention No. 169).

The selected women were invited to gather and participate in several of these preliminary focus groups around the region. During group interactions, they expressed their own thoughts, perspectives, and experiences concerning spirituality, gender, education, empowerment, development, and their relationships to international funding and cooperation agencies. The groups' discussions, which were transcribed and lightly edited, constituted the basic documents for the summit meeting.

The importance of research led and designed by the same subjects, that is objects, of research inquiry cannot be overemphasized. The asymmetrical power relations between urban women and indigenous peasant women are evident throughout the Latin American continent. It is urban woman who have access to higher education, professional positions, and economic resources. Usually, it is they whose voices, proposals, and projects for research find support. The summit selected its participants from a pool of indigenous women who are political leaders: senators, 'regidoras', congresswomen, heads of social organizations, leaders of political grassroots groups. All these women had many years of experience exercising political and social influence and leadership. The summit offered them a space where they could express their experiences and priorities in their own voices, without the mediations and interpretations of the area's elite and hegemonic institutions. One of the main themes was 'gender from the indigenous women's vision.' This was and is still a debated issue that has sometimes created barriers between mainstream feminism and the indigenous women's movement. I had the privilege of being invited to be one of the few 'non-indigenous' women participants at the meeting and also a consultant for their gender and empowerment documents. The organizers knew of my research on early Mesoamerican cosmology and activist work and expressed the desire to hear the opinion of a feminist who has respect for indigenous cultures.

The theme of indigenous spirituality was transversal and intersected with every other issue addressed at the summit. A study of the documents from the summit, voted on by consensus, reveals the priorities of the contemporary struggles, concerns, and agendas of indigenous groups in the Americas. The documents see 'indigenous spirituality' as origin and motor for the re-creation of collectivities and for the emergence of a new pan-indigenous, collective subject in which women's leadership is emerging and potentially growing, defining women as outspoken, strong, and clear agents for change.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> 'Indigenous women of different cultures and civilizations of Abya Yala should not forget they are daughters of the land, the sun, the wind, and fire and their continuous relation with the cosmos element will strengthen their political participation in favor of indigenous women' (*Summit* 2003, 67). '...this process is a joint effort among indigenous women of the different peoples,

The term ‘indigenous women’ had no positive connotations as recently as a few years ago. It had never been used to name a self-constituted identity by the indigenous peoples themselves. Now, as I could observe, it is the token for a collective subjectivity, a social actor that has been created by the indigenous women themselves through their political and spiritual practices.

## 1 The modernity of ancient spirituality

The Latin American continent has long been known as a stronghold of Catholicism. Even today, the Vatican counts Latin America as one of the regions that boast the greatest numbers of Catholics in the world.<sup>3</sup> Among indigenous social movements, claiming the right to develop and define their own spirituality is a novel attitude, yet one that is voiced with increasing intensity.<sup>4</sup> Beyond claiming a right to food and shelter, a decent livelihood, and ownership of their territory and its resources, the indigenous are turning an internal gaze toward their traditional culture. They are also daring to question the most ingrained sequels of Catholic colonization, rejecting the contempt and disdain with which their spirituality, beliefs, and practices are held by the Catholic majority. We will see an example of the mainstream Catholic perspective toward the indigenous peoples in the ‘Message of the Bishops to the Summit’, below.

Despite conflicting perspectives held by scholars and other commentators, the indigenous social movements are the most visible transformational force in the Latin American continent (Gil Olmos 2000a). The indigenous peoples no longer accept the image that was imposed on them from the outside. They want to create their own identity; they refuse to be museum objects. It is not a question of reviving the past. Indigenous cultures are alive, and the only way

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among different generations, including non-indigenous women that support the effort of indigenous women’ (*Summit* 2003, 71). ‘...it is necessary that all women recognize themselves as women at the spiritual level of our bodies, minds, knowledge, and experience’ (*Summit* 2003, 71). ‘Our political participation also requests that we reinforce and we be proud of the cultures of indigenous peoples’ (*Summit* 2003, 67).

**3** During the last 20 years, the percentage of Catholics has been decreasing consistently. In Mexico, we see now that roughly only 82% percent of the population identifies as Catholic in contrast to the 96.5% of two decades ago. The main domain of Catholic believers had been the impoverished and dispossessed of Mexico. Among them stand the 62 distinct indigenous peoples in the country.

**4** This theme resounds around the world with other indigenous peoples. See the Maori claims (Tuhiwai Smith 1999).

for them to survive is to reinvent themselves, recreating their identity while maintaining their differences (Gil Olmos 2000b).

The work of anthropologist Kay Warren offers insights into the genealogy of the pan-indigenous collective subject. What Warren calls the *pan-Mayan collective identity* was forged out of the peoples' need to survive the aggressions of the state in Guatemala. As the distinct ethnic groups were threatened with cultural annihilation, their guides, philosopher-leaders, formulated a collective identity drawn from their inherited oral, mythic, and religious traditions. As Warren explains, the bearers of cultural wisdom began to set forth an 'assertion of a common past which has been suppressed and fragmented by European colonialism and the emergence of modern liberal states. In this view, cultural revitalization reunites the past with the present as a political force' (Warren, Jackson 2002, 11). Whatever the possible explanations for the genesis of this pan-Mayan collective social subject might be, it engenders a political collectivity, and one of its central claims is often based on its own self-defined 'indigenous spirituality.'

As for indigenous women,<sup>5</sup> they are claiming this ancestral wisdom, cosmopolitanism, and spirituality. Theirs is a selective process. Issues within tradition that constrain or hamper their space as women are being contested. Meanwhile, those which have enhanced their position as women within their spiritual ancestral communities are held onto dearly, their survival supported and ensured by the community.

Addressing the Mexican Congress in March 2002, *Comandanta* Esther, a Zapatista leader from the southern Mexican state of Chiapas, expressed the concern of indigenous women in this way: 'I want to explain the situation of women as we live it in our communities ... as girls they think we are not valuable ... as women mistreated ... also women have to carry water, walking two to three hours holding a vessel and a child in their arms' (Marcos 2005a, 103). After speaking of her daily sufferings under indigenous customary law, she added: 'I am not telling you this so you pity us. We have struggled to change this and we will continue doing it' (Marcos 2005a, 103). She was expressing the inevitable struggle for change that indigenous women face, but she was also demanding respect for their agency. They, those directly involved, have to be the ones to lead the process of change. There is no need for pity and still less for instructions from outsiders on how to defend their rights as women. This would be another

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<sup>5</sup> The summit included women originating from most Latin American countries, as we see in the excerpts of their presentations and documents. That also means that we are looking at at least a couple of hundred of ethnic groups/identities. They refer to the region as *Abya Yala*, their own, reclaimed term to refer to 'America'. This multiplicity of ethnic identities at the summit chose to refer to themselves as 'indigenous women'.

form of imposition, however well meant it might be. *Comandanta* Esther's discourse should convince those intellectuals removed from the daily life of indigenous peoples that culture is not monolithic, not static. 'We want recognition for our way of dressing, of talking, of governing, of organizing, of praying, of working collectively, of respecting the earth, of understanding nature as something we are part of' (Marcos 2005a, 103). In consonance with many indigenous women who have raised their voices in recent years, she wants both to transform and to preserve her culture. This is the background of the demands for social justice expressed by indigenous women, against which we must view the declarations and claims for 'indigenous spirituality' that emerged from the *First Indigenous Women's Summit of the Americas*.

Among the thematic resolutions proposed and passed by consensus at the First Summit, the following are particularly emblematic:

We re-evaluate spirituality as the main axis of culture (*Summit* 2003, 61).<sup>6</sup>

The participants of the First Indigenous Women's Summit of the Americas resolve: that spirituality is an indivisible part of the community. It is a cosmic vision of life shared by everyone and wherein all beings are interrelated and complementary in their existence. Spirituality is a search for the equilibrium and harmony within ourselves as well as the other surrounding beings (*Summit* 2003, 60).

We demand of different churches and religions to respect the beliefs and cultures of Indigenous peoples without imposing on us any religious practice that conflicts with our spirituality (*Summit* 2003, 19).

## 2 What does Indigenous spirituality mean?

When I first approached the documents of the summit, I was surprised by the frequent use of the self-elected term *spirituality*. Its meaning in this context is by no means self-evident and hence needs to be decoded. It has little to do with what the word usually means in the Christian traditions, in which I include all denominations. When the indigenous women use the word 'spirituality,' they give it a meaning that clearly sets it apart from Catholic and other Christian tra-

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<sup>6</sup> Quotations from the *Memoria*, the raw materials and transcriptions from focus groups, and documents from the summit vary in translation. Some of the documents are translated into English as part of the document, in which case the Spanish translation of a particular section has a different page number from the English. In some cases, the Spanish was not translated in the documents; this is particularly the case for the position statements, whereas the declarations and plans of actions are often in both Spanish and English in the documents. Unless otherwise noted, I am responsible for all translations.

ditions that arrived in the Americas at the time of the conquest and the ensuing colonization: ‘We indigenous Mexican women ... take our decision to practice freely our spirituality that is different from a religion but in the same manner we respect everyone else’s beliefs’ (*Summit* 2002a, 1).

This stance is strongly influenced by an approach that espouses transnational socio-political practices. Indigenous movements and in particular the women in them are being increasingly exposed to a globalizing world. The presence of a Maori elder at the summit, as well as the frequent participation of Mexican indigenous women in indigenous peoples’ meetings around the world, have favored new attitudes of openness, understanding, and coalition beyond their own traditional cultural boundaries. Through the lens of indigenous spirituality, we can glimpse the cosmivision that pervades the worlds of indigenous women.

### 3 The bishops’ message at the summit and the women’s response

Reports about the summit’s preparatory sessions, combined with the public status of its main organizer, indigenous Nobel Peace Prize laureate Rigoberta Menchú, gained the attention of the Mexican bishops. They apparently feared that the indigenous worlds, which they regard as part of their domain, were getting out of control. Moreover, it was not only the indigenous peoples but the indigenous *women* who were taking the lead and gaining a public presence. There were also rumors about so-called ‘reproductive rights’ being discussed on the summit’s agenda. Catholic authorities spoke out against indigenous agitation. They felt pressed to send a ‘message’ and a warning:

The Summit touches on indigenous peoples’ spirituality, education and culture from perspectives such as traditional knowledge, loss and re-construction of collective and individual identities, and also from indigenous women’s spirituality *from a perspective totally distant from the cultural and spiritual reality of the diverse ethnic groups that form our (sic) indigenous peoples* (*Mensaje* 2002, 2, my emphasis).<sup>7</sup>

This patronizing and discriminatory message was sent to the summit by the *Comisión Episcopal de Indígenas*, the Episcopal Commission for the Indigenous. The message is paternalistic throughout. Its tone is one of admonition of and condescension toward the indigenous ‘subjects.’ It assumes that rationality and truth

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<sup>7</sup> The bishops’ message is a MS given to journalists at the summit. It does not, unfortunately, exist in a printed published format.

are the private domain of bishops. They feel that it is their obligation to lead their immature indigenous women subjects, that is, to teach them, guide them, and scold them when they think they are wrong. The reader gets the sense that, to the bishops, this collectivity of women is dangerously straying from the indigenous peoples as the bishops define them.

The indigenous women's response, *Mensaje de las Mujeres Indígenas Mexicanas a los Monseñores de la Comisión Episcopal de Indígenas* (Summit 2002a) emerged from a collective meeting within the framework of the summit.<sup>8</sup> In this document, the thirty-eight representatives of Mexican indigenous communities expressed their plight in the following words:<sup>9</sup>

Now we can manifest openly our spirituality. Our ancestors were obliged to hide it ... It is evident that evangelization was an imposition and that on top of our temples and ceremonial centers churches were built (Summit 2002a, 1).

We Mexican Indigenous women are adults and we take over our right to practice freely our spirituality that is different from a religion ... we feel that we have the right to our religiosity as indigenous peoples (Summit 2002a, 1–2).

We reconfirm the principles that inspire us to recover and strengthen reciprocity, complementarity, duality, to regain equilibrium (Summit 2002a, 1).

Do not worry, we are analyzing them [the customary law practices that could hamper human rights], because we believe that the light of reason and justice also illuminates us, and certain things should not be permitted (Summit 2002a, 1).

This last sentence makes a veiled reference to centuries of colonial and post-colonial oppression. First the colonizers, and then the modern state, both with the Church's approval, denied the indigenous peoples the qualification of *gente de razón* ('people with the capacity of reason'). Even today, in some parts of Mexico, this qualification is reserved for whites and persons of mixed blood.

As a voluntary, 'only listening' participant of this collectivity of thirty-eight *Mujeres Indígenas Mexicanas*, I paid careful attention to all the discussions. These speakers of several indigenous languages groped for an adequate Spanish wording to convey the ideas sustaining their formal response to the monolingual bishops. At one point, when I was asked directly what I thought about the use of a particular term, I ventured an opinion. After they discussed it, they decided not

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<sup>8</sup> The summit included women from many Latin American countries. The Mexican Indigenous Women's Meeting was exclusively a meeting of Mexican women to which I was invited to participate as a non-indigenous participant, to collectively draft the response to the bishops' message. Only in this meeting was I asked to give opinions and vote as a non-indigenous Mexican woman.

<sup>9</sup> The document was produced collectively after hours of proposals and debate. It was finally agreed on by a consensus vote, the only way to be truly 'democratic' among indigenous peoples. Like the bishops' message, it exists only in MS form and is not published in a wider format.

to go with my suggestion. The significance here is that my opinion was treated not as authoritative, but simply as worthy of consideration as any other. In their own classification, I was a ‘non-indigenous’ supportive feminist. Fortunately, long gone were the days when an urban mestizo university woman could impose an idea or even a word.

The women’s discussions were horizontally collective. The women present represented the majority of the Mexican ethnic communities. Their native languages included Nahuatl, Tzotzil, Tzeltal, Tojolabal, Chol, Zapotec, Mixe, Mazatec, Mixtec, and Purepecha, among others. The gathering was an expression of the new collective subject that is taking the lead in struggles for social justice. Notwithstanding traditional ethnic divides among them, all the women involved chose to emphasize their commonalities and identify themselves as Mexican indigenous women. Despite some language barriers, their discussions of ideas and words have stayed with me. They struggled with Spanish as they forged the language of their text. The editing of the document took all of us into the early hours of the next day. It was finally passed by consensus, in which my vote as ‘non-indigenous’<sup>10</sup> counted as any other, as it should in a consensus building process.

In addition to the constraints posed by the multiplicity of their languages, they expressed the deeply pressing dilemma of having to deal with a religious institution that, in spite of its evangelical roots, has traditionally been misogynistic, as well as, for the most part, culturally and ethnically prejudiced against indigenous worlds. The insistence of the women on being *adults* (*‘las mujeres indígenas mexicanas somos mayores de edad’*) is a response to the assumption implicit in the bishops’ message, namely, that not only women but also indigenous peoples in general are minors and, as such, in need of strict guidance and reprimand. The ecclesiastical message also implies that they, the (male) bishops and archbishops, know better than the indigenous social activists themselves what it means to be ‘indigenous’ in contemporary Mexico.

Considering the cautious reverence paid to Catholic authorities by most Mexicans – whether they are believers or not – the indigenous women’s response is a significant expression of a newly gained spirit of autonomy and self-determination. The women’s declaration, in both tone and content, also speaks of the erosion of the Church’s dominion over indigenous worlds. These poor, unschooled women have shown themselves to be braver and less submissive than some feminist negotiators.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. n. 9, above.

<sup>11</sup> During several UN meetings of the reproductive rights network here in Mexico and in New York, I consistently noticed that many feminist activists, journalists, and academic researchers,

## 4 Decolonizing epistemology

Several authors have argued that decolonizing efforts should be grounded at the epistemological level (Mignolo 2007; Tlostanova 2007; Marcos 2005b). When speaking of the future of feminism, Judith Butler recommends a ‘privileging of epistemology’ as an urgent next step in our commitments. She also reminds us that ‘there is no register for “audibility” referring to the difficulties of reaching out, understanding, and respecting “Other” subaltern epistemic worlds’ (Butler 2004).

The following analysis of some basic characteristics of indigenous spirituality is an invitation to understand it in its own terms. It is an effort toward widening the ‘register for audibility.’ This deepening of understanding will facilitate a less domineering and imposing relationship with women not only in society and politics but also in the spiritual indigenous domains. As an indigenous woman from *Moloj Mayib’*, a political Mayan women’s organization, complained regarding her encounter with feminists:

they question us very much, they insist that we should question our culture ... what we do not accept is their imposition, that they tell us what we have to do, when we have the power to decide by ourselves. (I do not mean) ... that the feminist comes and shares tools with us and we are able to do it: that she could support me, that she can walk by my side ... but she should not impose on me. This is what many feminist women have done, be imposing (Maria Estela Jocón in *Summit* 2003, 274–275).

The opinion of this indigenous woman is confirmed by Gayatri Spivak’s critique of ‘the international feminist tendency to matronize the Southern woman as belonging to gender oppressive second-class cultures’ (Spivak 1999, 407). A decolonial thinking grounded in another epistemological stand is required.

## 5 A world constructed by fluid dual oppositions, beyond mutually exclusive categories

To be able to comprehend contemporary ‘indigenous spirituality’, it is important to review some of the tenets of Mesoamerican ancestral ‘embodied thought’

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though not necessarily Catholic believers, manifested a mix of fear and respectful reverence when in proximity of ecclesiastical garments and other paraphernalia of church officials, which prevented them from effectively negotiating with the Vatican representatives, despite their deep ingrained anti-clerical stand.

which are often referred to in the summit's proceedings (*Summit* 2003; cf. also Marcos 1998).

Duality is the centerpiece of spirituality understood as a cosmic vision of life.<sup>12</sup> Duality – not dualism – is a pervasive perception in indigenous thought and spirituality. The pervasiveness of a perception without equivalent prevalence in Western thought could, perhaps, in itself largely explain the persistent barrier to penetrating and understanding indigenous worlds.

According to Mesoamerican cosmology as present in many narratives today,<sup>13</sup> the dual unity of the feminine and masculine is fundamental to the creation of the cosmos, as well as its (re)generation, and sustenance. The fusion of feminine and masculine in one bi-polar principle is a recurring feature of almost every Mesoamerican community today. Divinities themselves are gendered: feminine and masculine. There is no concept of a virile god (e.g. the image of a man with a white beard as the Christian God has sometimes been represented), but rather a mother/father dual protector-creator. In Nahua culture, this dual god/goddess is called *Ometeotl*, from *ome*, 'two,' and *teotl*, 'god.' Yet *Ometeotl* does not mean 'two gods' but rather 'god Two' or, better, 'divinity of Duality.' The name results from the fusion of *Omecihuatl* (*cihuatl* meaning woman or lady) and *Ometecuhtli* (*tecuhltli*, man or lord), that is, 'of the Lady and of the Lord of Duality'.

The protecting *Ometeotl* has to be alternately placated and sustained. Like all divine beings, it is not conceived as purely beneficial. Rather, it oscillated – like all other dualities – between opposite poles and thus could be supportive or destructive. In addition, a multiplicity of goddesses and gods entered into diverse relations of reciprocity with the people. Elsewhere I have dealt more comprehensively with the gods and goddesses of the Mesoamerican cosmivision (Marcos 2006). Scholars recognize that the religiosity of the entire Mesoamerican region is pregnant with similar symbolic meanings, rituals, and myths concerning the condition of the supernatural beings and the place of humans in the cosmos. One of Mesoamerica's most eminent ethno-historians, Alfredo Lopez Austin, refers to this commonality of perceptions, conceptions, and forms of action as the *núcleo duro*, the 'hard core' of Mesoamerican cultures (Lopez Austin 2001).

Duality, defined as a complementary pairing of opposites, is the essential ordering force of the universe and is also reflected in the ordering of time. Time is

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<sup>12</sup> E.g. '...duality is a very important element in our cosmivision, it is important that duality is inscribed in our spirituality because it is the main axis of our life' (*Summit* 2003, 4).

<sup>13</sup> Many examples of these narratives can be found in *Summit* 2003.

marked by two calendars, one ritual-based and the other astronomical. The ritual calendar is linked to the human gestation cycle, that is, the time needed for a baby to be formed inside the mother's womb. The other is an agricultural calendar that prescribes the periods for cultivating corn. Maize (corn) is conceived of as the earthly matter from which all beings in the universe are made (Marcos 2006). Human gestation and agricultural cycles are understood within this concept of duality, as are feminine and masculine, but dualities extend far beyond these spheres. For instance, life and death, above and below, light and dark, and beneficence and malevolence are considered dual aspects of the same reality. Neither pole invalidates the other. Both are in constant mutual interaction, flowing into one another. Mutually exclusive categories are not part of the epistemic background of this worldview, whose plasticity is still reflected in the way indigenous women deal with life and conflict. These women seldom remain mired in a position that would deny its opposite. Their philosophical background allows them to resist impositions and at the same time to appropriate modern elements into their spirituality. Fluidity and selectivity in adopting novel attitudes and values speak of the ongoing reconfiguration of their world of reference.

The principle of fluid duality has held indigenous worlds together over the centuries. It has been both concealed and protected by its non-intelligibility to outsiders, and the indigenous world has guarded this 'subaltern Other' from inimical incursions into their native philosophical depths. The 'hard core' of indigenous cultures has been a well-kept secret. Even today, among many native communities in the Americas, exposing this concealed background to outsiders is considered a betrayal of the community.<sup>14</sup> It is only recently that the unveiling has started to be done directly by the indigenous women themselves. From my position as an outsider, I felt pressed to seek permission of Nubia, a Tepoztlán Nahua indigenous leader, for whether I could interview her about her beliefs, conception of duality, and ritual in the ceremonies of her village. She accepted but did not allow me to ask my questions without her explicit previous agreement. Presently, indigenous women and men are becoming vocal carriers of their religious and philosophical heritage and have agreed to vocalize their heritage, to share it with the outside world. Only recently have they learned to use, critically and autonomously, whatever knowledge has been collected about

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**14** Inés Talamantes, a Native American Professor of Religious Studies who does ethnography on her own Mescalero Apache culture, once confided to me that she was forbidden by her community to reveal the deep meanings of their ceremonies.

them. The women explained that they want to ‘systematize the oral traditions of our peoples through the elders’ knowledge and practices’ (*Summit* 2003, 62).<sup>15</sup>

## 6 Duality and gender

In the indigenous Mesoamerican world, gender is constructed within the pervasive concept of duality (Marcos 1998, 2006). Gender, that is, the masculine/feminine duality, is the root metaphor for the whole cosmos. Everything is identified as either feminine or masculine, and this applies to natural phenomena such as rain, hail, lightening, clouds; living beings, i.e., animals, plants and humans; and even to periods of time, such as days, months, and years (Lopez Austin 1988). All of these entities have a feminine or masculine ‘breath’ or ‘weight.’ It is evident, then, that this perception of gender corresponds to a duality of complementary opposites, a duality, in turn, that is the fabric of the cosmos. Duality is the linking and ordering force that creates a coherent reference for indigenous peoples, the knitting thread that weaves together all apparent disparities (Quezada 1997; Marcos 1993).

The documents from the summit foreground and help to explain the concept that duality is also a basic referent of indigenous spirituality:

To speak of the gender concept presupposes the concept of duality emerging from the indigenous cosmovision ...the whole universe is ruled by duality: the sky and earth, night and day, sadness and happiness, they complement each other. The one cannot exist without the other (*Summit* 2002b, 6).

Everything is ruled by the concept of duality, certainly, men and women (*Summit* 2003, 231).

Duality is something we live through, it is there... we learn of it within our spirituality and we live it in ceremonies, we live it when we see that in our families women and men, mother and father take the decisions (Candida Jimenez, Mixe indigenous woman, *Summit* 2002b, 6).

Yet, despite the reverential espousal of the ancestral concept of gender duality and complementarity, contemporary indigenous women express some reticence

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<sup>15</sup> The elders in many indigenous communities, especially the Mayan ones here referred to, are both women and men, depending on the areas where they are considered the maximum authorities. In the summit documents, we read the voices of women claiming that the elders be in charge of systematizing their oral traditions; they are referring to women elders. Cf. Marcos 2006, ch. 8, considering the ethno historical recuperation of the *llamatlatolli*, discourses of the old wise women in the Nahua region.

and even rejection of some aspects of it. Their arguments are based on how it is lived today in many indigenous communities. For example, in the document of the summit dedicated to ‘Gender from the vision of indigenous women,’ Maria Estela Jocón, a Mayan Guatemalan wise woman, remarks that duality today,

is something we should question, it is a big question mark, because as theory it is present in our cosmovision and in our customary laws, as theory, but in practice you see many situations where only the man decides ... mass media, schools, and many other issues have influenced this principle of Duality so it is a bit shaky now (*Summit 2002b*, 7).

Alma Lopez, a young indigenous self-identified feminist, who is a Regidora in her community, believes that the concept of duality of complementary opposites has been lost:

The philosophical principles that I would recover from my culture would be equity, and complementarity between women and men, women and women, and between men and men. Today the controversial complementarity of Mayan culture does not exist (*Duarte 2002*, 278).

However, beyond the reticence or even outright negations of the contemporary and lived practices of inherited philosophical principles, the indigenous women are still claiming them, still want to be inspired by them, and propose to re-inscribe them in their contemporary struggles for gender justice. They deem it necessary not only to recapture their ancestral cultural roots and beliefs but also to think of them as a potent resource in their quest for gender justice and equity:

Today there are big differences between the conditions of women in relation to that of men. This does not mean that it was always like this. In this case there is the possibility of returning to our roots and recovering the space that is due to women, based on indigenous cosmovision (*Summit 2003*, 133).

The summit document dedicated to gender has the subtitle: *De los aportes de las mujeres indígenas al feminismo*, ‘The Indigenous Women’s Contributions to Feminism’. In this portion of the document, too, the women cast off their role as recipients of a feminism imposed on them by outside forces and instead proclaim that their feminist vision has contributions to offer to other feminist approaches. Among their contributions to feminism are the innovative concepts of *parity, duality, and equilibrium*. The first paragraph explains that

some key aspects from indigenous movements have to be emphasized. They are the concepts of duality, equilibrium and harmony with all the implications we have mentioned already (*Summit 2002b*, 31).

It also proposes,

[t]o all indigenous peoples and women's movements a revision of cultural patterns... with the objective of propitiating gender relations based on equilibrium (*Summit 2002b*, 37).

Duality, equilibrium, and harmony are among the basic principles of their feminist practices. Indigenous women claim that the demands for equality by *other* feminist movements could better be interpreted within their spirituality and cosmology as a search for equilibrium.

## 7 Equilibrium as gender equity

Equilibrium, as conceived in indigenous spirituality, is not the static repose of two equal weights or masses. Rather, it is a force that constantly modifies the relation between dual or opposite pairs. Like duality itself, equilibrium, or balance, permeates not only relations between men and women but also relations among deities, between deities and humans, and among elements of nature. The constant search for this balance was vital to the preservation of order in every area, from daily life to the activity of the cosmos. Equilibrium is as fundamental as duality itself.

Duality, thus, is not a binary ordering of 'static poles.' Balance in this view can best be understood as an agent that constantly modifies the terms of dualities and thereby bestows a singular quality on the complementary pairs of opposites that permeate all indigenous thought (as seen in the summit documents and declarations). Equilibrium is constantly re-establishing its own balance. It endows duality with a flexibility or plasticity that makes it flow, impeding stratification. There is not an exclusively feminine or exclusively masculine being. Rather, beings possess these forces in different nuances or combinations. The imperceptible 'load' or 'charge' that all beings have – whether rocks, animals, or people – is feminine or masculine. Frequently, entities possess both feminine and masculine capacities simultaneously in different gradations that perpetually change and shift (Lopez Austin 1988).

The gender documents were direct transcriptions from the focus group discussions. The following rich and spontaneous evaluations of equilibrium express the indigenous manner of conceiving gender equity:

We understand the practice of gender perspective to be a respectful relationship... of balance, of equilibrium – what in the western world would be equity (*Summit 2002b*, 6).

Equilibrium means taking care of life ... when community values of our environment and social community are respected, there is equilibrium (*Summit 2003*, 132).

Between one extreme and the other there is a center. The extremes and their center are not absolute, but depend on a multiplicity of factors ... variable and not at all exact ... [Duality] is equilibrium at its maximum expression (*Summit 2003*, 231).

Indigenous women refer to equilibrium as the attainable ideal for the whole cosmos, and as the best way to express their own views on gender equity.

## 8 Subversive spirituality (of immanence)

In the fluid, dual universe of indigenous spiritualities, the domain of the sacred is all-pervasive. There are strong continuities between the natural and the supernatural worlds, whose sacred beings are closely interconnected with humans who in turn propitiate this interdependence in all their activities. Thus political struggle is a part of their spiritual activities.

Enacting this principle, at the summit every single activity started with an embodied ritual. The women from Latin American indigenous communities woke up early in the morning. I was given a room on the second floor, directly above the room of Rigoberta Menchú. The sounds of the early morning sacred ritual were a reminder that I was hosted, for those days, in an indigenous universe. The processions and chants were led by a couple of Mayan ritual specialists: a woman and a man. We prayed and walked through the gardens and premises of the hotel where we were hosted. A fancy four-star hotel that had never witnessed anything like this was taken over by the indigenous world. Nothing ever started, at this United Nations meeting, without rhythmic sounds and chants, without offerings to the four corners of the world of 'copal' (a sort of Mexican incense), fruits, flowers, and colored candles. The sacred indigenous world was there present with us; we could feel it. It was alive in the atmosphere and within each of the participants. It was also in the flowers, candles, and fruits and in the rhythmic repetition of words.

In striking contrast with indigenous spirituality, the dominant tradition in Christian theology stresses 'classical theism,' defined as centered on a metaphysical concept of God as ontologically transcendent and independent from the world. This concept of God has met with increasing criticism, particularly among eco-feminist and process theologians (Keller 1986; Gevara 2001). In indigenous spirituality, the relationship to the supernatural world lies elsewhere:

The cosmic vision of life is to be connected with the surroundings, and all the surroundings have life, so they become SACRED: we encounter earth, mountains, valleys, caves, plants, animals, stones, water, air, moon, sun, stars. Spirituality is born from this perspective and conception in which all beings that exist in Mother Nature have life and are interrelated. Spirituality is linked to a sense of COMMUNITY in which all beings are interrelated and complementary (*Summit* 2003, 128).

Ivone Gevara, a Brazilian eco-feminist theologian, recalls how an Aymara indigenous woman responded to Gevara's theological perspective: 'With eco-feminism I am not ashamed anymore of expressing beliefs from my own culture. I do not need to emphasize that they have Christian elements for them to be considered good ... they simply are valuable' (Gevara 2001, 21).

Eco-feminist theology promotes complex and novel positions centered on a respect for Earth and reverence for nature. Many indigenous women perceive this feminist theology to be easier to understand and closer to the standpoint of their indigenous spirituality than Catholic theism. These bridges between Christian and indigenous spiritualities become more intelligible when we reflect on the main characteristics that shape indigenous spirituality's relationship to nature: its divine dimensions, the personification of deities in humans, the fluidity between immanent and transcendent, and the fusion with the supernatural that women can and should enact. There is no exclusive relationship to a transcendent being called God; there is no mistrust of the flesh and the body; there is sanctity in matter:

We recover indigenous cosmovision as our 'scientific heritage,' recognizing the elders as ancient carriers of wisdom (*Summit* 2003, 60).

*Retomamos la cosmovisión indígena o ciencia de los Pueblos indígenas, reconociendo a los ancianos y ancianas como portadores de sabiduría ancestral ...* (*Summit* 2003, 31).

That the indigenous women of different cultures and civilizations of Abya Yala do not forget that they are daughters of the land, of the sun, of the wind and of fire and that their continuous relation with the cosmic elements strengthen their political participation in favor of indigenous women and indigenous peoples (*Summit* 2003, 63).

*Que las mujeres indígenas de las diferentes culturas y civilizaciones de Abya Yala no se olviden que son hijas de la tierra del sol, del viento y del fuego y que su relación continua con los elementos cosmogónicos fortalecerán su participación política a favor de las Mujeres indígenas y de los Pueblos indígenas* (*Summit* 2003, 34).

The woman's body, a fluid and permeable corporeality, is conflated with Earth as a sacred place; they regard themselves as an integral part of this sacred Earth. The spirit is not the opposite of matter and neither is the soul of the flesh.

## 9 Embodied religious thought

According to dominant Western epistemic traditions, the very concept of body is formed in opposition to mind. The body is defined as the place of biological data, of the material, of the immanent. Since the seventeenth century, the body has also been conceptualized as that which marks the boundaries between the interior self and the external world (Bordo, Jaggar 1989, 4). In Mesoamerican spiritual traditions, on the other hand, the body has characteristics that vastly differ from those of the Western anatomical or biological body. In the Mesoamerican view, exterior and interior are not separated by the hermetic barrier of the skin. Between the outside and the inside, permanent and continuous exchange occurs. To gain a keener understanding of how the body is conceptualized in indigenous traditions, we must think of it as a vortex, in a whirling, spiral-like movement that fuses and expels, absorbs and discards, and through this motion is in permanent contact with all elements in the cosmos (Lopez Austin 1988).

## 10 A spirituality of collectivity and the interconnectedness of all beings

For indigenous peoples, then, the world is not ‘out there,’ established outside of and apart from them. It is within them and even ‘through’ them. Actions and their circumstances are much more interwoven than is the case in Western thought, in which the ‘I’ can be analytically abstracted from its surroundings. Further, the body’s porosity reflects the essential porosity of the cosmos, a permeability of the entire ‘material’ world that defines an order of existence characterized by a continuous interchange between the material and the immaterial. The cosmos literally emerges, in this conceptualization, as the complement of a permeable corporeality. It is from this very ample perspective that the controversial term ‘complementarity’ should be revisited according to its usage by indigenous women. From their perspective, it is not only feminine and masculine that are said to be ‘complementary,’ but, as the Zapatista *Comandanta* Esther insisted in her address to the Mexican Parliament, complementarity embraces everything in nature. She explained that Earth is life, is nature, and we are all part of it. This simple phrase expresses the interconnectedness of all beings in the Mesoamerican cosmos (Lopez Austin 1988). Beings are not separable from one another. This principle engenders a very particular form of human collectivity with little tendency to individuation. This sense of connectedness has been found consistently within contemporary indigenous medical systems and also

in the first historical primary sources (Lopez Austin 1988). The 'I' cannot be abstracted from its surroundings. There is a permanent transit between the inside and the outside (Marcos 1998). Lenkesdorf (1999) interprets an expression of the Tojolabal language (a Mayan language of Chiapas): '*Lajan, lajan aytik.*' The phrase literally means *estamos parejos* ('we are all even'), but should be understood as 'we are all subjects.' Lenkesdorf holds that this phrase conveys the 'intersubjectivity' basic to Tojolabal culture.

'Spirituality,' say the women at the summit, is born from this vision and concept according to which all beings that exist in Mother Nature are interrelated. Spirituality is linked to a communitarian sense for which all beings are interrelated and complement each other in their existence (*Summit* 2003, 128).

Among the examples of several pervasive spiritual and cosmological references reproduced by the indigenous women of the Americas, this one seems to be at the core: the interconnectedness of everyone and everything in the universe. The intersubjective nature of men and women, interconnected with earth, sky, plants, and planets. This is how we must understand the defense of the Earth 'that gives us life, that is the nature that we are,' as *Comandanta* Esther explained to the legislators (Esther 2001). 'Indigenous peoples' spirituality,' the summit document declares, 'revives the value of nature and humans in this century. The loss of this interrelationship has caused a disequilibrium and disorder in the world' (*Summit* 2003, 134). 'A cosmic and conscious spirituality aids to re-establish equilibrium and harmony ... as women we have the strength, the energy capable of changing the course for a better communal life' (*Summit* 2003, 135).

Spirituality emerges from traditional wisdom, but the document also stresses that, 'we have to be conscious of the richness of the worldwide cultural diversities' (*Summit* 2002b, 31). Here again, we perceive a characteristic of openness, a 'transnational' consciousness that has been influenced by women's movements and feminist practices.

Indigenous ethnicities are not self-enclosed but rather envision themselves in active interaction with a world of differences: national, bi-national, and transnational. The international indigenous movements are building bridges all over the world and gaining momentum. There is a growing transnational language of cultural rights espoused by the 'indigenous' worldwide. They all acknowledge the damage that diverse colonialisms have done to their worldviews and have begun to echo each other concerning the value of recovering their own spiritualities and cosmologies.<sup>16</sup> In recent years, indigenous peoples have intensified

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<sup>16</sup> See Kepa 2006; Tuhiwai Smith 1999; Siem 2005; Palomo et al. 2003; Manu'atu 2000; Champagne, Abu-Saad, 2005; Villebrun 2005.

their struggle to break free from the chains of colonialism and its oppressive spiritual legacy. Indigenous women's initiatives to recover their ancestral religious legacy constitute a decolonizing effort. Through a deconstruction of past captivities, they recreate a horizon of ancestrally inspired spirituality. They lay claim to an ethics of recovery while rejecting the violence and subjugation suffered by their ancestors within the religious and cultural domains. 'We only come to ask for justice,' the organized indigenous women have repeatedly declared. Yes, justice is their demand: material, social, and political justice. They also seek recognition of and respect for their cosmological beliefs as an integral part of their feminist vision.

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# Religion and the Historical Imagination: Esoteric Tradition as Poetic Invention

**Abstract:** In this contribution, it is argued that the concept of ‘imagination’ should be restored to the status of a crucial key term in the study of religion. More specifically, attention is focused here on the importance of the *historical* imagination as an object of research (as distinct from its importance as a factor *in* research) and its relation to strict historicity. The dynamics of the historical imagination can be analyzed in terms of a double polarity: factuality versus non-factuality and poeticity versus non-poeticity. Historical narratives with a high degree of poeticity tend to be remembered and have an impact on readers even if they are factually inaccurate, while narratives with a low degree of poeticity tend to be disregarded or forgotten even if they are factually accurate. Against this background, four influential historical ‘grand narratives’ are analyzed: (1) the Renaissance and predominantly Catholic story of ‘ancient wisdom’ through the ages; (2) its negative counterpart inspired by Protestant polemics, referred to as the story of ‘pagan error’ through the ages; (3) the Enlightenment story of progress through rational ‘Enlightenment’; and (4) its counterpart more congenial to Romantic sentiments, the story of a progressive ‘education of Humanity.’ Such imaginative narratives have a strong impact because they are able to engage the emotions, and hence we need to analyze how specific narratives afford specific economies of emotionality. Because religious grand narratives are the reflection of highly eclectic types of historiography, they need to be countered by an anti-eclectic historiography that does not sacrifice factuality to poeticity. And yet, it is at least as important for historians to accept the task of telling new ‘true stories’ about religion too: narratives that engage the imagination of their readers without sacrificing nuance, complexity, and factual accuracy.

**Keywords:** imagination, historicity, poeticity, ancient wisdom narrative, paganism, Enlightenment, education of humanity, emotions, grand narratives

The soul never thinks without an image.  
(Aristotle, *De Anima* III.7. 431 a 16)

As recently argued by Lucia Traut and Annette Wilke, the concept of *imagination* has been strangely neglected in the modern study of religion and should urgently be restored to the status of a crucial ‘key term’ in our discipline (Traut, Wilke

2015, 19, 60). They rightly point out that although scholars of religion are using the term quite frequently, even in the very titles of monographs,<sup>1</sup> it tends to be treated rather vaguely and without much theoretical reflection.<sup>2</sup> At present, there is no general theoretical debate going on about the imagination, its nature, its function, or its relevance to the historical, social, discursive, or cognitive dimensions of religion. There is no entry on ‘imagination’ in standard reference works such as Mark C. Taylor’s *Critical Terms for Religious Studies* (1998) or Willi Braun and Russell T. McCutcheon’s *Guide to the Study of Religion* (2000); it is not a topic of discussion in Peter Antes, Armin Geertz and Randi Warne’s *New Approaches to the Study of Religion* (2005); nor does it play a role of any significance in Michael Stausberg’s more recent overview *Contemporary Theories of Religion* (2009), and it is absent from the list of entries for Stausberg and Steven Engler’s *Oxford Handbook for the Study of Religion* (2016). Clearly, modern scholars of religion still see the imagination pretty much as a non-issue.

## 1 The imagination between caretakers and critics

I will be arguing in this article that the imagination should be promoted to the status of a key topic in the study of religion. To illustrate its importance, let us first take a quick look at the basic theoretical and methodological opposition between ‘religionist’ scholars and their critics. By religionists I mean scholars of religion in the tradition of Mircea Eliade and other intellectuals historically affiliated to the Eranos circle (Hanegraaff 2012, 277–314); by their critics I mean modern scholars associated with organizations such as the North American Association for the Study of Religion (NAASR), or journals such as *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion*. Their basic approaches are ultimately incompatible, and both are highly influential in the study of religion as well as popular understandings of religions, especially in the United States. As is well known, religionists (the chief academic ‘caretakers’ of religion according to the well-known terminology of McCutcheon 2011) tend to think in terms of mythical archetypes, uni-

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1 Probably the best-known case is Jonathan Z. Smith’s *Imagining Religion* (Smith 1982). Other examples mentioned by Traut and Wilke are Ronald Inden’s *Imagining India*, the notion of ‘imagined homelands’ in diaspora studies, and Benedict Anderson’s ‘imagined communities’ (Traut, Wilke 2015, 19). A quick search on Amazon for ‘imagination’ / ‘imagining’ and ‘religion’ is sufficient to demonstrate how often the terminology is being used in the titles of scholarly books on religion.

2 There are, of course, exceptions. See e.g. Herdt, Stephen 1989; Shulman 2012; Pezzoli-Olgiati 2015; and Wolfson 1994, Wolfson 2011, Wolfson 2014 (cf. note 7).

versal symbols, or a *mundus imaginalis*, and their entire conceptual apparatus relies on their highly positive understanding of the imagination as a faculty of knowledge that enables us to apprehend profound spiritual realities beyond the reach of mere rationality or normal sense experience. In short, they assume that the religious imagination is *noetic*, as it somehow puts us in touch with ultimate or deeper levels of reality. In sharp contrast, modern scholars in the ‘critical’ tradition typically argue, or assume implicitly, that gods, angels, demons, or any other spiritual entities are obviously not real but exist only in the human imagination. For them, the task of the scholar consists in piercing through the veil of imaginative fantasies and illusions to get at the more fundamental social, psychological, discursive, or political realities that actually explain religion. In short, they believe that the religious imagination is not noetic but *deceptive*: it prevents us from perceiving reality.

While scholars in the critical tradition clearly disagree with religionists about how the imagination should be assessed and valued in the context of religion, one would therefore expect them at least to agree about its importance. After all, if the imagination does such a good job at confusing religious believers about the true nature of reality and making them believe in things that do not exist, then should we not try to analyze that phenomenon in depth? As already noted, however, that expectation is not borne out in practice. This is a remarkable fact, for it suggests that although ‘critical’ scholars see themselves as standing in a rationalist and secularist tradition, they might not be aware of the *central* role that the imagination played in the philosophical project of the Enlightenment, from Thomas Hobbes and David Hume to Immanuel Kant. As formulated by Mary Warnock in her classic analysis of this debate, Kant had to draw the conclusion that

Without imagination, we could never apply concepts to sense experience. Whereas a wholly sensory life would be without any regularity or organization, a purely intellectual life would be without any real content. And this amounts to saying that with either the senses or the intellect we could not experience the world as we do. The two elements are not automatically joined to each other in their functions. They need a further element to join them. The joining element is the imagination ... (Warnock 1976, 30).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> This is not to deny that Kant saw the role of the imagination in human cognition as a deeply troubling fact. On his ambivalent attempts to minimize and obscure its importance between the first and second edition of the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, and the significant differences between how he discussed the imagination in his theoretical and his empirical writings, see Böhme, Böhme 1983, 231–250; Kneller 2007, chs 1 and 5; and cf. Wolfson 2014, 1–2 n. 3 with further literature.

The intellectual foundations for this conclusion can be found already in Hobbes and Hume. It was therefore the Enlightenment (and *not* Romanticism, as is often assumed, cf. Engell 1981) that discovered the imagination as a faculty of the mind that is crucial to our very capacity of apprehending reality and bringing order to the chaos of sense impressions (Engell 1981, 3–10). To the best of my knowledge, these conclusions have never been refuted.<sup>4</sup> Rather, what happened is that they were expanded, reinterpreted, and taken into entirely new directions by Romantic thinkers such as Schelling, Wordsworth and especially Coleridge, who famously distinguished between the ‘primary imagination’ through which all of us perceive the world around us and the ‘secondary imagination’ that is central to artistic creativity and genius (Warnock 1976, 66–130; Warnock 1994, 22–44). As a result of this development, we have come to assume, quite incorrectly, that imagination stands in contrast with rationality just as Romanticism stands in contrast with the Enlightenment. I would argue, rather, that if religionists take inspiration from Romantic speculation about the secondary imagination and its quasi-divine creative powers,<sup>5</sup> scholars in the critical tradition should get more familiar *at least* with the Enlightenment argument concerning the primary imagination and its central role in human cognition.

What we can learn from Hume and Kant is that the imagination is the primary reality of our mental lives as thinking animals. It is only by means of our imaginative faculty that we are able to entertain ‘concepts’ and ‘ideas’ at all. Precisely how the imagination accomplishes such miracles was a mystery to Kant, and he despaired about ever resolving it: he called it ‘an art concealed in the depth of the human soul whose real modes of activity Nature is hardly

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<sup>4</sup> See e.g. Clark 2013, 197–199.

<sup>5</sup> Perhaps partly for chauvinistic reasons, Coleridge’s obscure musings on the imagination have received much attention particularly from British scholars. I would agree with Mary Warnock that although the Romantic theory of imagination is certainly of great cultural and historical importance, from a more technical and philosophical point of view it is far inferior to the British empiricist and Kantian tradition. As Warnock notes, with a fine point of irony, ‘Instead of arguments, we are presented with repeated statements, obscure, dark and perhaps profound. The reason for this change, this tremendous deterioration in the rational climate, is that the sharp distinction which Kant had drawn between what could and could not be known, between legitimate thought, and impossible, empty metaphysical speculation, had been done away with’ (Warnock 1976, 63–64). For a fascinating discussion of how Coleridge’s understanding of the imagination seeks to overcome methodological agnosticism in order to create the foundation for a new kind of ‘Romantic Religion,’ exemplified for instance in the sophisticated esoteric philosophy of Owen Barfield, see Reilly 2006. Incidentally, Barfield’s crucial influence on J.R.R. Tolkien, whose famous theory of faerie (Tolkien 1966) is based upon the same foundations, makes this lineage highly relevant to Markus Altena Davidsen’s research on fiction-based religion in the “Spiritual Tolkien Milieu” (Davidsen 2014).

likely ever to allow us to discover, and to have open to our gaze' (Kant 1787, B 180 – 181; Warnock 1976, 32). This might be a defeatist position, at least from contemporary perspectives, for it would seem that cognitive scientists are presently rediscovering the fundamentals that were first uncovered by Hobbes, Hume, and Kant. In their groundbreaking work on 'conceptual blending,' Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner observe that cognitive studies have long been led astray by the insistence of twentieth century analytical philosophers that figurative thought should be excluded from 'core meaning.' This made them blind to the fact that, in fact, 'imaginative operations of meaning construction ... work at lightning speed, below the horizon of consciousness' (Fauconnier, Turner 2002, 15). Their conclusion is radical, and I would like to highlight it for special emphasis:

The next step in the study of mind is the scientific study of the nature and mechanisms of the imagination (Fauconnier, Turner 2002, 8).

If Fauconnier and Turner are correct, then it is clearly time for us as scholars of religion to get serious about establishing the imagination as a new key term in our discipline as well.<sup>6</sup>

## 2 The historical imagination as an object of research

The imagination is obviously a very large topic, with many potential applications in the study of religion and other cultural domains (cf. Brann 1991). In this article I will be exploring just one possible avenue: that of the *historical* imagination as an *object* of research (and not, therefore, as a factor *in* historical research, important and interesting though that topic certainly is).<sup>7</sup> My concern will be simply with how religious actors imagine history – a question that, as will be seen, is inseparable from the question of how they find meaning in it. Building upon

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<sup>6</sup> For a pioneering application of conceptual blending to the Nag Hammadi corpus, see Lundhaug 2010; and cf. Davidsen 2016.

<sup>7</sup> The 'historical imagination' has been on the agenda of historical method and philosophy of history at least since Hayden White's classic *Metahistory* (1973), and arguably already since R.G. Collingwood's work after World War II. The relation between fictionality and historicity has been an object of vigorous debate in specialized journals and popular media; and even though these heated discussions may 'have given off more smoke than light' (as remarked by Ann Rigney, *Imperfect Histories*, Rigney 2001, 5), at least the importance of the question is generally understood by historians.

the argumentative tradition of Hume and Kant, Mary Warnock has explained why it is that ‘without imagination we could have no idea of past, present and future’ (Warnock 1994, 88): that is to say, no idea of continuity in time. We give meaning to this continuity by turning the succession of events into a story: a narrative with a plot. However, this very operation is an extremely selective simplification that inevitably does violence to the infinite complexity of historical events. Furthermore, whereas any story has a beginning, middle, and end, history is different in that we all find ourselves in the middle of it and do not know its end (Warnock 1994, 108). My concern in this contribution is therefore not with history as such, but with religious actors who turn history into a story, or impose a story upon history.

These stories are products of the historical imagination and, more specifically, of historical *memory*. Memory is generally considered a sub-class of the imagination, as it allows us to picture what is no longer the case or what we are no longer experiencing. Just as our *individual* sense of identity depends upon how we remember our life (if we lose our memory, we literally no longer know who we are), likewise our sense of *collective* identity depends upon how we remember our common history. However, our memory is not a photographic plate. Like all other forms of imagination, it is an *active* faculty that continually recreates the past in the very process of preserving it. Just as we perceive the world ‘out there’ only through the medium of our imagination, we perceive history ‘back then’ only through the medium of our individual and collective memory. In both situations, the medium causes us to see things that exhibit highly variable degrees of accurate correspondence to the realities ‘out there’ or ‘back then.’

This leads me to Jan Assmann’s concept of *Gedächtnisgeschichte*, or mnemo-history (Assmann 1992; Assmann 1997, 6–22; Assmann 2000). To explain my understanding of it – which is somewhat different from Assmann’s own (Hanegraaff 2007, 112; Hanegraaff 2012, 375–378) – let me begin with a concrete example. The sixteenth-century humanist Cornelius Agrippa (1486–1535/36) was remembered for many generations as a black magician in league with the devil, and among other things, this caused him to become a model for the figure of Faust in Goethe’s famous tragedy. In fact, however, specialists know that Agrippa was not only a philosophical skeptic but also a very pious Christian fideist who saw unquestioning faith in Jesus Christ as the only reliable foundation for true knowledge and salvation (van der Poel 1997). At first sight, we might be tempted to think of these two conflicting pictures as ‘the Agrippa of the imagination’ versus ‘the Agrippa of history,’ but this would be correct only in a very rough and imprecise sense. It is more accurate to say that while *any* picture of Agrippa exists only in our historical imagination, Agrippa the black magician displays a relatively high degree of non-factuality, whereas Agrippa the skeptic

and Christian fideist displays a relatively high degree of factuality. Factuality and non-factuality may then be seen as theoretical polarities between which a narrative can be located:

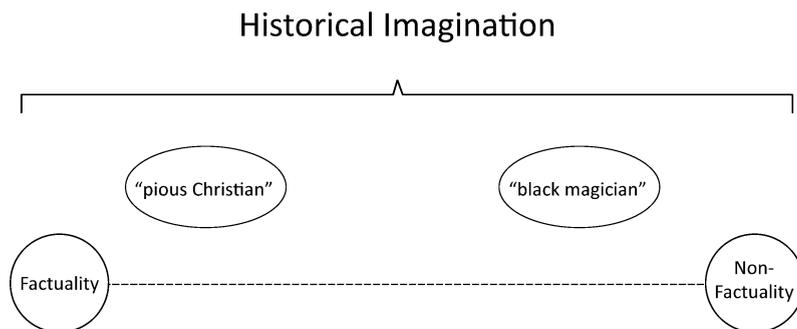


Fig. 1

The worrying fact from a historian’s perspective is that the Agrippa that tends to be remembered is the relatively non-factual one, for the simple reason that he makes a good story – one that displays a relatively high degree of *poeticity*.<sup>8</sup> By contrast, the relatively historical Agrippa tends to be forgotten because his story displays a relatively low degree of poeticity. His memory is typically preserved only by specialized historians writing for a limited academic audience.

This example was chosen to illustrate the concept of mnemohistory, which may be defined as ‘the history of how we remember the past,’ as opposed to the history of ‘what actually happened in the past.’ The relevance of this distinction lies in the fact that it is ultimately grounded in the inherent paradoxality of the imagination – a deeply puzzling feature that goes to the heart of what the imagination is all about and may be the chief reason why philosophers tend

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<sup>8</sup> I am grateful to Markus Altena Davidsen for convincing me of the need to break up my original notion of ‘fictionality’ into two component parts. As Davidsen pointed out to me, fictionality can mean either non-factuality or poeticity (i.e. those patterns that are needed for a ‘good story’), and these should be distinguished because ‘factuality draws the historical imagination towards absolute referentiality/accuracy, but poeticity does not draw it towards absolute non-referentiality/non-factuality’ (Davidsen, personal communication, November 27, 2015).

to find it so problematic.<sup>9</sup> The imagination never *shows* us the world ‘out there’ or ‘back then’ otherwise than by *creating* it for us in our mind, which is just another way of saying that it only shows us things by deceiving us about them, or reveals them only by concealing them from our gaze. Now if we focus on one horn of this dilemma and emphasize the *deceptive* side of the historical imagination, this will inspire us to pierce through the veil of historical fantasies in order to discover (in the famous words of Leopold von Ranke) *wie es eigentlich gewesen*, how things really were. This is the post-Enlightenment project of classic historical criticism, or critical historiography, which concentrates on investigating the primary sources in meticulous detail and is bound to conclude (if we stick to our example) that Agrippa was not a black magician at all, but a philosophical skeptic and fideist Christian. Here we are dealing with the classic function of historiography as an instrument of *Entmythologisierung*.

I cannot emphasize enough that, in my opinion, such critical historiography is indispensable as the foundation for any serious historical research project, in the field of religion as well as anywhere else. Without it, we are building our houses on sand. But essential as it may be, it is structurally incomplete: it must be complemented by the practice of mnemohistory or, more precisely, mnemohistoriography (Hanegraaff 2012, 375–376). Here are we dealing with the other horn of the dilemma. It is true that the imagination (like memory) is ultimately deceptive; however, it is ultimately revelatory as well, for it is only *through* these deceptions that we are able to apprehend reality at all! The imagination discloses the world to us in the form of creative inventions that must be studied for their own sake; and this is true for the world of realities ‘out there’ as well as of realities ‘back then.’ Perhaps most important of all, it is naive to assume that the creative products of the historical imagination simply stand over against the objective facts of history – on the contrary, they find themselves *among* those facts and can be studied as such. To return to our example: the multiple distortions, misunderstandings, and creative inventions about Agrippa (in short, everything – whether false or correct – that pertains to how Agrippa has been perceived) are fully part of *wie es eigentlich gewesen*. One might even argue that, as far as Agrippa’s historical impact is concerned, these fantasies are ultimately more relevant and important than his ‘real’ identity known only to a few specialists. In sum, mnemohistory focuses on Agrippa as imagined and remembered. Accordingly, a mnemohistoriographical analysis of Agrippa

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<sup>9</sup> For particularly profound and complex analyses of the religious imagination and its inherent paradoxality, see the oeuvre of Elliott Wolfson, e.g. 1994, 204–214 *et passim*; Wolfson 2011, 109–142 *et passim*; Wolfson 2014, 1–13 *et passim*.

will describe in meticulous detail how the chain of imaginative reconstructions has developed through time. Whereas Jan Assmann seems to think of mnemohistory as an independent pursuit, I would insist that history and mnemohistory must always be practiced in dialectical interaction.

### 3 Example 1: The story of ancient wisdom

In the rest of this article, I will focus on the role of the historical imagination in my own field of specialization, Western esotericism. My concern is with the *longue durée* of a series of historical currents, ideas, and practices from late antiquity to the present that share at least one thing in common: the simple fact that they were discredited and marginalized in scholarly research since the period of the Enlightenment and therefore ended up in a vaguely defined no-man's land beyond the established academic disciplines. In other words, as I have tried to explain elsewhere (Hanegraaff 2012), the materials that we now categorize under the rubric of 'Western esotericism' can be characterized as the historical casualties of Enlightenment discourse: they represent everything (e.g. 'magic,' 'occult philosophy,' 'superstition,' 'the irrational,' or even simply 'stupidity') that the intellectual elites and the emerging academy perceived as incompatible with their own agendas of modern science and rationality and against which they therefore defined their own identity. This means that the field can be defined as the Enlightenment's polemical Other, because it stands for the sum total of discredited or rejected knowledge that Enlightenment thinkers felt they needed to discard in the interest of modern science, reason, and progress.

That agenda was expressed with particular clarity by the nowadays forgotten Enlightenment pioneer in the history of philosophy Christoph August Heumann. In his *Acta Philosophorum* (the very first professional journal devoted to history of philosophy), he wrote in 1715 that all these fake or pseudo philosophies should be dumped 'into the sea of oblivion' (*das Meer der Vergangenheit*) to be forgotten forever. Following an argumentative logic of destruction reminiscent of the recent assault by 'Islamic State' on Palmyra and other monuments of 'pagan' antiquity (Hanegraaff 2015), he argued that no documentary source of these 'superstitious idiocies' should be preserved in libraries and archives. Their very memory had to be erased from collective consciousness (Heumann 1715, 209–211; see Hanegraaff 2012, 132–133). This comparison with the human and cultural tragedy that is currently unfolding in the Middle East is not just random but based upon a true parallel: these Enlightenment polemics were built directly upon the struggle of monotheist religions, Christianity in particular, and Protestantism even more in particular, with the late Hellenistic com-

plex of a broadly Platonizing religion and philosophy that may conveniently be referred to here as ancient *paganism* and which was understood as deeply infected by *idolatry* (cf. Hanegraaff 2005; Hanegraaff 2007). For Protestant thinkers in particular, quite similarly to how 'Islamic State' looks at pagan remains, these traditions came from the devil and should be destroyed.

More specifically, and crucial to my argument here, the Enlightenment polemic was a secularist reformulation of the early modern Protestant attack on an extremely influential historical narrative that can be defined as *Platonic Orientalism* (Walbridge 2001; Hanegraaff 2012, 12–17).<sup>10</sup> We are dealing here with an extremely powerful historical narrative that has been operative in Western consciousness since the Patristic period and was formulated in explicit programmatic terms during the Italian Renaissance. Here it will serve as my first example of the poeticizing historical imagination and the construction of cultural memory. In what follows, I will deliberately try to present it not as an argument about historical events, but as *a story* (before reading on, please read this footnote).<sup>11</sup>

*Once upon a time, in very ancient days long before the birth of Christianity, the Light of true spiritual wisdom began to shine in the East. Some say it all started in Egypt, with Hermes Trismegistus; others say it began with Zoroaster in Persia; yet others say that it originated with Moses among the Hebrews. But wherever its ultimate beginning may have been, its true source was God himself, who caused the Light of wisdom to be born in the darkness of human ignorance. The Light now began to spread, carried forward through the ages by a long succession of divinely inspired teachers, until it finally reached Plato and his school in Athens. Now Plato was much more than just a rational philosopher: he was a divinely inspired teacher of wisdom. His dialogues did not present any new and original message either: they merely reformulated the ancient and universal religion of spiritual Truth and Light. Henceforth the true wisdom was carried forward by a succession of Platonic teachers and philoso-*

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**10** Of course, this terminology cannot fail to evoke associations in any reader's mind (or more precisely, in his/her imagination!) with Edward Said and postcolonial theory, but for our present purposes it will be useful to bracket those associations. In my opinion, Said's Orientalism should be interpreted as a limited nineteenth century subset of a much larger historical phenomenon in which Platonic Orientalism plays a very major role; but that argument would lead us far beyond the scope of this article.

**11** At this point we are confronted with the inherent limitations of a standard academic format. The present article is based upon a keynote lecture delivered at the Congress of the International Association for the History of Religion, Erfurt (Germany), 25 August 2015. Having asked my audience to 'sit back and enjoy the story,' I deliberately abandoned the 'neutral' tone of voice that is appropriate for an academic lecture and did my best to shift to the more dramatizing style of a storyteller (trying to take some inspiration, here and there, from Galadriel's voice at the beginning of Peter Jackson's *Lord of the Rings*). I accompanied the story with an elaborate series of Powerpoint slides, consisting only of images to the storyline. Readers of the present article are kindly invited to try and read the story in a similar manner.

*phers, and this tradition finally culminated in the religion of Jesus Christ. When Christianity began to conquer the world, this should have been the glorious fulfilment of the ancient divine revelation. However, something went terribly wrong. The Christian message was perverted and misunderstood. As the Church was triumphant over its opponents, Christians were progressively blinded by power and the pursuit of worldly pleasures. And so, because of their impurity, they slowly lost touch with the ancient core of all true religion. They no longer understood that the gospel was meant to be the culmination and fulfilment of pagan wisdom. Instead, they began to see all pagans as their mortal enemies – practitioners of idolatry and worshippers of demons, dangerous agents of darkness who must be annihilated in God's name. The Platonic philosophers themselves, and their ancient Oriental predecessors (those who had been the first carriers of the Light) were now perceived as teachers of the dark arts instead. And so it was that the ancient wisdom declined and its true nature was forgotten. There came a time when the leaders of the Church themselves had descended to the level of common criminals, and the very institution of the Church had become an embarrassment to all true Christians. It was at this darkest moment of history, when all seemed lost, that God himself intervened, and after the long darkness of Winter, a new Spring arrived. By the mysterious workings of Divine Providence, the manuscripts of Plato and the ancient teachers of Oriental Wisdom were rediscovered and restored to the light of day. They traveled all the way to Italy, the heartland of the Church, and were translated into Latin and the vernacular languages. Just when they were most needed, due to the miracle of printing, all the sources of ancient wisdom could now be read and studied by the multitudes, more widely than could ever have been imagined at any previous period of time. And so it is that at this darkest moment of decline and forgetfulness, God reminded humanity of the true sources of Wisdom, Truth, and Light. Surely this is the beginning of a new Reformation that will purge the Church of its errors and usher in a New Age of the Spirit. Behold the Golden Times are returning!*

This is the essential story that Italian humanists such as Marsilio Ficino and his many followers were telling themselves and their readers by the end of the fifteenth century (Hanegraaff 2012, 5–53). It is crucial to my argument to be clear about the high drama and emotional appeal of which a historical narrative such as this is capable – especially if it is told not with a stance of academic distance and irony, but with the moral force and commitment of a narrator who shows his sympathy with the ‘Lightbearers’ and their journey through history. In discussing such narratives as scholars, we sometimes risk forgetting that we are not just dealing with a theory, a theological doctrine, or an intellectual argument about history – in short, with something that neatly fits our own preferred order of academic discourse. The narrative may contain, or refer to, all those elements; but at the most basic level we are dealing with *a story* that is meant to speak directly to the imagination and engage the emotions. I want to insist that this is not a trivial observation. The core narrative of Ancient Wisdom had a very strong impact on the historical imagination of mainstream intellectuals from the fifteenth to at least the eighteenth century, and after its decline in mainstream academic discourse, it has continued to do so in esoteric milieus up to the pres-

ent. Its remarkable power to influence discourse can certainly not be explained just by the rational arguments or historical evidence that its defenders have tried to muster in support. First and foremost, that power resides in the fact that it is a good story that appeals to the imagination and engages the emotions. Its poeticity is crucial to understanding its appeal.

So what is it that makes this a good story? Or formulated in more technical language, what are the chief ‘affordances’ (Davidsen 2014, 96–104) that make it possible, even likely, for such a historical narrative about Ancient Wisdom to be accepted by readers as plausible and persuasive? We should distinguish here between religious and historical plausibility. With reference to the example at hand, if readers find it *religiously* plausible this means that they are willing to assume that the spiritual Light is real and valuable, whereas if they find it *historically* plausible this means that they are willing to assume that events happened basically the way the story tells us they happened. While there is a logical hierarchy between the two (the Light could exist without the story but the story could not exist without the Light), it seems to me that the story’s religious plausibility does not depend on its historical plausibility (one does not assume there is a spiritual Light because things happened the way they happened), nor that its historical plausibility depends on its religious plausibility (one does not assume things to have happened the way they happened because there is a spiritual Light). Rather, it would seem that religious *and* historical plausibility here both depend on the power of the story as such: one is willing to assume that there is a Light, and that this is how it has been carried forward through history, *simply because the story has such an appeal*. So why does it? This is a question that must ultimately be answered in terms of basic human psychology; and in order to answer it, we will need an empirical psychology of the imagination, the emotions, and their mutual interaction.

As far as I can see, the story of Ancient Wisdom has two chief affordances in view of its religious and historical plausibility, and these should be at the center of such a psychological analysis:

(1) It is marked by a clear ethical *dualism*, formulated not just in the somewhat abstract and always debatable terminology of ‘good’ versus ‘evil’ but visualized directly as a battle of Light against Darkness. If the story succeeds in engaging its listeners, they will identify with the Lightbearers who have been working so hard to keep the true knowledge alive, while feeling negative emotions (sadness, defiance, anger) about the forces of darkness and ignorance.

(2) Successive historical events are framed as a *journey or adventure* through history, in which the protagonists suffer all kinds of setbacks but also experience unexpected moments of salvation. If the story appeals to us, then we are glad to watch the sages carrying on the Light and handing it over to their successors

from generation to generation; we are shocked, disappointed, and worried when the mission is betrayed by those who should have known better; we are appalled at the blindness of those who oppose the Light; we feel we want to come to the rescue of the Lightbearers who are so unjustly accused; we feel greatly relieved at the unexpected arrival of help from above; and we are inspired by hope that the forces of darkness and ignorance will not have the final word but the Light will prevail.

## 4 Example 2: The story of pagan error

Having made these suggestions, let us now move on to a second example of the poeticizing historical imagination and the construction of cultural memory. Against the Renaissance narrative of Pagan Wisdom we find an equally influential counter-narrative of Pagan Error. It originated among Roman Catholic critics of Platonism such as Giambattista Pico della Mirandola and polemicists against witchcraft such as Johann Weyer, gathered momentum with Counter-Reformation intellectuals such as Giovanni Battista Crispo, and became central to the frontal Protestant assault on Platonic Orientalism during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Hanegraaff 2012, 77–152). The basic storyline goes as follows (and again, it is helpful to try and imagine it as dramatically as possible):

*Far from being teachers of wisdom, the pagan sages of the ancient Orient (Zoroaster, Hermes, Pythagoras, Plato and his followers) were teachers of darkness. They were in league with evil demons, the false gods of the heathens, who taught them the arts of magic and expected to be worshiped in hideous rites of idolatry. Far from being a preacher of Egyptian wisdom, Moses was elected to liberate the Jewish people from the darkness of Egyptian paganism. The true religion of the One God began with him, and finally culminated in Christianity. However [just as in the Ancient Wisdom narrative], something went terribly wrong at that point. In their efforts to explain the gospel in doctrinal terms, the Fathers of the Church began making use of the so-called philosophy of Plato. Seduced by the eloquence of the Platonic authors, who could speak so beautifully about God as the One source of Being from whom everything had flown forth, they did not realize that they were allowing the Christian message to get infected by the virus of pagan error: a religion of emanation that rejected the creatio ex nihilo and undermined the need for faith in Jesus Christ by suggesting that everyone could find the truth in himself. This is how the Christian message came to be poisoned by pagan errors that caused the Church of Christ to be slowly transformed into the Church of Antichrist. However, at the time of deepest darkness, when the church was ruled by criminals and even the original pagan texts were freely disseminated like never before, God sent Martin Luther to remind Christians of the true message and purify the Church of its pagan errors. In their battle against the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church, the Reformers are really fighting against the demonic forces of darkness that had succeeded in extinguishing the light of the gospel and had replaced it by the false doctrines of Platonic and ancient Oriental paganism. Only when Chris-*

*tianity will be fully purged from the darkness of pagan idolatry will the light of the Gospel be triumphant.*

Clearly, this Protestant story is a perfect mirror image of the earlier one. The teachers of light have become teachers of darkness; the so-called pagan wisdom is exposed as pagan error; Platonic philosophy is not the cure for Christianity but the cause of its decline; the rediscovery of ancient Oriental and Platonic manuscripts in the Italian Renaissance is not a divine intervention but an ultimate attempt by the devil to pervert the minds of Christians; and the Reformation of the Church does not imply a rediscovery of ancient pagan wisdom but, on the contrary, requires its final destruction.

Again, it is a very good story. As far as I can tell, its most important affordances are still the same: a sharp ethical dualism of darkness and light, and the notion of a journey or adventure through history that has many setbacks but should culminate in a happy end. The difference between the two stories clearly lies in their radically opposed valuations of ancient Hellenistic paganism in general and Platonic Orientalism more in particular, but also in the basic emotions to which they make an appeal (a point to which I will return below). The Ancient Wisdom narrative and the Protestant counter-narrative can be seen as model stories that allow many variations. In contemporary New Age culture, for instance, it is easy to see how the Renaissance model of Platonic Orientalism has morphed into a wide variety of popular esoteric and New Age narratives about the ancient tradition of spiritual wisdom carried on through the ages by lightbearers or lightworkers, ascended masters or mahatmas, who are patiently trying to awaken human beings to their inner divinity. In the world of Evangelicals and Christian fundamentalists, on the other hand, we encounter endless variations on the Protestant counter-narrative about the battle against the very real demonic forces of the occult.

I have been arguing that stories such as these – emotion-laden inventions of the historical imagination – may ultimately be more fundamental to how religion functions than verbal discourse. Critics might want to argue that it is possible to understand imaginative formations as falling *within* the domain of discourse, but I suggest that it is rather the other way around: human discourse falls within the wider context of the historical imagination. Linguistic signs, verbal communication, and so on, are embedded in pre-verbal thought that operates through images. We see things before we start talking about them. We are not telling stories about abstract words or concepts but about how we perceive reality in our minds. This reality may correspond either to the world that presently surrounds us (the world ‘out there’) or to the remembered world of the past (the world ‘back then’), but in either case we perceive it only through the imagination.

## 5 Examples 3 and 4: The stories of enlightenment and the education of humanity

To expand the scope of analysis, I will proceed with two more examples of the poeticizing historical imagination and the construction of cultural memory. My third example is the classic ‘grand narrative’ of rationality and scientific progress that underpins the projects of Enlightenment and Modernity. Interestingly, it turns out to be a mixture of the two previous narratives. The storyline is familiar, and goes as follows:

*Once upon a time, in ancient Greece, the light of Reason began to shine. Rather than believing blindly in imaginative fables about the gods or accepting the dictates of priestly elites, philosophers began to think for themselves and draw their own conclusions from direct observation of the physical world. They began to build a rational worldview in harmony with the experience of the senses. In doing so, they were trying to liberate their fellow humans from the reactionary forces of mystical obscurantism, magical superstition, and religious prejudice, insisting on free inquiry and the quest for rational understanding. Due to their efforts, the Light of Reason began to spread. But then a new religious power emerged to oppose them: that of Christianity and its doctrine of salvation through Jesus Christ alone, supported by irrational trinitarian doctrines and assisted by a powerful priestly hierarchy that sought to suppress the freedom of the human spirit. The result was a new Dark Age of ignorance and superstition that lasted many centuries. Only with the Renaissance revival of classical learning did Reason begin to make its comeback, assisted by the Reformation and its success in breaking the hegemony of the Church. As scientists began to discover the true laws of nature, thereby demonstrating the absurdity of religious prejudice, Reason finally triumphed over superstition, and human freedom over despotism. Thus the foundations were created for a better society of Enlightenment and Progress. Against the reactionary forces of religious prejudice and magical superstition, Reason must and will prevail. Through rational education, the human mind can be cured of ignorance and persuaded of the truth. In the end, it is only stupidity and blindness to reason and facts that obstructs the forward march of Science and Reason.*

Just as in the Ancient Wisdom narrative, the light is born in Antiquity but suffers a serious decline due to the rise of Christianity, only to be rekindled through the revival of secular (pagan) learning in the Renaissance. But of course we are dealing here with the light of reason, not the mystical light of spiritual wisdom. Likewise, the spreading of the light is hindered and opposed not by a force of demonic evil but by human despotism and ignorance, not to mention sheer stupidity. Again, it is a very good story that relies for its effect on the same affordances that were noted earlier: a clear dualism of light and darkness, and an eventful story or adventure through history towards a hopeful happy end.

Interestingly, this is different with my fourth and final example of the poeticizing historical imagination and the construction of cultural memory. We have

seen that the Platonic Orientalist narrative of ‘pagan wisdom’ stands against the Protestant counter-narrative of ‘pagan demonism.’ Similarly, against the Enlightenment narrative of ‘rational paganism’ stands a Romantic counter-narrative that relies on what might be called an ‘esoteric paganism’ (cf. Hanegraaff 2012, 260–277). The basic storyline is as follows:

*The history of human consciousness began in the innocence of childhood. Humanity was still living in a dreamlike state, intimately at one with Nature, under the benevolent guidance of an enlightened priesthood of visionaries and healers. The voice of divinity spoke to the human mind directly, through a poetic Ur-language of images, symbols, signatures and correspondences. Secret doctrines were transmitted to the spiritual elites through mystery initiations and mythical narratives. This original Oriental wisdom reached its culmination in Egypt, but it was through the people of Israel that human consciousness began to progress and grow through adolescence to maturity, culminating in the appearance of the absolute and universal religion of Christianity. Thanks to the Platonic tradition, the ancient wisdom of the Orient flowed harmoniously into the heart of Christian doctrine. The Middle Ages, the time of the great cathedrals and the Holy Roman Empire, were the great period of Christian splendor and harmonious unity. But spiritual evolution and progress requires strife and effort to move forward, and so the human mind had to encounter new challenges to grow further. The unity of Christendom was shattered by the advent of the Reformation, leading to an age of individualism and rational inquiry. The natural sciences tried to pierce the veil of Isis so as to discover the very mysteries of divinity itself, up to a point where human consciousness got so much divorced and alienated from the sources of true wisdom and divinity that philosophers and theologians even began to doubt the very existence of God. However, the evolution of human consciousness unfolds through history under the mysterious guidance of divine Providence, which will always take care to lead its children back on the right track even if they lose their way for a while. As the human mind reaches full maturity, the individual Self will be at one with the Self of the universe, and human beings will choose in freedom to live in harmony with the spiritual laws of divine wisdom.*

Although this narrative adopts some crucial aspects of the Ancient Wisdom narrative of Platonic Orientalism, its structure is clearly very different from the ones we have seen before. The guiding idea is evolutionary: it is concerned with the steady progress of human consciousness as a whole, understood (in the terms of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing) as an ‘education of the human race’ (Lessing 1780) under the guidance of a benevolent divine force that patiently leads it towards full maturity. Contrary to all three previous narratives, this one is *not* based upon a dualistic opposition of light against darkness, for the final outcome of the process is never in doubt. The trials and tragedies of human history are ultimately just tests and challenges: they do not seriously endanger the larger process but, on the contrary, are necessary in order for it to move forward. Obviously, we recognize this narrative as ‘Hegelian’; but it is more accurate to say

that Hegel's philosophy of history is a primary example of a far more widespread Romantic narrative.

## 6 The emotions

If I have been calling attention to the role of the emotions throughout this article, it is because the theme of the imagination requires such an emphasis. The fact that feelings, affections, or passions are more easily evoked by imaginative representations than by strictly rational argument is a commonplace in philosophical analysis in this domain. For instance, David Hume already remarked that 'lively passions commonly attend a lively imagination' (Hume 1739, Bk III.3.6) and observed, in a discussion of political discourse, that 'men are mightily governed by the imagination, and proportion their affections more to the light under which any object appears to them, than to its real and intrinsic value' (Hume 1739, Bk III.2.7; cf. Warnock 1976, 38). This phenomenon is so well known from daily experience that I do not think it is in need of any further proof. Of course, these observations can easily be applied to the topic of the historical imagination as well: there is no doubt (cf. the example of Agrippa, above) that beyond the restricted circles of specialized historians, the 'real and intrinsic value' of historical data tends to take a back seat compared to how they are 'made to appear' through narrative framing. Whenever any of my four historical stories succeeds in convincing an audience, clearly this is not because it provides factual information that is perceived by them to be correct, but because the story engages the emotions.

The historical imagination can play on a very wide and complex emotional register, and of course each recipient or participant will respond differently. Nevertheless, it may be useful to ask ourselves what are the dominant emotions on which each of the four narratives relies for its effect. My preliminary suggestions would be as follows.

1. The story of Ancient Wisdom clearly relies on positive symbols of identification. First and foremost, these are meant to inspire *love* for the divine Light of Truth, combined with feelings of *gratitude* for those who have been carrying it forward through the ages. The chief negative counterpart to these positive emotions might be described as a kind of painful, melancholy *sadness* about the ignorance of so many human beings, their tragic failure to see the light.

2. The Protestant counter-narrative does not think in such terms of ignorance, but assumes that the enemy knows exactly what it is doing: the latter is inspired by radical evil and has the worst intentions. Accordingly, the narrative symbolism is meant, first and foremost, to inspire emotions such as *fear* and *re-*

*vulsion*. To give just one example: among the most potent of such symbols encountered in the literature is the horrific image of Platonism as a ‘poisoned egg’ from which a filthy breed of vermin comes crawling out (Colberg 1690–91, 75; Bücher 1699, 9; Brucker 1731–36, III, 520–521; Hanegraaff 2012, 111, 115, 143–144, 151), or the related image of a demonic ‘seed pod’ from which an endless swarm of heresies comes to infect the world (Weyer, in Mora 1998, 106; Hanegraaff 2012, 86, 111). The chief positive emotions that allow its adherents to confront the horror might be described here as righteous *anger* and courageous *defiance*.

3. The Enlightenment narrative has a very different emotional tone: on principle, it distrusts mere emotion and seeks to restrain it by reason. I suggest that the feelings inspired by this narrative are essentially those of *pride*. In their most positive manifestation we are dealing here with the quiet and confident, happy pride inspired by true achievement; but since a sense of intellectual superiority is always implied, it has the potential of turning into arrogance. Its negative counterpart therefore consists in feelings of profound *irritation* and *contempt* for the irrational, and the stupidity of those who refuse to listen to reason and recognize facts.

4. Finally, there is the Romantic narrative, describing an ‘education of the human race’ from the innocent bliss of childhood to the full maturity of true knowledge. If the Enlightenment story inspires pride in human achievement, its Romantic counterpart is marked, rather, by profound feelings of *awe* towards the grand and sublime mysteries of Being, Creation, Evolution, Consciousness, Freedom, and the Self. This narrative is grounded in dialectics rather than dualism, and therefore leaves no room for truly negative emotions. However, when its adherents *lose* their sense of awe, and with it their belief in this whole grand design of existence, one typically sees them sink into states of *depression* and *despair*. Existential nihilism is the child of Romanticism betrayed.

Of course this is just a rough sketch, without any great pretensions. The larger point at issue is that the historical imagination produces stories about the past that derive much of their persuasive power from their ability to engage the emotions. In the cases discussed here, these emotions are rooted in deep existential commitments to basic values that lie on either side of the most basic fault lines of Western culture: as we have seen, the first two narratives are all about the conflict between Hellenistic paganism and Scriptural Monotheism, whereas the third and fourth narratives are all about the conflict between Enlightenment values and traditional religion.

## 7 Anti-eclectic historiography

I have been arguing that the products of the historical imagination are polarized between the theoretical extremes of factuality (*wie es eigentlich gewesen*) and poeticity (the good story). The four narratives that I have been discussing clearly tend towards the poetic side of the spectrum. The important point to make here is that their power as stories is grounded in highly selective procedures of data selection. Enormously complicated developments and messy realities are simplified for maximum emotional effect. Grey areas of moral ambiguity are reduced to a stark opposition of light versus darkness. Even the education of the human race can only lead towards ever more light and ever less ignorance: true regression, defeat, or failure is out of the question. These are all instances of *historical eclecticism*: a highly selective approach to historical data, guided by a storyline that privileges emotional satisfaction and dramatic effect over full empirical accuracy, rational evaluation of all the available evidence, or historiographical precision.

In my previous work I have sought to demonstrate that Enlightenment historiography in such domains as history of philosophy, religion, and science was grounded in a deliberate, explicit, self-conscious choice for eclecticist method (Hanegraaff 2012, 129–130, 140, 149–152). The job of historians did *not* consist in presenting their readers with all the available evidence and leaving it up to them to make up their minds: this would only confuse them. On the contrary, historians were expected to apply their own rational judgment to historical materials so as to sort the ‘wheat’ from the ‘chaff.’ Enlightenment historians were convinced that, in applying such selective procedures, they were serving the truth. In fact, however, they were doing the opposite: by promoting eclecticism as a core methodical principle, they lent legitimacy to a type of historiography that sacrifices historicity/factuality on the altar of poeticity. The result is a clear, satisfying, easily understood storyline premised on the idea of a heroic battle of science against superstition, religion against magic, philosophy against the irrational. From a historical point of view, however, this type of Enlightenment mnemohistory is in no way superior to any of the other narratives that I have been discussing: just like the ‘Ancient Wisdom,’ ‘Protestant’ and ‘Romantic’ narratives, the ‘Enlightenment’ narrative is a poetic invention with a seductive storyline that speaks to the imagination and can have a very strong emotional appeal. This is what makes it so effective in deluding us about the degree to which it is actually grounded in rational argument and factual evidence.

Therefore what we need in the study of religion is an *anti-eclectic historiography* (Hanegraaff 2012, 152, 377–378). Such a historiography cannot be con-

cerned with issuing judgments about the ‘truth’ or ‘seriousness’ of human cultural products, taking positions in favor of certain traditions at the expense of suppressing others. Instead, it has to be grounded in a radical empiricism that welcomes all the available data as equally worthy of attention. Such a perspective has been very much ‘in the air’ in the academy since the 1990s at least. It obviously reflects deconstructionist critiques of how the ‘grand narratives’ of modernity have been guiding our perception of history and the world around us; but interestingly enough, it has also been highlighted from a perspective informed by cognitive studies in a naturalist and evolutionist framework. In her 2010 Presidential Address to the American Academy of Religion, Ann Taves pointed out that throughout the twentieth century, the study of religion, as well as neighboring disciplines such as psychology, have been operating with artificially limited and restrictive concepts of ‘religion’ that were based on the tacit exclusion and systematic neglect of anything associated with magic, the esoteric, the occult, the paranormal or the metaphysical (Taves 2011, 298–303).

How did we come to adopt such artificial distinctions and allow them to dominate our conceptual understanding of ‘religion’? I believe that the answer is simple, and rooted in elementary human psychology: *poeticity tends to trump factuality in the historical imagination*. We are wired to like a good story about what happened in the past and how we ended up where we are today, and our deep emotional need for a clear storyline that satisfies our personal preferences tends to overwhelm our attention to rational arguments and empirical or historical evidence. We pay attention to what interests us, while neglecting what does not, and although the resulting perspective is obviously limited and selective, we are more than willing to accept it as ‘true.’

## 8 Concluding remarks

This might sound like a rather negative conclusion. The polarity of poeticity and factuality in the historical imagination could easily lead us to believe that while *stories* are exciting they just happen to be false, whereas *history* might be more true but just happens to be boring! I suspect that it is for such reasons that so many students of religion end up being disappointed and disenchanted once the implications of historical research and critical analysis begin to dawn on them: too often, they move from the undergraduate ‘classroom of sympathy’ to the graduate ‘classroom of doubt’ and never manage to recover the enthusiasm with which they started (Kripal 2007, 22; cf. Hanegraaff 2008, 262). However, it seems to me that there is light at the horizon, for once the grand narratives have been deconstructed as poetic inventions and we recognize the paradox at

the heart of the historical imagination (the fact that, as noted above, it only shows us reality by creating it for us), this makes it possible to tell *a true historical story*, that is to say: one that is historically accurate *and* exciting at the same time. The true ‘hero’ of such a story would be the historical imagination itself. As historians, we can trace and describe the many adventures that this hero has gone through, in his quest of grasping realities that always keep eluding him while believing in narratives that always keep deluding him. The story of *that* quest, I insist, is not a delusion. It is the true story of how human beings have *really* and *actually* been trying to gain knowledge, and how we keep persisting in the attempt. This story can never be told completely, and we are still stuck in the middle of it, but I believe it can be told accurately. It is well worth trying to tell it – for it is, of course, the story of ourselves.

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# Religion and Life Trajectories: Islamists Against Self and Other\*

**Abstract:** Life trajectories capture the dynamic nature of religious traditions and phenomena. They can complement and challenge what we know about religions based on rituals, myths and beliefs. Life trajectories bring out the individual experiences of the latter, in their embodiment over a period of time. This essay applies this insight to Islamists who joined and participated in religious activism in South Africa over several decades. It shows that Islamist journeys were prone to be challenging, given that Islamists often rejected established religious leaders and were confronted by political and religious challenges. The journeys were marked by the adoption of a distinctive choice made within the larger language of Islam. Islam was framed as an ideology, worldview or cause which the individual felt compelled to adopt. But the life of an individual was often confronted by subtle and not too subtle differences within this language. Islamists were forced to navigate a deep sectarianism, but the choice for Islamism was often not between good and evil, but between competing perceptions of good. Identity was a key feature of Islamist journeys, wherein what counted as the Other varied from group to group, and individual to individual. The journeys of many Islamists led to both expected and unexpected destinations. The essay concludes with an interpretive framework for these journeys derived from the history of exegesis of the Qur'an. It suggests that the journeys of Islamists are marked quite often by rebuke and admonishment (*lawwāma*), directed at self and others.

**Keywords:** Islamism, political Islam, biography, life trajectories, psychology of religion, religion in South Africa, African religions, method and theory

In a fascinating autobiography, Muntassar Zayyat shares some interesting personal experiences as a member of Islamic Communities (al-Jama'at Islamiyya) in Egypt, which planned and carried out the assassination of Anwar al-Sadat in 1981. Immediately after this fateful event, Zayyat tells us that he and his associates anguished over what to do next. They were confronted by a teacher

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who believed that the assassination was completely wrong and unjustified. Zayyat tells us that he and his associates took a vote and decided to suspend any further activity. This was one of many moments of doubt and bewilderment shared by Zayyat of his involvement in Islamism. Former British Islamist Ed Husain also wrote of his journey that began as a young boy reciting songs of praise for the Prophet Muhammad, followed by a five-year roller coaster ride among the recruiters and peddlers of Islamic radicalism in London. Abd al-Mun'im Abu Futūh, who was a candidate for the Egyptian Presidency against Morsi in 2011, wrote of his early life in the same communities as Zayyat in the 1970s; he later joined the moderate Muslim Brothers, but resigned after the Egyptian uprising. These and other recent autobiographies of Islamists provide a glimpse of the motivations, inspiration, challenges and sometimes frustrations of living a life of Islamic activism. These life trajectories deserve greater recognition and greater attention in the study of religious change and dynamism. They deserve greater attention in what they tell us about the complex and changing phenomenon of Islamism.

Studies on the life trajectories of Islamists of very different persuasions are not unknown. The most eminent leaders of Islamism, like Hasan al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb, Yusuf al-Qardawi, Osamah ben Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri, have received extensive scholarly attention (Musallam 1990; Akhavi 1997; Stern 2003; Gerges 2006; Gräf, Skovgaard-Petersen 2009; Scheuer 2011). But most of this attention focuses on how they developed and adopted Islamist political and religious ideas, how much of a threat they represent to the world in general and the Western world in particular, and their socio-political impacts. Relatively few studies have been devoted to life trajectories that include what Aishima and Salvatore have called the 'trials and tribulations' of religious activism in a post-colonial context (Aishima, Salvatore 2009, 42). The complex journeys that constitute Islamism have not been carefully and systematically examined, even though they offer greater insight into this significant religious phenomenon.

In this essay, I examine biographies and life trajectories as key data for understanding Islamism. I am not necessarily interested in the biographies as windows to the self, something that has become prominent in the study of religions recently. The study of biographies and journeys of individuals in the study of religions have almost exclusively focused on processes of individualization and self-actualization (Buitelaar, Zock 2013; Fuchs, Rüpke 2014). Such studies have added to what William James earlier and more recently Paul Ricoeur and Charles Taylor have respectively said about the journey and location of the self. James closely examined the conversion narratives of evangelical Christians in the nineteenth century, and turned attention to the different stages towards individual religious maturity. He stressed the positive effects of sound religiosity – and

he was interested in showing these values in the lives and journeys of saints, mystics and converts. This teleological and normative framework has been adopted in the twentieth century by most psychologists of religion such as Allport, Capps, Fowler and Hutch (Fowler 1984; Hutch 1987; Capps 1994). In a different scholarly trajectory, Paul Ricoeur and Charles Taylor have stressed the narrative framework within which the self is located. Ricoeur's work on narrative identity has received widespread support and application (Ricoeur 1980; Joy 1997; Crowley 2003).

In this essay, I want to show that biographical trajectories are indispensable for what they tell us about Islamism, and about the dynamism of religions and religious phenomena in themselves. In a special forum organized in 2014 by *Religion and American Culture, A Journal of Interpretation*, leading biographers of religious individuals were invited to share their thoughts on the value of biography for the religious history of America. The contributions highlighted the substantial place of biography in the study of religion. Most of the discussion focused on the value of biography for bringing out the historical significance of these figures. It dwelled on the long-standing debate on the value of movements and trends, against the experience of both extraordinary and ordinary individuals in the flow of history. One of the participants in this forum, Matthew Avery Sutton, referred to Jill Lepore's concept of microhistory, which is located between biography and history. While biography focuses on the unique life of an individual, usually someone who made a significant contribution to history, microhistory points to the significance of a life in the light of the general religious, social or political history in question. Lepore says that microhistory places the life of an individual within 'the culture as a whole' (Lepore 2001, 141). Moreover, she saw the individual life as an 'allegory' of the whole, indicating the close connection between the specific life of the individual, and the larger cultural canvass. The subjects of individual life trajectories are fascinating for the experience they share about themselves, *and* for their part in a larger movement and tradition in the culture. This attention to the experiences of an individual, taken allegorically, could be used more widely in the study of religion.

Life trajectories could be added to the rituals, narratives, beliefs, performances and artistic expressions that have become part of the stock data that scholars of religions use to understand and explain the meaning and significance of religions. They may complement or challenge what we know about religious phenomena and developments based on rituals, myths and beliefs. They deserve greater attention as data, as units of analysis, for the study of beliefs, rituals and narratives. Life trajectories and autobiographies contribute to our deeper understanding of religions, and how they are lived by men and women in a particular time.

This idea will be illustrated with a sample of trajectories and journeys that I have collected over the last few years of individuals who have been involved in Islamist activism in South Africa since the 1970s. I recorded interviews, lasting from one to two hours, and sometimes repeated, to gather information on life trajectories that included educational backgrounds and inspirations, career choices, moments of conversion and re-conversions, fatigue, frustration, new movements, new projects, and sometimes reflective thoughts on many years of engagement. After some hesitation, interviewees seemed eager to present their life of engagement as narratives. Being part of Islamism meant taking a position different from the one given at birth. This included journeys in space and time, from the rural to the urban, from the East to the West and back again, from the present to the past and back again. The life trajectories were often engaged with a significant Other. Islamists passed through a conscious construction and reconstruction of the self in relation to a significant Other. And they almost always included deliberation and intense debate over the merits of one Islamist organization over another. Islamists were comfortable with the metaphor of journeying, and I will use recurring motifs and topoi in my interview data to sketch Islamist journeying in South Africa.

Muslims constitute less than two percent of the population of South Africa, but Islamist trends, tensions and conflicts mirror global trends and developments (Jeppie 1991; Tayob 1995). Islamism in South Africa has been shaped by three organizations founded in the 1970s and 1980s. The oldest and most widespread is the Muslim Youth Movement (MYM) that was established in 1970 and inspired by the Muslim Brothers of Egypt and the Jamaate Islami in South Asia. Students and youths at high schools and universities turned to Islam, and committed themselves to an Islamic worldview and identity. They read literature written by Islamists in Egypt and Pakistan, and formed study circles and projects to re-Islamize themselves and society. In 1980, another organization emerged in Cape Town under the leadership of Achmat Cassiem who had been involved in anti-apartheid protests for already a decade. Inspired by Khomeini and the Islamic Revolution of Iran, Qiblah pursued the dream of an Islamic Revolution for South Africa. In 1983, Farid Esack and a group of young students founded another organization in Cape Town. Under the banner of the Call of Islam, this new group was critical of the alleged lack of undivided commitment, shown by the MYM and Qiblah, to South African liberation (Esack 1988). From the 1980s onwards, the MYM and the Call of Islam pursued a path of critical engagement with global Islamist trends. They were engaged in what Asef Bayat referred to as a post-Islamist moment (Bayat 1996). Since 1994, other groups have emerged and added to the market place of Islamisms in South Africa. Some are clearly recognizable in mosques and associations, while others thrive in small study cir-

cles in Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town. From some of these smaller groups, recruits for the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) have also emerged.

One of the features of South African Islamism is vacillation over global and local commitments, revealed in the journeys of three of my interviewees. Mandla (Interview, February 26, 2013) was a politically active young male in the Eastern Cape, already reciting poetry at anti-apartheid meetings at age 15. In 1986, a friend gave him a book that argued that Islam was an African religion. Mandla was overwhelmed: ‘... the book captured my imagination immediately; I said no! That this is the faith! I wanted to become a Muslim and this is the religion of my ancestors.’ Mandla’s enthusiasm was short-lived as he met Indian Muslims in the Eastern Cape who did not share his conviction that Islam was an African religion. But he kept his faith, and joined the Muslim Youth Movement when it committed itself to Africanization in post-apartheid South Africa. But this journey was not so smooth, and Mandla resigned in 2011 in frustration with the racism he perceived in the ranks of the organization.

In contrast, Faqir (Interview, April 4, 2012), from a wealthy middle-class family in Durban, was a founding member of the MYM in 1970. After completing school, his father sent him on a European tour during which he met Sa’id Ramadan, the son-in-law of Hassan al-Banna, in Geneva. Faqir was impressed with Ramadan’s vision of Islam as a dynamic and modern religion, and returned home to establish an Islamic movement in South Africa. He played a leading role in connecting South African Islamists with the leading figures in Europe and North America, connected in turn with the Muslim Brothers in Egypt and Jamaate Islami in India and Pakistan. In the 1980s, Faqir was challenged by activists like Mandla that the MYM had ignored apartheid oppression: their global vision had failed to reflect the peoples’ struggles against apartheid. Faqir held passionately to his global vision, but also insisted that Islamism in South Africa was not opposed to national liberation.

Faruq (Interview, April 21, 2015) was a young activist from an Indian racial background, but as committed as Mandla to anti-apartheid activism. His Islamist journey began in Cape Town when he was in high school. He joined study circles organized by the MYM at high schools, and was initiated into the language of Muslim politics when the student revolts of 1976 were taking off. When he attended a mass meeting of the United Democratic Front, formed to mobilize and organize countrywide protests against apartheid in 1983, he was told by his Muslim brothers that it was a sin to join such a non-Islamic group. He very quickly left the MYM and joined the Qiblah movement because of its clearer commitment to the anti-apartheid struggle. ‘I knew,’ he told me, ‘that the MYM was not going to join the struggle.’ In the process, of course, he also did not join the United Democratic Front, which was vigorously criticized by Qiblah.

The different journeys of Mandla, Faqir and Faruq capture one of the salient features of the journeys of Islamism in South Africa and elsewhere. Islamism in South Africa was rooted in the ideas of liberation, but moved like a pendulum between a global vision of Islam and local anti-apartheid politics. Even as leaders like Faqir insisted that there was no tension involved, individuals felt deeply the choices that they had to make. These two poles in Mandla, Faqir and Faruq's journeys recurred in the journeys of other leaders and followers in the various movements in South Africa.

This particular feature of Islamist journeying between poles also can be traced in the discourse of Islamists elsewhere. Early in the 1930s, Hasan al-Banna in Egypt identified Islam as a cause (*da'wa*) in comparison with many other causes (*da'awāt*): '...different causes (*da'awāt*) have harassed our time, divided hearts and confused thoughts, [but they] can be judged by our cause (*da'wa*)' (al-Banna n.d., 19). In another lecture, al-Banna spoke of the Islam of the Muslim Brothers, contrasted with the Islams of the Persians, the Mamluks and the Turks (al-Banna n.d., 118). Al-Banna and other intellectuals created a language for thinking about Islam in comparison with other religions, causes and nations. Islamists were expected to make these clear choices, wherein Islam was shaped and reshaped in relation to the new ideas of nations, ideologies and social movements. But in South Africa, as elsewhere, these choices have not been easy. And the life trajectories displayed how choices were navigated and negotiated in unique and sometimes irregular fashion.

The choices confronted in the journeys of Islamism appeared to be clear and straightforward to intellectuals such as Hasan al-Banna. But among individual activists, choices were sometimes difficult to assess and make. This is another feature worth looking at more closely in the lives of Islamists. It can be illustrated in the life of Aziz (Interview, June 23, 2012), trained as an architect in Durban. Aziz told me that he was only initiated into Islamic activism in Houston (USA) where he met Ebrahim Yazdi, who later briefly became deputy prime minister and minister of foreign affairs in Iran until the hostage crisis. Back in South Africa, Aziz could not really decide between the MYM and the Tablighi Jamaat, a less political revival movement than the others that I have mentioned. Later, as a qualified architect, Aziz was given an opportunity to design a prayer room on the Howard campus of the University of Natal. He did not want to follow the example of the University of Durban-Westville, where the mosque stood apart from other religious groups, and from the faculty buildings. Aziz wanted a mosque that flowed into the campus – one that was not so clearly demarcated from education and from other spheres of life. The mosque was designed and built with this vision, but it has since become very similar to the model that Aziz had rejected. When I met him, Aziz was disappointed with such mosques –

the one he had designed, and the others that proliferated in the city. Mosques were a clearly recognizable value for Islamists, but their discordant and divergent relation to the world unsettled Aziz.

The journey of Musa (Interview, April 8, 2014), an activist from Johannesburg, also illustrates a struggle over multiple and competing notions of 'good'. Musa's father was a travelling salesperson, and he has himself founded a successful business in the city. In the early 1980s, he offered to manage the bookshop of the Muslim Youth Movement, primarily to show how it could be made financially viable. But he was also interested in other books, not only the books prescribed for its study groups. On one occasion, he was confronted and challenged by the leadership of the Muslim Youth Movement for stocking Murabitun books. The Murabitun was a competing Islamist group from the United Kingdom gathering recruits from within the ranks of the Muslim Youth Movement. It accused the latter of failing to live up to the model of Sunni revival groups, of being too modernist in its creed and its structure. Internal dissension among Islamists was not unknown to Musa, but he was disappointed with the heavy-handedness of his superiors in the MYM. Since then, he has embarked on his own journey, marked by the multiple books that lined the bookshop that he nurtured.

This confrontation and choice of good is a key feature of journeying in political Islam. It is well-known that a deep sectarianism dominates political Islam, but little is said about the struggle over multiple concepts of good that appear to Islamists to be equally right, equally grounded in Islam, or equally attractive. Islamists move among the various and diverse Islamist options on offer; sometimes intra-Islamist conflicts completely determine the course of a life trajectory. The great theologian al-Ghazali provides a representation of the struggle over multiple 'goods and evils' that are reflected in Islamist journeys:

It is as if the heart is an object attacked from every side. When influence[d] by one thing, it is immediately matched by its opposite and changes its quality. When a demon descends on it and calls it to respond to impulse, an angel comes and saves it from that. When one demon pulls him towards some evil, another one pulls him in another direction. When an angel directs him to a good, another directs it to something else. Sometimes, [the heart is] torn between two demons, and sometimes between two angels (al-Ghazālī 1356, 2:1419).

The heart not only faces a choice between good and evil, but also between several competing conceptions of good and evil. A deep and persistent conflict between good and evil, and between varieties of good and evil, seems to be the fate of humans. This representation resonates with the internal struggle that often constitutes Islamist journeys. Activists are confronted and caught between the

competing groups that claim to represent Islam, or they are confronted by a demand to make a choice between values and goals that are equally attractive.

A 'meeting of the Other' is another recognizable feature of journeying in Islamism. Most scholars suggest that identity constructions and conflicts lie at the heart of Islamism: Islamism was a desire for cultural uniqueness and authenticity (Burgat 2003; Ismail 1998; Roy; 2003). The trajectories of a number of my interviewees shed light on how this identity construction played out among Islamists in South Africa. Haroon (Interview, April 5, 2012) came to the Indian University in Durban to study pharmacy, and was soon drawn to Islamist recruitment on campus. But he told me that he was particularly enamored with the lectures and debates of Muslim 'evangelist' Ahmed Deedat. He followed Deedat everywhere, and modeled himself in Deedat's image as a speaker and debater. When I asked him about a transformative memory in his life, he mentioned a few nights he spent in the Black township of KwaMashu near Durban. It seems that Deedat's lectures shaped Haroon's identity against Christianity and Hinduism; but his experience in KwaMashu confronted his identity as an Indian Muslim, unsettling him to think about his racial background in South Africa.

A veteran activist, Sumayya (Interview, June 21, 2012) came from a middle class background, but her identity took shape in her experiences as a woman. She grew up in a small town, and then moved around various cities as her husband pursued his financial dreams. I met her in the Kwazulu capital of Pietermaritzburg where she shared her journey with me. She was acutely conscious of her identity as a woman, reinforced by her experiences with the Tablighi Jamaat, with men in mosque committees, and with religious scholars who had consistently undermined her religious activism and commitment. She related numerous occasions when she had initiated projects to improve the quality of education in the town or city. Her projects were blocked or, if adopted, she would be kept at a distance. Her horizon, and her sense of self, expanded dramatically when civil strife in the midlands of Natal introduced her to a variety of religious and cultural groups. She joined them in a new social activism, and her vision of the Other expanded far beyond the inter-Islamic groups that she had grappled with until then.

Rahim was a religious scholar who had trained in India, and has recently migrated to ISIS in Syria with his family. I did not interview him, but he wrote a number of letters and recorded sound messages which he sent to his family and former associates. He said that he found a deep contentment and satisfaction with ISIS. But his messages were filled with accusations against his Indian and South African teachers who 'mised' him. His significant Other was the Islam of his youth and years of scholarship in India where he had imbibed what he called 'Buzrug' Islam – Islam of the gurus and spiritual leaders. I found a similar

attitude towards Indian Islam in young Salafi converts in Johannesburg – Indian Islam provided an anchor, a counter-point, for their journeys that led them to greater devotion and commitment to the life of the early successors of the Prophet.

The Other occupies an important part of the journeys of Islamism. The Other shapes and determines a course of action, an attitude and relation. For many activists in South Africa, religious scholars (*‘ulamā’*) were the significant Others. Their understanding and practices were shaped in relation to religious leaders, who were invariably seen to be too silent on apartheid, too traditional, or too Indian. Muslim religious scholars were the dominant Other, but they shared this distinction with Indian Muslims, Black Muslims, and other Muslim activists. The Other of South African Islamism could not be dissociated from the racial history of the country. The Other animated a life trajectory in unusual and unexpected ways. *Beyond South Africa*, the recent biography by Brynjar Lia of Abu Mus‘ab al-Sūrī, the key strategist of al-Qaeda, shows how he rejected the Muslim Brothers in Syria – which later shaped his political actions in relation to similar groups in Algeria, Europe and Afghanistan (Lia 2007).

Journeying in Islamism revealed an interesting play on destinations. I generally interviewed activists who had been involved in Islamism over decades. Rather than taking a snapshot of their lives as engaged in a ritual, a practice, a video message or a book, I focused on destinations and end-points that unfolded over decades. Imraan (Interview, April 5, 2012) was a working class office worker attracted to what he says were the ‘larnies’ (middle-class bosses) of the Muslim Youth Movement in the 1970s. More than four decades later, I interviewed him at his office in the working-class Indian township of Phoenix in Durban, from where he counseled streams of people on government grants, HIV AIDS and rental arrears. He told me of women who prostrated themselves at his feet for his useful services. He was also embarrassed that they promised to pray for him at the local Hindu temple. When I left him, I had no doubt that Imraan had found his destination in a place far removed from his life in the MYM in the 1970s.

Rahim, the man who joined ISIS, was waiting for the final battle of good versus evil in Raqqa where he believed Armageddon would unfold on the plains of Dabiq. Over a longer period of engagement, Musa and Faqir seemed to me more representative of Islamist life trajectories. Both were still meandering from one goal to another. Faqir was determined to prove to the world, and mostly to himself, that the MYM was committed to the eradication of apartheid in the 1970s. He seemed to find little time for self-reflection in his relentless path in the mobilization of Muslims. Musa also experienced life as a series of destinations but he was not as unsettled as Faqir. After withdrawing from the MYM, he became

active in the management of a mosque in Johannesburg, then immersed himself in the production of a Muslim world radio program, and then pledged allegiance (*bay'a*) to a Sufi *shaykh*. When I heard that he had become a Sufi *khalifa* (representative), I thought that he had finally reached his goal. In conversation, though, I realized that he was still moving: forever subject to the competing concepts of good that he first tasted in the MYM bookshop.

Scholars of Islamism in the last few decades have made a significant contribution to our understanding of the phenomenon. In one of the earliest studies on Islamism, Humphreys identified what he then called Islamic Revival as a shared language and ideology developed from earlier pre-modern revivalist movements in the history of Islam. Humphreys takes cognizance of this history, but points to significant changes in modern revival movements that are influenced by mass education, urbanization and modern politics (Humphreys 1982). He maintains a delicate balance in his analysis between earlier forms of revivalism and modern trends.

In most studies on Islamism, the adoption of what Humphreys has called a language of revivalism has been interpreted as a mark of social identity and even authenticity. The latter is generally interpreted as a desire for distinction, and a desire to assert some special presence in the public sphere. With the notable exception of scholars like Quitan Wiktorowicz and Gabrielle Marranci, few studies explored what this desire or motivation means for individuals. Wiktorowicz has focused, in his many works, on how Islamists, particularly Salafis, adopted a particular interpretation of Islam (Wiktorowicz 2004; Wiktorowicz, Kaltenthaler 2006). Marranci has focused on how identity formation has worked through emotions and feelings (Marranci 2009). But even in their work, one looks in vain for the path and process of identification of one individual over a period of time. Even in the best work, Islamists always seem arrested in a moment in time – just long enough for a representation to be captured for scholarly work.

Another dominant theme in the scholarship on Islamism has been an insistence that Islamism was not uniform. In spite of the Islamist claim that there is only one way to respond to God and the Prophet, Islamists have been incorrigibly sectarian. Voll, Kepel and Sheppard have offered fine distinctions of Islamists based on the various groups' relation with modernity and violence (Voll 1982a; Voll 1982b; Kepel 2002; Shepard 2004). Thus, we are introduced to Salafi modernists in the early twentieth century, differentiated from the Muslim Brothers who are relatively more modern. This group is further differentiated from radical groups that emerged first in Egypt in the 1970s. Since the 1970s, traditional Salafis have been included in the broad term used for Islamists, but then they are also divided according to their willingness to take up arms in pursuit of their goals. The various categorizations alert us to an important truth. Whatever the

lines of differentiation, Islamism tends to break up into sectarian and competing tendencies. In spite of their shared discourse, there is intense inner conflict, debate and eventually splintering among Islamists. Mostly, this diversity among Islamists has been used to correct a popular Western misconception about Islam and Muslims. A Western public apparently needs to be reminded repeatedly that not all Muslims are prone to violence, or reject modernity, or sympathize with those who carry out violent acts.

What is more important in my view is to appreciate how Islamists, even those who are committed to some particular language or ideology, have lived with sectarian distinctions over a period of time. The inner splintering of Islamism raises an important question for any study devoted to an appreciation of the individuals who enter this movement. The would-be Islamist lives and expresses his commitment in a highly fractious terrain. In almost every country, city or region, Islamists are confronted by competition with rival groups. A study of their individual journeys sheds light on how they navigate and contribute to this important part of Islamist experience.

Another line of inquiry has explained Islamism as a product of great social and political changes that took place in most countries of the world over the last few hundred years. Bruce Lawrence argued many years ago that religious fundamentalisms in general were a rejection of the modernity in which they were unwittingly implicated. Fundamentalists were deeply modern, even though they railed against modernity's deep malaise (Lawrence 1989). Other, more specific, explanations have been offered about the particular conditions that have given rise to various kinds of Islamist or other religious resurgent phenomena: for example, al-Qaeda was an unexpected outcome of the Cold War conflict where religion was mobilized against communism (Mamdani 2002; Burgat 2008). Life trajectories do not render these explanations irrelevant, but they open a window on how these changes were negotiated and mediated through a life of activism.

Existing analyses focusing on the language, identity and social context of Islamism cannot be ignored, but they disembodiment movements and organizations in modern societies, particularly from the religious meanings and motivations that shape them over time. Recalling the insight of Lepore, life trajectories may be mined for what they tell us about religious traditions as lived by individuals over time. Their stories resonate deeply in the traditions, as allegories to the greater whole. They illuminate experiences of a religious tradition over the life of an individual in a particular era.

Al-Ghazali's insights on the demons and angels that compete for the soul of the individual may be developed as a framework for understanding and appreciating the journey of Islamism that I have presented in this essay. Like other

Muslim intellectuals, al-Ghazali pointed to key milestones in a journey to God. The seeker begins with a self marked by evil (*ammāra bi 'l-sū'*), travelling then to a stage of incessant blame and admonition (*lawwāma*), and then finally reaching a stage of complete contentment and inner peace (*iṭmi'nān*). Like William James' stages of religious maturity, Muslim intellectuals outlined a journey that had a clearly desired goal and focus. For our purposes, no such teleology needs to be assumed. However, it seems to me that the second milestone mentioned above suggests a cluster of ideas and meanings that resonate with the life trajectories of Islamists. The word *lawwāma* denotes blame, censure, rebuke and admonition. The word appears in the Qur'an as an oath taken by God on the self: 'I swear by the Day of Resurrection, and I swear by the rebuking Self' (Qur'an 75:1–2). A brief review of Muslim exegesis provides a glimpse on how this verse has been interpreted for its relevance for religious life. The great historian and exegete of the ninth/tenth century, al-Ṭabarī (d. 923), says that the use of the phrase refers to a person 'who blames his friend for doing good and evil, and he regrets at what has passed.' Another exegete, Zamakhshari (d. 1143/44), says that it refers to 'the pious self who rebukes (blames) others on the Day of Judgment; who lack God-consciousness, or who rebukes himself even though he has done good.' Al-Qurtubī (d. 1273), the Andalusian exegete, applies the term to life in general, and not only to the Day of Judgment. The phrase refers, he says, to 'the believer who continuously blames himself.... What do I want with my words? What about my food? And what about what is inside me?' And the authors of one of the most popular Qur'anic exegesis, al-Jalālayn, say that it refers to 'the one who rebukes himself even though he strives to do good.' Sufi interpretations place the questioning and doubt within the life of a seeker in the spiritual path. And they include some subtleties that point to the state of restlessness of the typical novitiate at this stage of a religious journey: he is aware of the shortcomings of self and Other, but cannot find solace in good or God. He has moved away from a life of temptation, but remains deeply conflicted.<sup>1</sup>

This state of *lawwāma*, blaming and admonishing self and Other, speaks to the life trajectory of many Islamists. This is true of the South Africans that I have interviewed, and it also emerges in the autobiographies that have begun to be published by Islamists elsewhere in the last decade. The Islamist emerges in religious consciousness with a conviction that both the self and society have gone astray. She rejects her parents, her religious teachers and her friends. She de-

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<sup>1</sup> All the commentaries have been obtained from this useful site: <http://www.altafsir.com/Tafsir.asp?tMadhNo=1&tTafsirNo=1&tSoraNo=75&tAyahNo=1&tDisplay=yes&UserProfile=0&LanguageId=1>, accessed December 28, 2015.

mands greater devotion to the texts, rejects the established norms of the society, but also anguishes about her own commitment. Sometimes, she finds solace in a small community, but she is soon assailed by doubts and continuing recrimination, and then moves on. She often finds another movement, one that has a better form of critique and admonishment. Or she is confronted by a companion who admonishes her with greater vehemence. Or she meets a religious leader who turns her away from the state of admonishment, or a secular vision that leads her out of religion entirely. Islamists, by definition I would propose, are restless: rebuking self and Other in their life journeys.

The life trajectories of Islamists need not point to a high point of religious commitment or maturity in the sense suggested by William James or Muslim scholars in the past. As I have said earlier, this model of greater maturity in religious development has dominated twentieth century psychology of religion. From James to Allport to Capps, the focus of the study of religious journeys has been on individuals like Augustine, Teresa da Avila, Gandhi and the Dalai Lama. Scholarly attention has pointed to paths that have led to sainthood. I have found some unrecognized saints in my research, but mostly I have found a great degree of unease, periods of commitment followed by self-questioning, a tendency to change commitment, extreme doubt about established authorities, and varying degrees of restlessness. Such life trajectories deserve attention and analysis in the study of religions. A life of religious commitment should not only be important for its supreme fulfillment – desirable and admirable though this may be. We should appreciate the meandering and frustrated journeys of more mortal individuals in the history of religions as well.

Taking a life trajectory as a basic unit of analysis calls for closer attention to our study of religions. This is a journey of religious commitment, but it is not as stable as we have come to expect of religious traditions, practices and emotions. The narratives, myths, identification, and beliefs within one life trajectory are constantly moving and changing. Generally, the study of religious practices, beliefs and commitments seems to focus on a degree of stability. We have studied such elements as they change over time, but what does one do with a subject that experiences these elements in this unstable manner? How can one study phenomena through a life in which belief is by definition ill-defined, holding on to a myth that changes every few months or years, or which relates to the sacred with only occasional bouts and waves of earnestness? If the Islamist is still considered a religious subject, then the self-rebuking unstable self on a tumultuous journey needs another framework.

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# Angels, Animals and Religious Change in Antiquity and Today\*

**Abstract:** The theme in this article is the relation between humans, animals and intermediate beings and how alterations and transformations in these relations accompany general religious changes. The first part discusses how monks and ascetics aspired to become immortal and be like angels and how they considered some species of animals to be demons or demon-like. The second part considers the Norwegian New Age scene and especially Princess Märtha Louise, who said that she learnt to speak with angels through her communication with horses, and together with Elisabeth Nordeng created ‘the Angel School’. The two examples reflect two macro processes of religious change in parts of the Mediterranean and European world: from a multi-religious society to a Christian monopoly in antiquity and from a Christian monopoly to a multi-religious and secular society at present.

**Keywords:** angels, animals, the extended great chain of being, monasticism, multi-religious societies, ontological transformation, religious change

## 1 Introduction

Change implies modifying or replacing something with something else and to become different. It happens on a macro-level as well as on micro-levels, and is a continuous process. Categorical alterations and ontological transformations are among the more profound types of change. The theme in this article is the relation between humans, animals and intermediate beings and how alterations and transformations in these relations accompany general religious changes.<sup>1</sup> More specifically we ask:

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1 According to a frequently used definition, ‘religion is communication with superhuman beings.’ In this article, I presuppose a wider definition, namely that ‘religion is characterized by communication with and about superhuman beings’ (cf. Gilhus, Mikaelsson 2001, 29). I also presuppose that the religious imagination tends to blur the border between natural and supernatural categories.

- How and why did the conceptions of animals and angels change in late antiquity?
- How and why do they change today?

Men, women, demons, angels and animals are regarded in many cultures as part of the extended great chain of being, which includes natural as well as supernatural categories. Lakoff and Turner describe this chain in a cognitive perspective (Lakoff, Turner 1989, 166–181). The chain maps the relation of humans to other kinds of beings, real and imagined, as well as their relation to inanimate things. The extended chain includes god(s), intermediary beings like angels and demons, humans, animals, plants and non-living things. There are higher and lower sublevels. Among animals, dogs are higher-order beings than insects, and among plants, trees are higher-order beings than algae (Lakoff, Turner 1989, 167). And we can add, in antiquity men were on a higher sublevel than women. The chain becomes metaphorical when one level is used to understand another, for instance, when we speak about humans by means of animals (Lakoff, Turner 1989, 172–173). The point of departure in the present article is that alterations and transformations take place within the chain, and that the gaps between the levels are sometimes widened, sometimes made smaller.

Winds of religious change blew through the Mediterranean in antiquity when a globalizing religion, Christianity, replaced the ancient religions. Christian asceticism grew and flourished, and the Mediterranean became ‘dotted with something quite new, sexually frustrated readers, stretching from Egypt to the coast of Scotland’ (Fox 1994, 148). Among the solitary desert dwellers and in the monasteries, the ascetic project was pursued in systematic ways.

In comparison, the contemporary Western world is dotted with small-scale religious enterprises and specialists, though not necessarily sexually frustrated ones. But similar to how the ascetics and monks expressed dominant tendencies in late antique religious culture, contemporary religious entrepreneurs express dominant tendencies in present day secular culture such as cultivating the self, and focusing on personal relations and how to be successful in life. Because the ancient ascetics and the New Age entrepreneurs express new and culturally significant tendencies in the two periods and because both include categorical alterations, it might be fruitful to compare the relationships between humans, animals and intermediary beings in the two periods.

The examples in this article are from late antique Egypt and from contemporary Norway. The first example is how monks and ascetics aspired to become immortal and be like angels and how they considered some species of animals to be demons or similar to demons. The second example is the Norwegian New Age scene and especially Princess Märtha Louise, who said that she learnt to speak

with angels through her communication with horses, and together with Elisabeth Nordeng created ‘the Angel School’.

## 2 Monks, texts and religious change

In monastic circles in third and fourth century Egypt a radical education experiment took place. Young men who wanted to become monks and came to the monasteries from families of farmers, distant from contemporary book-culture, had, according to the Pachomian Rules, to learn to read (*Praecepta* 49).<sup>2</sup> The monks recited and memorized Scripture. Text- and reading-communities create alternative realities by means of texts, and reading was clearly an ascetic exercise and a gateway to an imagined world of superhuman beings. These textual communities were part of a more extensive cultural change whereby the external storage of memory systems in libraries and their intensive use created a new form of all-encompassing religious life (cf. Donald 2001, 305–308). The ritualized use of texts combined with pursuing the ascetic life was a profound source of individual change and change of social belonging. Along with it went a new type of gendering of culture and society expressed in a segregation of men and women in monasteries.

In addition to Scripture, the ascetics consumed other types of texts as well. Most of them were texts that in one way or another communicated with the Biblical world, like the treasure of buried codices found at Nag Hammadi, the heartland of the Pachomian monasteries. These treatises gave the biblical texts a background in a pre-cosmic world of transcendent superhuman beings. Narratives about ascetics and monastic leaders evolved in the literary genres of biographies and sayings – *vitae* and *apophthegmata*. That Scripture was best encountered in the examples of the ascetic heroes is implied by Amoun of Nitria, who says: ‘If you can’t be silent, you had better talk about the sayings of the Fathers than about the Scriptures, it is not so dangerous’ (Amoun of Nitria 2 in *Alph.*, cf. Harmless 2004, 253). One Father did not want to speak about Scriptures or about spiritual and heavenly things at all, but about earthly things and the passions of the soul (Poemen 8 in *Alph.*). The heroes of the biographical tradition were constructed as incarnations of biblical ideals and as having transcended the category of ordinary humans (cf. Goehring 2013, 213).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The demand to be literate continued in later monastic communities (see Peterson 2010).

<sup>3</sup> ‘Indeed the holy men are always as if in heaven by their thoughts’ (G<sup>1</sup> 88 in Veilleux 1980, 358; cf. S Bo 73 in Veilleux 1980, 97).

### 3 The imagined otherness of natural and supernatural categories

In the biographies of the heroes there is a rich gallery of subordinate characters, who reflect how the ascetic self was constructed in relation to others. Constructing 'otherness' is a prerequisite for constructing self, because one defines oneself by defining others.<sup>4</sup> Chief objects of otherness in the ascetic life were women, animals, demons and angels. In the desert and monasteries, the categories of women, animals and angels were twisted and transformed by the religious imagination. Monks might become like angels; women and animals frequently turned out to be demons or their close allies, while Satan sometimes masqueraded as Christ, and the sly demons appeared in the disguise of angels.

Arguably, male phantasies about women sometimes combine superhuman and subhuman characteristics. However, within the context of monastic life, female otherness gained an added dimension when a monk, who was raised in a monastery from childhood, 'did not know what a woman was' (*N.171/Syst. 5.25*).<sup>5</sup> As the story goes, when one young monk became a man, the demons showed him the forms of women during the night. The first time the young monk actually saw a woman he identified her as similar to what the demons had shown him. His superior, however, told him that this was another species of monks, belonging to the villages: 'they have one form, while the desert-dwellers have another.' One might assume that the explanation did not permanently solve the woman puzzle in the monk's imagination. On the contrary, it probably contributed to keeping the category unstable, and this might have been one of the functions of this particular story.

Repressed and not so-repressed sexuality was an inexhaustible, sparkling source of the supernatural, and *porneia*, lust, a potent agent in the ascetic life. Four demons transformed, for instance, into a beautiful woman and wrestled with a monk to 'draw him into shameful intercourse' (*N. 188/Syst. 5.41*). In such dire straits something had to be done! Sometimes extreme measures were taken as in the story about a monk who walked into the tomb of a dead woman and mopped up her bodily fluids with the *leviton*, the sleeveless linen

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<sup>4</sup> Zygmunt Bauman comments on 'otherness' in this way: 'Woman is the other of man, animal is the other of human, stranger is the other of native, abnormality the other of norm, deviation the other of law-abiding, illness the other of health, insanity the other of reason, lay public the other of the expert, foreigner the other of state subject, enemy the other of friend' (Bauman 1991, 8, cf. Smith 2004, 256).

<sup>5</sup> For the references to the different collections of the *Apophthegmata*, see the bibliography.

tunic, to help him in his battle against lustful thoughts (*N.* 172/*Syst.* 5.26). Another monk fought so hard against sexual desire (*porneia*) and with so little success that he went into the desert ‘to die like a beast rather than to behave shamefully because of a bodily passion’ (*Syst.* 5.54). The monk did his best to be eaten by two hyenas, but did not succeed. After a few days, he was again burning with desire. Desperate ills need desperate remedies: The monk went into the desert, found a little asp and applied it to his genitals, ‘as being the cause of my temptation.’ (*Syst.* 5.54, cf. *The Lausiatic History* 23). God protected the monk, he was not bitten – nothing more is said about the asp.

For the readers of these texts the desert was a theatre filled with animal extras, which played their parts along with the ascetic heroes. While angels and demons thrive in texts and images, animals have their natural playgrounds elsewhere. However, it is important to realize that animals in texts and pictures are never ‘real’. They too are creatures of the human imagination and constructed for specific purposes. ‘Animal’ is further a category that contains a wider number of species than humans, angels and demons, and therefore a rich source for speaking about supernatural things. The conception of animals was influenced by the views of a farmer society, an urban elite and the ascetic tradition with monks living in the desert or on its margins where they might confront wild and dangerous animals.

Sometimes a positive super-human force (God) moved an animal, but more often they served evil powers or were demons in their own right. When Pachomius was a child and his parents gave him a cauldron of antelope meat to take to laborers in the field, ‘the devil set on him a crowd of demons under the form of dogs bent on killing him’ (*Bohairic Life* 5, in Veilleux 1980, 25). When the monks in the monasteries of Shenoute wanted to re-hire an ascetic because of his skills to help them set up their loom, Shenoute did not want him back. Unable to persuade the others in other ways, Shenoute claimed that he ‘saw an unclean spirit mounted upon his shoulders in the form of a large dog’ (Naples fragments in Layton 2014, 17). A discourse of demons *cum* animals was part of monastic life and could be applied when useful.

In the ascetic texts the selection of animals is dependent on an interaction between the biblical and the Egyptian fauna. The unclean animals in the Septuagint, such as pigs and dogs, were usually seen as demons (Brakke 2006, 31). Dogs had an ambiguous position because they were close to humans, but low in the hierarchy of the household. The story about Pachomius and the dogs suggests that semi-wild flocks of dogs roamed about in the Egyptian countryside. On a more general basis, Origen detected ‘some sort of kinship between the form of

each demon and the form of each animal (*zoon*).<sup>6</sup> Athanasius' *Life of Antony* made a distinction between demons that 'imitate beings without reason (*aloga*)' (9.9) and real animals, which serve Satan.<sup>7</sup> The overlap between animals and demons is found especially in relation to lions, bears, leopards, serpents, vipers, scorpions and wolves as well as reptiles (*Vita Antonii* 9.6, cf. Gilhus 2006, 221). When God becomes man, Satan tends to become a beast and in line with this polarity, animals are employed to give credible and realistic shape to demons.

## 4 The battle of beasts

Processes of change – from pagan religious traditions to Christianity, from heresy to orthodoxy and from family-life to asceticism – were in Christian discourse constructed as battles. These battles made pagans and heretics into beasts, turned animals into demonic others, and monks and ascetics into saints and angels. In other words, processes of categorical changes and ontological transformations were acted out in mythical battle scenarios. According to Einar Thomassen, 'Ancient Christianity introduced the novelty of the "religious identity", which swallowed up all other sources of personal identity formation in a manner previously unheard of in antiquity' (Thomassen 2012, 201). This is why heresy mattered. A totalizing identity was among other things cultivated by a battle-discourse, in which battles were fought against pagans and heretics as well as against the negative impulses in the human soul.

### 4.1 Battle against pagans

Egypt went from a religious tradition wherein animals gave shape to gods, to Christianity where they did so only to a small degree. Christians accused non-Christians of animal worship and of believing in the transmigration of souls be-

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6 *Contra Celsum* 4.93, cf. Crouzel 1956, 197–206; Brakke 2006, 31–32; Gilhus 2006, 226. For the use of animals and demons in Shenoute, see Brakke 2006, 107–110.

7 David Brakke has pointed out how the devil and his demons attack Antony first with thoughts, then his body and lastly by means of visions (Brakke 2006, 29). According to Brakke, the biblical model for this overarching scheme going from mental attacks to physical attacks to visions is the story of Job (Brakke 2006, 29–30). The martyrs fought against animals, seen as the helpers of Satan (Gilhus 2006, 183–204). Athanasius transfers the martyr scenario to Antony (cf. Brakke 2006, 37).

tween humans and animals (*Vita Antonii* 74.5 and 7, cf. 76.1). The power of the Christian heroes was strong and outdid the powers of the pagan world: the holy animals of Latopolis – the Nile perch (*lates niloticus*), fierce predators which could reach two meters in length and 200 kilograms in weight (Thompson 1928) and were associated with the goddess Neith – took fright and fled when they met the child Pachomius (he had been taken with his pagan parents to worship at Latopolis).<sup>8</sup> Monks made crocodiles carry them over the Nile: which might be an imitation of one of Horus' ways of locomotion, but, more importantly, it was a victory over the powerful Egyptian god Sobek/Sobek-Ra, a crocormorph god, popular in the centuries before Christianity became dominant (cf. Frankfurter 2004). Shenoute, the powerful leader of a federation of monks, says that if a person looks at a cat with amusement, the cat will make ready to jump at the person and claw out his eyes (Brakke 2006, 107–108).<sup>9</sup> Shenoute does not come through as a lover of cats, but, more importantly, his vehemence against these animals might be due to the status of cats in Egypt in the late period when they had attained a sort of emblematic sacredness (Smelik, Hemelrijk 1984).

## 4.2 Battle against heretics

Heretics were characterized as animals on a general basis. The classical example is the *Panarion*, the Medicine Chest against Heretics, authored by the influential bishop Epiphanius, one of the power-players in the last part of the fourth century, who describes and labels eighty heresies, sixty of them after species of animals, mostly reptiles and insects.

Specific doctrines made people into heretics. One example is the Eucharist, which was hotly debated. For instance, a monk had been tricked by Satan into believing that the ingredients of the Eucharist were not the body and blood of Christ. He had a vision of hosts of angels and of two illuminated persons with a small child between them. Over the altar in the church, the two 'held the hands and feet of the child between them, grasping a sword, slaughtered it, emp-

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<sup>8</sup> According to the Bohairic life, 'they raised their eyes in the water, saw the boy, took flight and fled away' (*Bohairic Life* 4, in Veilleux 1980, 25). *The Greek Life* (G<sup>1</sup>) refers to the creatures as 'the phantoms of the demons of the river' (G<sup>1</sup> 3, in Veilleux 1980, 299). The divergence between the *Bohairic Life* and G<sup>1</sup> shows that the borderline between animals and demons was thin. The Coptic Church identifies the creatures as crocodiles (cf. Veilleux 1980, 266).

<sup>9</sup> According to David Brakke, Shenoute 'routinely interpreted biblical references to "beasts" or specific animals as references to demons' (Brakke 2006, 107).

tying its blood into the cup that was set on the table' (*Syst.* 18.48, cf. *N.* 761b, Anastasius the Sinaite 52, in *Alph.*) The flesh of the child was transformed into the bread of the Eucharist in the hands of the monks. This grotesque story is part of the debate about the interpretation of the Eucharist. It presupposes one of the profound changes in the history of religion: from sacrificing animals and reading the secrets of their bodies, to a secularization of slaughter, to a symbolic human sacrifice and an interpreting of texts and human bodies (cf. Gilhus 2006, 262–270). According to Shenoute, those who deny the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the Eucharist are 'more evil than the dogs and the pigs' – even 'more evil than the impure demons.'<sup>10</sup>

### 4.3 Internal battles

Animals characterized interior dispositions and desires and were part of the cosmic drama of salvation *within* the ascetic souls.<sup>11</sup> In Origen's and Evagrius' deliberations, demons are crosses between animals and thoughts (*logismoi*).<sup>12</sup> While Egyptian pharaohs and Mesopotamian kings conquered lions and showed their power by means of these conquests, the monks had power to chase away wild animals and make lions and hyenas behave like sheep (cf. Gilhus 2006, 222). In this way they made the internal landscape of the soul reflect the external landscape of the desert and made animals embody processes of individual transformations in which desires and ambitions were overcome.

According to Dan Sperber, representations of animals 'evoke a worse world, that of anomaly, and a better one, that of perfection. They provide a contrasted and contrasting imaginary background for knowledge of the world as it is' (Sperber 1996, 167). In line with his thoughts, the Christian battle-discourses sometimes had domestic or semi-domestic animals embody specific positive emotional values. The sheep is the paradigmatic good guy, with strong roots in the New Testament, used to describe monks as well as positive mental representations, in line with how people tend to classify themselves together with domestic animals. The more daring of the ascetics aspired to graze and live among antelopes and buffalo (cf. *N.* 62; *N.* 132 A; *N.* 516). These animals were sometimes semi-domesticated, and express in an apt way how ascetics were living on the

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<sup>10</sup> Shenoute, *I am amazed*. In: Tito Orlandi, *Shenute contra Origenistas*.

<sup>11</sup> *N.* 383, *N.* 535, cf. also Leyerle 2005, 157.

<sup>12</sup> Evagrius labels 'demons, which fight with the mind, birds; those who trouble the passions are animals; while those who fuel desire are called beasts' (*The Kephalaia Gnostica* 1. 53, referred in Sinkewicz 2003, xxix, n. 67).

margins between civilization and wilderness. Acting against cultural norms and normal human behavior was a sign of the holiness of the ascetics.<sup>13</sup>

These examples show that ‘animals are good to think with’, as Lévi-Strauss famously stated (Lévi-Strauss 1962, 127–128). However, thinking by means of animals should not be conceived of as merely an exercise in the logic of categories, but more as a tapping into the emotions which these animals tend to give rise to. Especially wild animals were conceived to be demons or demon-like, and beasts of prey were used to visualize and incarnate the battle against pagans and heretics as well as against external and internal opponents. The battle-discourse contributed to widening the gap between animals and humans and to giving animals a lasting connection to that which was considered to be negative and/or demonic.

## 5 Angels and ontological transformations

In the cults and popular religious traditions in late antiquity, the concept of angel, *aggelos*, referred to a mediator between humans and a supreme god. The term had several meanings, which derived from various local traditions, and implies that local traditions were expressed in a universal language (cf. Cline 2011, 104; Muehlberger 2013, 31).

Angels took over some of the functions of the participants in traditional panthea. Similar to the ancient Middle-Eastern religions, a lively assembly of super-human beings was present in Christianity. ‘Monotheism’ is among other things a polemic term, and one of its functions is to veil multiplicity.<sup>14</sup> In this case the multiplicity consisted of angels, demons and divine and semi-divine humans.

According to Ellen Muehlberger, Evagrius of Pontus and others saw angels as flexible companions and guides in the cultivation of the ascetic life, while Augustine regarded them more as ‘divine drones’ (Muehlberger 2013, 5). Muehlberger describes two late antique discourses of angels: ‘In one, angels were one type of being among many in a shifting universe, and their primary purpose was to guard and to guide Christians who attempted to cultivate specialized bodily practices and types of prayer in order to return, like the rest of creation, to their orig-

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<sup>13</sup> This anti-civilization ideology is also found in Indian ascetic literature (see Oliville 2011, 94).

<sup>14</sup> While the Nag Hammadi texts include many named angels and powers, the angels in the ascetic and monastic literature are mostly without names. Egyptian doxologies and hymns include the names of Michael, Gabriel, Raphael and Suriel/Uriel. These and other named angels are abundantly present in magical papyri as well (Müller 1959, 59).

inal unity with God' (Muehlberger 2013, 8–9). 'In the other, angels were characters described in the emerging canon of Scripture and available to enable readers to transform the mostly narrative material in that Scripture into foundational proof for theological propositions' (Muehlberger 2013, 9). According to Muehlberger, this constitutes the first discourse developed in an Egyptian ascetic context.

In this context, angels had a panoptic function, seeing everything the ascetics did, and especially when the ascetics were tempted to sin. In line with their interest in wrongdoings angels acted as judges and hangmen. When, for instance, an angel took Pachomius to see the dead sinners who were tormented in hell, 'the torturing angels were quite filled with joy and gladness' (*Bohairic Life* 88, in Veilleux 1980, 115). Angels are present in the daily life of the ascetics, where they bring messages, take care of people who are ill and correct monks who are up to no good, for instance harboring heretical views. When the monks' talk is edifying, an angel is present, when not, 'a stinking filthy pig' (*Syst.* 18.43, 4 and 12). The saying reflects the potent tension in the monks' imagination between the superhuman category of angels and the subhuman category of animals.

In addition to showing themselves to humans, speaking with them and guiding them, and sometimes acting as the special companion of the monks, angels also offered an ontological transformation category, as already suggested. Some Christians in late antiquity had a strong wish to live the *angelikos bios* and become like angels. Fulfilling this wish implied a more profound change, a sort of categorical and ontological transformation of the category of human.<sup>15</sup> This was a dramatic change, which aimed at lifting humans out of the life-world and away from other creatures.

The idea of the angel-like nature of humans was fueled by impulses from Scripture, and thrived, among other things, on a feeling of the superior origin of humans in relation to animals.<sup>16</sup> Animals were, for instance, used as shaming devices in a *minori ad maius* argumentation: 'There is nothing filthier than a sinful human being, neither the dog nor the pig, for they are irrational and keep to their own status, whereas the human, being in the image of God, did not keep its own status' (*Syst.* 15.125). The desire to become an angel is sometimes made explicit as in this short saying, combining two interconnected mythemes about fall and salvation: 'Woe is me! We came here to become angels and ended up becom-

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<sup>15</sup> About 'ontological conversion', see Marshall 2014.

<sup>16</sup> For the nuances of the discourse of the Angelic Life, see Muehlberger 2013, 148–176.

ing irrational, impure beasts (*aloga akatharta zoa*)' (*Syst.* 16.7; *Les Apophthegmes des Pères*, vol. 2, 396).<sup>17</sup>

A prevailing view with roots in Middle Platonism, further developed by Origen in the third century, was that angels, men, demons and astral bodies had a common rational nature. In a way demons are fallen angels, while angels are un-fallen demons. Humans, who previously shared that status, might aspire to re-join the angels. In this way, 'man' and 'angel' became titles of rank – as Benjamin Blosser has recently pointed out (Blosser 2012, 174. 210). As for animals, Origen stressed that they lack the faculty of reason. According to him, they have their irrationality in common with vegetables, even if animals are *psychei*, while vegetables are *apsychei* (*Contra Celsum* 4.83).

In these processes of change, the category of angel, *aggelos*, was developed and used positively, the category of animal/demon was used negatively, and the gap between humans and animals was widened, as well as the gap between men and women. In line with an axiomatic gender hierarchy, the idea circulated that women had to make themselves male in order to be saved (cf. Vogt 1991). Women, animals and angels were instrumental in promoting the new human/male/superhuman ideal where the goal was to move up in the hierarchy of being with the ambition of transcending the human category, and becoming immortal. The originally Stoic view of animals became dominant and intensified in Christianity and probably spread via Origen and the ascetic movement.

## 6 The Angel School

Angels have an impeccable biblical standing, being present at the conception, nativity and death of Jesus. When they encounter different people, times and places, they change. Angels travel light and easily slip through the cultural net. They have something in common with Darwin's finches and the North Sea cod and even more with the virus of the common cold (in a metaphorical sense) – because small changes in their environment make them change. We have seen how angels interacted with monks and ascetics in late antique Egypt, but they are also present in the mental landscape of many people in late modern societies in the twenty-first century.

Let us pause for a moment. When we compare angels in Egypt in late antiquity with angels in Norway in the twenty-first century, what are we doing? Are we

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17 We are reminded of Nietzsche: 'Der Mensch ist ein Seil, geknüpft zwischen Tier und Übermensch – ein Seil über einem Abgrunde' (*Zarathustra Vorrede* 4).

making a comparison based on genealogy or typology? Is it a homological or analogical comparison?<sup>18</sup> Taking into consideration that there is a continuous tradition of angels from antiquity via Christian texts and medieval paintings to the present, and that it is often pointed out that New Age angels mostly have Christian roots, the ancient and late modern angels might be conceived of as distant cousins. One could even argue that in some respects we live in the latest antiquity: Christianity, for instance, got a lasting impression from the religious impulses of antiquity. However, it is also important to notice a structural similarity – the ancient Mediterranean and contemporary Norway took/takes part in processes of globalization and encounters between religious traditions, and both may be described as staging lively religious scenes. It is a reasonable hypothesis that intermediary beings thrive under such circumstances. Such beings are, for instance, very visible in contemporary popular culture and media. Unlike earlier periods when, in addition to angels, demons and scary monsters filled the popular imagination, contemporary popular culture, while still harboring demons, is mostly saturated with angels. It also seems that while the bestial Satan with his entourage of demons and hybrids have left the scene, angels and animals have found new opportunities to come together.

Contemporary angels are part of the American ‘angel craze’, which reached Norway in the 1980s and 1990s. These creatures are not only present in homes, churches and New Age fairs, they are virtually present everywhere because of a strong mediatization and because they are attractive objects in capitalistic markets (cf. Gilhus 2013). Angels are especially visible at Christmas where they connect the Gospel of Christmas day with Christmas sales. Angels have at the same time moved from a male to a female domain and are seen in the shape of women and children rather than in the shape of males (cf. Utriainen 2014, 250). The functions of angels as judges and hangmen have disappeared; they are no longer equipped with wings from birds of prey, but from swans; and they are mostly seen as companions, helpers and therapists. Angels have changed from being the opponents of demons/animals to sometimes using animals as their allies. These animals function as models for communication with angels and also as their vehicles.

In Norway the new fascination with angels is foremost associated with the spiritual mission of Princess Märtha Louise, the daughter of the Norwegian king. Together with her business partner, Elisabeth Nordeng, she published the book, *Møt din skytsengel: En innføring i å møte din unike kraft* (‘Meet your

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**18** Do we, with respect to wings, compare birds with birds or birds with bats? Egil Asprem has recently used this example in a fruitful way (Asprem 2014, 27–30).

guardian angel: An introduction in meeting your unique power', my translation) in 2009.<sup>19</sup> The picture on the cover of the book is a blue sky with some clouds and a huge white wing filling the picture, probably the wing of a swan. The name *Engleskolen* – 'The Angel School' – is printed on the cover of the book.

The book connects angels to the universal power of love, which in this case seems to be the supreme superhuman power. The authors encourage the readers to find their unique spiritual way, and the book offers 'spiritual tools.' The most important among these tools is meditation (Princess Märtha Louise, Samnøy 2009, 9). The book's message is that you should be present in the body, be connected with the earth and the universe and invite angels into your life (cf. Gilhus 2016). According to the authors, angels can be sensed in several ways as sound, light, taste, smell, feeling and color (Princess Märtha Louise, Samnøy 2009, 164).<sup>20</sup> Similar to the ascetic project, the human body is still in focus, but this time the paradigmatic body is female. While the monks and ascetics had internalized the language of Scripture and spoke by means of it, the relationship with Scripture in the book by the princess and Nordeng is indirect and superficial. Here Scripture is present in the form of echoes from Sunday school, novels and literature.

Mainly because of the princess' popular appeal and media attention (cf. Kraft 2008), angels have become a summarizing symbol for New Age spirituality in Norway, reflected, for instance, in a book by a professor in Theology at the University of Oslo, Notto Thelle (cf. Gilhus 2016). Its title is *The Angels of the Princess*, with the subtext, *An Invitation to a Conversation about Alternative Spirituality* (my translation).<sup>21</sup> The cover of the book corresponds with the cover of the book of the princess and Elisabeth Nordeng. It sports the wing of an angel (swan) against the sky and uses colors similar to their book. However, only one of the chapters in *The Angels of the Princess* is directly related to the angels of the princess: the rest is about New Age spirituality in general. Thelle is especially concerned with the relation of New Age spirituality to Christianity and the Church of Norway.

In Princess Märtha Louise and Elisabeth Nordeng's book angels are rooted in the emotional landscape of childhood, which is in line with a general contempo-

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<sup>19</sup> The book has been published in English with the title *The Spiritual Password: Learn to Unlock Your Spiritual Power* (2014).

<sup>20</sup> Elisabeth Samnøy later changed her name to Elisabeth Nordeng.

<sup>21</sup> The Norwegian title is: *Prinsessens engler: En invitasjon til en samtale om alternativ spiritualitet*. Their second book about angels is *Englenes hemmeligheter: Deres natur, språk og hvordan du åpner opp for dem* (Princess Märtha Louise, Samnøy 2012).

rary conception of angels.<sup>22</sup> In addition, these creatures have a strong tie to real animals. Bird-wings are still a visual characteristic, in line with angels' air-borne manner of locomotion. According to the princess, feathers found in unusual places reveal that angels have been present.<sup>23</sup> In a newspaper article, a professor in biology offered the princess to read the DNA of the feathers for her.<sup>24</sup> The princess admitted that the feathers were probably from birds. Still the episode shows that the relationship between facts and metaphors is not always straightforward, and, moreover, that how the idea of angels is conceived of offers a special perspective for the interpretation of the world.<sup>25</sup>

The angels of the princess have a special connection to horses, because her contact with angels happened by means of them – 'through the horses I learnt to communicate with animals on a deeper level. It was while I was taking care of the horses that I made contact with the angels.'<sup>26</sup> In this way angels are directly linked to horses and to animals in general and to the human ability to communicate with other species. Twenty years ago, Harold Bloom spoke about what he called 'the domestication of angels' and sighed: 'Most quests for the angels seem nowadays to suppose that a guardian angel is rather more like a dog or a cat than like a husband or a wife' (Bloom 1996, 43 and 44).

The new and direct association between animals and angels also reflects a more general change of view regarding animals, partly formed by contemporary pet- and recreation-culture. Pets are the primary category of animals large groups of people have experience with. Pets are, for instance, depicted with wings; wing-costumes for pets are on sale as well as books about angel-animals. Cats, dogs and horses have obviously raised their status. Communication with animals as a way of communicating with otherness – that which transcends the ordinary and which exists on a deeper level – might include other animals as well. The princess met an eland antelope (*taurotragus oryx*) in Africa when she was on a retreat to get into 'deeper contact with myself and with the

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**22** Among the pictures in the book are an angel scrap, an angel in the snow and a gingerbread tin in the shape of an angel (Princess Märtha Louise, Samnøy 2009, 160–81). Nordeng connects the angels to her childhood experience of a fantasy-friend (Princess Märtha Louise, Samnøy 2009, 169).

**23** [www.magasinetvisjon.no/no/artikler/spiritualitet/Englenes+hemmeligheter.9UFRnGXx.ips](http://www.magasinetvisjon.no/no/artikler/spiritualitet/Englenes+hemmeligheter.9UFRnGXx.ips) (accessed February 19, 2015), cf. also Princess Märtha Louise, Samnøy 2009, 167.

**24** <http://www.abcnyheter.no/nyheter/2012/02/18/146118/professor-la-meg-dna-teste-eng-lefjaerene-martha> (accessed September 10, 2015).

**25** I am grateful to my colleague Lisbeth Mikaelsson for this observation.

**26** 'Gjennom hestene lærte jeg å kommunisere med dyrene på et dypere nivå. Det var mens jeg holdt på med hestene at jeg tok opp kontakten med englene' (Netpages from Astarte Education 2007).

earth' (Princess Märtha Louise, Samnøy 2009, 102, my translation). According to her, the leader of the course had stressed that the elands always came near when the participants were occupied with healing. One afternoon when they were working with healing, an eland stood a few meters from the princess: 'We stood there for a long time, and watched each other. It was not afraid at all' (Princess Märtha Louise, Samnøy 2009, 102, my translation). The eland is used as an example of connecting with the earth. Nature, where animals belong, is a source of immanence and deep meaning, more important than a transcendent realm high up and beyond <sup>27</sup>

## 7 Dynamic of religion: past and present

The changing conceptions of animals and angels in antiquity and today are, in both periods, part of globalization processes. The two examples above reflect two macro processes of religious change in parts of the Mediterranean and European world: from a multi-religious society to a Christian monopoly in antiquity and from a Christian monopoly to a multi-religious and secular society at present.<sup>28</sup>

Asceticism and the monastic life became a spearhead for late antique Christianity and together with the martyr the ascetic became the Christian hero *par excellence*. In the ascetic and monastic texts animals were part of a battle-discourse. Especially wild animals, but also some domestic ones, expressed and sometimes incarnated evil in general and sexual desire specifically. In this universe, angels were God's messengers, the companions of the monks and guardians of a religiously controlled world. Humans might transcend their place in the hierarchy of beings and rise to the status of angels. Angels and animals were accordingly used in a development project where the goal was to transcend human nature and reach a higher existential level.

In contrast to ancient societies, contemporary Western societies are mostly secular, democratic and egalitarian. In these societies the development of New

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<sup>27</sup> Pet-animals have, perhaps, more cultural focus than farm animals and wild animals, while, at the same time, views about those animals are influenced by contemporary pet-culture.

<sup>28</sup> One side of secularization is a re-enchantment, which the book by the princess and Nordeng reflects. Another side of secularization is a de-enchantment, which, similar to re-enchantment, is a process closely in dialogue with religion. In his novel, *A Time to Every Purpose under Heaven: A Novel of the Nature of Angels and the Ways of Man* (2004), the award-winning author Karl Ove Knausgård describes what happens to angels in a secularized world without god (Knausgård 2009). In this book, the angels became increasingly depressed and marginalized. Gradually they were transformed and finally turned into seagulls on the coast of Norway.

Age spirituality is promoted by means of small-scale religious enterprises (cf. Sutcliffe 2003), and religious ideas and practices are spread by means of electronic and social media and are virtually present everywhere. A pet-perspective of animals and a view of them as companions of humans is prominent. Angels are part of a global trend and frequently used and referred to by New Age authors and therapists. Their global dimension is stressed, for instance, when they are used synonymously with intermediate beings in other religions (for instance devas) or when they are converted to a higher abstraction level and described as spiritual energy. Female views and values are very visible in contemporary spirituality, not least in relation to angels. The battle-discourse from earlier times has changed into a communication-discourse where humans, angels and animals are constructed as partners in conversation. In New Age spirituality, animals and angels tend further to be part of a self-help scenario where the goal is to improve one's ability to deal with the world and one's personal relations.

Changes in the conceptions of animals and angels are in both periods closely connected to broader cultural and religious changes. Perhaps religions are at their most dynamic when they take part in processes of transformation and alteration of the basic categories in the human conception of the world?

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## Gaining Access to the Radically Unfamiliar: Religion in Modern Times

**Abstract:** Postcolonial critique instructed anthropologists to turn to history in order to integrate time into their discourse. Yet historiography, even when undertaken from a postcolonial, subaltern standpoint, has foundered precisely on the challenge of doing justice to religious subjectivity. How then is the non-religious scholar to gain access to religious phenomena? Phenomenological understandings of body, temporality and place provide an alternative account of what it means to come to understand something. Seen from this perspective, disciplines such as anthropology in fact rely radically on time, on the capacity of the scholar's body to slowly effect a new synthesis of body, place and people. In the expansion that takes place lies the potential to come to understand, without any necessary involvement of consent or belief, the continuum between religious and non-religious experience.

**Keywords:** modernity, historical time, postcolonial and feminist critiques of modernity, temporality of anthropological practice, phenomenology, bodily access to the unfamiliar, spirit possession, continuities of experience, religious agency

The study of certain kinds of religious phenomena can reveal our own presuppositions precisely to the extent that it places a strain on the categories we use. This is the orientation with which I explored the phenomenon of 'spirit possession' in my recent work (Ram 2013). Men and women in rural Tamil Nadu are capable of experiencing divinity and the dead not simply as a visitation, but in their bodies, as a more or less explicit presence. Such experience has no unequivocal meaning – it may constitute affliction or divine favor. The interpretative challenge may be described as 'ethnographic'. It is undertaken regularly as part of anthropology's ongoing wager that it is indeed possible to extend our knowledge even of cultural phenomena that are initially radically alien and unfamiliar to oneself. The methods I employ are also derived from phenomenology. In phenomenology, spirit possession would constitute an exemplary 'limit case', where ordinary presumptions that sustain us in everyday interactions no longer support us. We can and do stave off the instability that ensues. We can dismiss the challenge or simply diminish it by re-absorbing it into existing categories. If we were to take spirit possession as a genuine phenomenon, it would profoundly call into ques-

tion a network of assumptions about what it is to be human, alive or dead, what it is to worship, what it is to be divine. Instead, we re-absorb spirit possession into the language of consciousness ('altered' states of consciousness, but consciousness nevertheless), or into the language of biology (measuring brain activity alterations to see if anything 'real' is happening). More frequently still we simply dismiss it as falsehood.

We may not be able to step outside our own epistemologies, because they are in fact our ontologies. We apprehend the world not just cognitively but emotionally, affectively, and practically. Or – we could allow ourselves to be unsettled. My book titled *Fertile Disorder. Spirit Possession and its Provocation of the Modern* (Ram 2013) tries to persuade readers to come on a journey with me, through dense ethnographic exploration of what possession means for different women, in order to return to more common scholarly and political preoccupations, newly enriched by new hypotheses and ways of re-imagining at least some of our assumptions. In the book I deal with a number of such preoccupations such as gender, agency, the body, emotions, as well as justice. Here I want to see if we can extend some of those methods and insights to the themes of religion, change and history which are the binding themes of this volume. For it is not simply extreme phenomena such as spirit possession that act as a 'provocation of the modern'. Something of that provocation seems to cling to all of religion as far as self-consciously modern projects are concerned – whether these be political projects such as feminism, liberalism and socialism – or models of knowledge that take the methods of science as their yardstick of truth. Religion does not have to do much to be constituted as a provocation. Its very visibility to non-religious others seems an eruption into a place (the public sphere) and a time (the present) to which it does not belong. What does this reveal of our understanding of time itself? What understanding of time and of a shared present underlies this response of surprise and discomfort at every manifestation of religion? It is not only that religion is being located in the past, it is also being assumed that the past does not simply flow into the present. Instead, the present is assumed to entirely supersede the past. How might we think differently about the relation between past and present such that even those who do not share the assumptions of a religious phenomenon might nevertheless aspire to gain a form of access to it?

In what follows I take up two bodies of work that help us think differently about time.

First, I turn to the highly politicized set of discourses bequeathed to us by forty years of questions and critiques raised by feminists, post-structuralists, and post-colonial scholars. All of these coalesce in one respect: they have all, in some form or another, interrogated the linear, progressivist self-image of mod-

ernity. In turn they share elements of an alternative model of history and of time. We may, after Foucault, describe this model as an archaeology of the present.

The second body of work I turn to is the discipline of anthropology. This sits oddly after turning to the political critiques for inspiration. For postcolonial critiques in particular have tended to see anthropology as singularly lacking in an adequate sense of time. Anthropological traditions have been strongly indicted for failing to incorporate the time of colonial rule into their accounts of what they see and describe as ‘tribal’ societies for example (Asad 1975, 103–120). The explicit models of time anthropologists have offered for the non-western societies they have studied – as non-linear, cyclical time in India for example – might be seen from a post-colonial perspective as too homogenizing (Sarkar 2002, 15), and as adding to a ‘time distance’ between the western ‘us’ and ‘them’ (Fabian 1983).

In taking such charges to heart, social change became a central motif for anthropology. In my book (Ram 2013) I closely examine the many ways in which spirit possession has been positioned as an index or concrete expression of the tensions introduced by capitalism into a pre-capitalist culture. In some cases, as in the factories of Malaysia (Ong 1987), the arrival or consolidation of capitalism takes the form of new relations of production and new disciplines of work. Others follow the lead of Taussig (1997) in describing cults of spirit queens as mimetic amplifications of different qualities of the modern state (Morris 2000; Tsing 1993). My own work in rural India began in the 1980s directly concerned with questions of social change, exploring the changing nature of the sexual division of labor with the adoption of new technology and capitalist relations of production. I went on to research the involvement of women in projects of social reform and development, and the changing conditions under which women ‘came of age’, gave birth and mothered. But the enigmatic qualities of spirit possession made me dissatisfied with extending this kind of analysis to every aspect of phenomena we encounter in the world. In this case it meant ignoring the very features which were most spectacular not only to me, but to those around me in Tamil Nadu. What stood out for all of us was the radical change in the very people who were ‘entered’ by spirits. During such intervals, their behavior, gait and language would alter. In the shrines of Catholic saints where people went to seek relief from the troublesome spirits, the Catholic deities did battle with the demonic. In Tamil Nadu, the Christian powers shared certain characteristics of the demonic world. Like them, they too entered the bodies of humans, taking them as mediums in such confrontations. It is true that one cannot simply remain with the sensory and the spectacular moment even in order to explore the meanings of such moments. Those meanings turned out to be distributed across the interrelationship between diverse sets of practices

– some were ritual practices that took place in temples and in Christian shrines, others were constructions of gendered life cycles, yet others were concerned with death and its effects on the flow of life energies. The changes I came to explore were more personal, as possession brought changes to the lives not only of the person directly involved, but of all who were touched by it.

In what follows I first trace the kind of alternatives postcolonial and feminist critiques forged in relation to what Ballard critically describes as the ‘precepts or conventions of a singular historical consciousness, which is that of modern, professional, Western, or now global historicity’ (Ballard 2014,102). This singular historical consciousness, argues Ballard, is particularly resistant to religion, for it could be said to have ‘cut its teeth’ on questioning the authenticity of the events described in the Bible (Ballard 2014, 102). I then trace some of the difficulties experienced in attempts by postcolonial historians to pluralize those conventions in relation to religion when writing the history of modern India. Finally I turn to phenomenology and anthropology, arguing that there are other ways of understanding temporality and change. My aim here is not to elevate anthropological practice but rather to elicit a dimension that can be applied more widely. Through what version of practice, through what version of time and of change, might non-religious scholars gain access to religious experiences?

## 1 Religion and the archaeological approach to the time of modernity

In an opening chapter of *Fertile Disorder* I adopt a mode of historical analysis. I explore how it is that spirit possession and many of its attendant practices have come to be so absent from the dominant discourses of modern India (Ram 2013, 42–70). I trace the particular workings of Reason in Indian modernity, specifically in the regional modernity of Tamil Nadu, where rationality was the chosen weapon of twentieth century intellectuals engaged in disputing the power of Brahmanic culture. I trace how ‘possession’, an eminent candidate for cultural iconicity as a non-Brahmanic complex of practices, came instead to be marginalized. It has become a practice lacking a discourse of its own within the dominant episteme. The ensemble of practices within which ‘possession’ lives has been carved up by different disciplines to constitute distinctive objects of knowledge. The stories of the local goddess who afflicts and cures people appear in collections of local folk tales. The performances of her epics are represented in performance studies. The wider practices of curing and the diagnoses of misfortune are assigned to anthropology, but are distributed across a number of sub-disci-

plines, from studies of folk religion to medical anthropology. I thus attempt to show that the term ‘possession’, seemingly unitary, is in fact a ‘remainder’: something left over after a previously coherent set of practices has been thus distributed. What possession can no longer claim in these dominant discourses is the capacity to generate knowledge in its own right.

But is this history writing in the usual sense of the term? It departs in certain crucial ways from an objectivist version of history, one in which the preoccupations of the enquirer are supposed to play no part in the account she produces of the past. Quite the opposite is the case here. The story I piece together is situated by my concerns with the politics of the present in India. It is a response I share with many of my intellectual peers to a crisis in a secularism we took for granted in ‘Nehruvian’ post-independence India. Such an upbringing in upper-caste urban Hindu India allowed one to bask in the assumption that one lived in a place where a unique Indian modernity has successfully integrated the best of Indian traditions – this included the best of Hinduism – imbibed as pure spirituality, culled of the taint of caste which was assumed to be on its way out. This version co-existed comfortably enough with an official secularism – until a sustained challenge to secularism came from the direction of a strident and exclusivist Hindu nationalism.

There have been different kinds of intellectual responses to this challenge, some of them seeking possible alternative models from different strands of religion itself. Nandy is a leading advocate for such a position. He finds in ‘everyday’ Hinduism a fluidity that lends itself to cutting across the formalities of religious borders. The flexible niche that allows one to adopt a deity as a personal object of devotion has meant for example that Muslim musicians could quite unself-consciously choose Saraswati, goddess of learning and the arts, as their presiding deity (Nandy 2001). A more widespread response among secular intellectuals has been to invoke the medieval bhakti traditions of Hinduism as an alternative model of religion. At its boldest, bhakti called on worshippers to bypass the mediation of religious institutions and orthodoxies, replacing them with a teacher who could show you the way to find the divine within oneself. Bhakti models of religion also provided the kind of shared language and basic understandings Nandy invokes, providing a habitus which easily crossed between Hinduism and Sufi strands of Islam. As the work of Eaton (Eaton 1985) demonstrates, the largest populations of Muslims were in undivided Punjab and Bengal, well away from the historic heartlands of Islamic states. It was not the state, but rather a state-supported popular Sufism, that brought these communities into Islam, mediated by Sufis who involved themselves not only in worship but in practical help, healing and adjudicating over disputes. Such ‘conversion’ sat lightly on existing norms and practices, not requiring total transformation of a shared past.

My concern has been that these debates on religion and secularism continue to leave out whole segments of experience of people for whom gods are even more spectacularly accessible to devotees than in bhakti traditions. Moreover these are gods who cure as well as afflict. In 1995, the German scholar Günther D. Sontheimer, who adopted some of the insights and methods of the imaginative Indian Marxist intellectual Damodar D. Kosambi, argued that modernity has made matters worse for what he called the folk and tribal models of religion that historically contributed much to Hinduism. In the *new* Hinduism of the middle class, he concludes, 'bhakti and the philosophical contents of Hinduism' have come to stand for the entirety. There remains, in his view, 'not even a disapproving awareness of folk Hinduism' (Sontheimer 1995).

Such oblivion is part of a much more secure hegemony of the upper caste/classes and I have therefore seen it as an urgent task of the present to acknowledge the continued vitality of non-elite religion. An excavation of the past undertaken in this spirit makes no presumption of being detached from the subjectivity of the enquirer. Then again, it is not 'subjective' in the usual sense of referring to the consciousness of an isolated individual subject. Rather, these are responses to shared concerns, coming out of varied but shared projects (secularism, democracy, socialism etc.), and part of wider shared debates. It is an attempt to see how our subjectivities came to be constituted in certain ways. This reference to a shared constitution of subjectivity does not entail an assumption that we are somehow identical. Rather, the past operates in the manner of a shared archive out of which we can selectively take and adapt according to the needs and purposes of the present.

Such a re-working of history came into postcolonial studies through the work of Foucault. As he describes it in his *Archaeology of Knowledge* (Foucault 1972), an archive is both embodied in specific enunciations, statements, as well as forming the precondition for those statements.

The archive is first the law of what can be said, the system that governs the appearance of statements as unique events. But the archive is also that which determines that all these things said do not accumulate endlessly in an amorphous mass, nor are they inscribed in an unbroken linearity, nor do they disappear at the mercy of chance external accidents; but they are grouped together in distinct figures, composed together in accordance with multiple relations, maintained or blurred in accordance with specific regularities... (Foucault 1972, 129).

It is *this* version of temporality – as a dominant genealogy to be excavated – which has fed into many of the critical discourses of the past forty years, not only post-structuralism and postcolonial critique, but various strands of feminist critique as well. Thus Said utilizes Foucault's notion of the archive in *Orientalism*

(Said 1979) to characterize the kinds of statements that can routinely be made about 'Islam' or the politics of the Middle East. Such statements can draw on quite different genealogies (colonialism, Christian formulations of Islam, even Greek pronouncements on the irrationalism of Dionysian cults or confrontations with the Persians) in order to create a sense of freshness as well as debate even while the archive regulates what is 'meaningful', legitimate, and what is not, what 'counts' as a statement and what does not.

But if an archive is actually constitutive of who we are as speaking subjects, then how is one to perform an 'archaeology'? Foucault's answer in this text is that one should explore discourses that have 'just ceased to be ours', that is, where a certain historical threshold has been crossed. That threshold, for India, is precisely the crossing of a certain normativity assigned to discourses of secularism. Others have exploited other forms of dissonance. Said exploits the pain and dissonance he experienced as a postcolonial subject, at once part and not part of a privileged location in the North American academy (Said 1979). Feminist intellectuals have used the frustration and pain of having to inhabit a world where it is apparently impossible to be a woman and an intellectual at once. What is shared across these different situations is the capacity to make generative a dissonance that is at once individually lived and socially produced.

Taken together, we now have forty years of cumulative insights into the exclusions that have been constitutive of modernity. Religion is one of those casualties. 'The Moderns have never been modern', says Latour (Latour 2013, 14). And indeed, this is the spirit of my critique as well, ultimately. But first it must be said, as Latour goes on to immediately acknowledge, that the moderns have nevertheless 'believed they were modern, and this belief too is crucial, for it has made them act in a thousand contradictory ways' (Latour 2013, 14). These 'thousand contradictory ways' can still cohere enough to exclude and marginalize socially constituted groups and social phenomena in quite systematic ways. If we look back over the different kinds of exclusions and marginalizations that have been enumerated as constitutive of modernity, we see an overlapping series emerging. In each of these oppositions, religion is pre-framed – each time to its own disadvantage. Depending on the context, contemporary utterances can frame modernity as capitalism versus feudalism, as progress versus tradition, as reason versus irrationality, or science versus superstition, as change versus stagnation, as democracy versus authoritarian absolutism, or indeed, as order and hygiene versus disorder and infection. None of these are simple oppositions. In each case, one term plays an inferior role. In each case, however, religion can take on the coloring of any or all the inferior terms, depending on the context: as

stagnant, authoritarian, feudal, superstitious, corrupt, and the source of unhygienic unscientific practices.

What makes these understandings ‘stick’ is that none of these have operated as purely conceptual oppositions. They have all been realized in projects of power and intervention that are also intertwined. As feminists have long pointed out, such polarities come to us already shaped by hierarchies of power that divide the territory as well as privilege one term over another: objectivity over subjectivity, rationality over other forms of comprehension, the Man of Reason (Lloyd 1985) over the feminized submerged continent of the psyche. Each of these antinomies acts as an affective drive for the institution of a project. Representing the psyche as unknown and dark has been the pretext for Men of Enlightenment to map and bring the psyche to light, mediated by women’s bodies as bearers of hysterical symptoms (Koffman 1985). In turn, idioms of mapping and exploring dark continents, or of bringing progress and democracy to authoritarian and decadent dominant groups have functioned as a language shared between the projects of a modernizing patriarchy and of colonialism, which is why gender and the rescue of women can emerge effortlessly at the heart of the language of western interventions in the Middle East, and more generally in what is now termed the global south. Each of the binaries between order and disorder, Enlightenment and darkness, subject and object has been realized as projects: of doctors, missionaries, colonial administrators, scholars and artists.

As colonial projects, they create what Fabian described as ‘temporal distancing’ between the time of the enquiring observer and that of the object of study (Fabian 1983, 61). This distance is itself internally hierarchized. So while India was distanced as a society run entirely on principles that were not simply religious but fatalistic and irrational, Hinduism and Islam were afforded recognition as ‘religions’. By contrast, the anthropologist working in rural villages encounters phenomena that have never made the grade as ‘religion’ since they fit into the most distant zone reserved by modernity for extreme superstition. European categories such as magic, witchcraft and possession may entail more than simple transpositions of European categories to other places. Some, such as the historian Kathleen Davis, would argue that the ‘idea of an irrational, violent, superstitious, feudal “Middle Ages”... came into being *as* and through *colonialism*.’ (Davis 2015, 70):

Colonisers could not have mapped and administered foreign lands and bodies as they did without the simultaneous process of imagining their own ‘Middle Ages’. Vice versa ‘the Middle Ages’ could not have been conceptualised as such, apart from Europeans’ attempt to theorise their relations to the people over whose lands they would lay claim. This holds particularly true for India in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. ... The linear narrative that the ‘idea of the Middle Ages spread unevenly but was generally accepted’ by the

time of the nineteenth century not only obscures the colonial history of the becoming medieval of the ‘the Middle Ages’ – which was also the condition of possibility for the ‘denial of coevalness’ – but it also quietly affirms the displacement of this history upon the ‘Renaissance’, ostensibly before Europe’s colonial struggle. (Davis 2015, 70. 71)

## 2 Postcolonial histories of India and religion as the limit case

The kinds of critiques I have alluded to are able to produce cogent critiques of modernity’s exclusions. But how far do they allow us to produce an account of that which has been excluded? Here the results are less than satisfactory, although many adherents of such critiques in the broader field of cultural studies would regard even the attempt to produce an account of the excluded ‘Other’ as almost axiomatically romantic and essentialist. Such an undertaking would hardly be worth the risk. But while practices such as possession may not generate much of value when viewed in terms of the dominant episteme, they do for those engaged in such practices. Once during my field work in 1991, I asked a local potter to make me an image of Icakki, such as I had seen at the temple of Muppandal. I wished to take it back to Sydney so I had something tangible to have in front of me while I wrote. The potter taught me a lesson about the difference between my own stance and that of the people who worshipped her:

The potter keenly observes me, and asks me if I have *nampikkai* (faith). I say I do, a little, in the goddess. Next question: have I had *anubhavam* or experience of her. I am stuck for a response. He tries to help me by giving me examples of such experience: have I had an illness cured by her? has she ever spoken to me in a dream? I say, no, she has not. Then how, he asks me, can I say I have faith? He relents and tells me to come back in four days. But when I return to the potter, the version he produces for me to take home is of a demure sari-clad female, hair neatly coiled in a bun, responsibly holding a child in her hand – nothing at all like the Icakki who made me gape in the temple at Muppandal. There the infant would be more likely to emerge mangled from her mouth. It would not be nurtured. Evidently the potter has decided I would be ill equipped to handle the powers of the image I so blithely commission. She is a *kōpakkāri* (a habitually angry female), not to be messed with. (Field notes, November 1991).

I may still not have *nampikkai*/belief or direct *anubhavam* of possessing deities, but my book is in one sense an extended response to the potter’s questions. But how have postcolonial historians responded to such questions? While they may never have been questioned as directly as I was, religion has been addressed in some form by virtually every foundational member of the influential Subaltern Studies group of historians. Religion recurs in their work as that which, lying

outside the framework of modern historiography, must be re-integrated into an account of Indian history. But the impulse is split by a politicized hermeneutics of suspicion. The politics of the group is described by Chakrabarty as emerging from a series of events and social movements in India that 'made official nationalism sound hollow' (Chakrabarty 2002, 6). The task taken on by this group of historians was therefore extraordinarily wide ranging. They sought to reconstruct the history of Indian modernity not only from a decolonizing perspective but also from a 'subaltern' non-elite perspective that would be critical even of anti-colonial nationalist paradigms. No critique can undermine all the assumptions of the discourse it inherits and it is not surprising to find that certain parts were left standing intact. What is significant is that it is the domain of religion which proves to be the recurrent point of instability.

I will be able to refer here only to a few examples. In his landmark study of peasant insurgency in the colonial period, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency* (1983), Guha follows the Italian revolutionary Marxist Gramsci in two central respects. On the one hand, we are treated to a more imaginative reading of peasant consciousness. On the other hand, that consciousness is described as 'rather hesitant, inchoate and disjointed perception'. In this inchoate state it cannot but continue to borrow and clothe itself in the received language of the ruling class (Guha 1983, 28). Such a consciousness can only go so far, succeeding in describing 'empirically some aspects of the peasant's conditions of existence', but 'falling far short of conceptualizing the structure of authority which made such conditions possible' (Guha 1983, 28).

I do not question the assertion that such a knowledge is not present in peasant rebellions, or indeed in most subordinate groups – although it is doubtful as to whether *any* intellectual framework could deliver such full knowledge. What is more to the point here is that it is the *religious* consciousness of the peasant leader which is singled out as the 'inherited and uncritically absorbed material of the ruling culture' (Guha 1983, 11), causing an erosion of the radical potential of such rebellion. Religious consciousness marks the peasant leader as both a member of a subordinate group as well as less than a full subject of revolution:

He is still committed to envisaging the coming war on the Raj as the project of a will independent of himself and his own role in it as no more than instrumental. 'Kanoos and Seedu Manjee are not fighting. The Thacoor [Master, God] himself will fight' stated the parwana in which the authors did not recognise even their own voice, but heard only that of God: 'This is the order of the Thacoor'. (Guha 1983, 28)

The implicit set of contrasts is between the inherited and the newly generated; between the uncritically absorbed and the conscious systematic critique of the past; between attributing agency to others, and claiming it as entirely one's

own. In each case, religion is understood entirely in the terms of the first set of terms.

My next example comes from Pandey's corpus of work. It is centrally concerned with religion. His early work sought to show how communalism – the supposed inability of different religious groups, particularly Hindus and Muslims, to co-exist without violence – was in fact a colonial discourse (Pandey 1990). Subsequent work on the Partition of India (Pandey 2002; Pandey 2006) has been directed at nationalist assumptions in Indian historiography that render Partition and subsequent communal violence either as acts of natural calamity, or as discrete episodes that can never be integrated into the Indian story of nationhood. But the discourse he wishes to abandon, and the one his meticulously historicizing training produces, both ultimately overlap in certain key respects. The discourse he wishes to leave behind is one in which the 'culture and interests, inclinations and "passions" of religious community are already known from the start. They appear as frozen entities, which are denied the possibility of internal difference, political agency and change, even as they become objects of political manipulation and governmentality in a new way' (Pandey 2006, 183). The contrasting politicized account of religious communities differs in one crucial respect: such 'frozenness' has been *politically* produced. Since the nineteenth century, religious communities have been taking over all other forms of difference, so that religious identity has become one of the main markers of difference. The result of this process is a 'freezing of communities' (Pandey 2006, 185). Both accounts give us a picture of religious communities as devoid of agential political change. In the first account this is the result of an essentialist colonial understanding of India as a religious society. In the second case it is the result of historical processes since the nineteenth century. Although Pandey concedes that things were different in the past, he parts company with Nandy who, as we have noted, regards religious communities as still able to generate a different form of cooperation to that posited by secularism. For Pandey on the other hand, these are politicized communities. The only agency he now sees left in religious communities is of a decidedly negative kind, as objects of governmentality. In the process it is not only nationalism that stands indicted of having lost its 'imaginative moment' (Pandey 2006, 182). It is religion as well.

The work of Chakrabarty differs from the others in a crucial respect. Tracking the response of his peers towards religion, much as I have, he concludes that Marxist traditions that seek to 'de-mystify ideology in order to produce a critique that looks forward to a more just social order' are inadequate for understanding India as well as more generally as a method. Instead, it is equally important to represent non-European 'normative and theoretical thought enshrined in other existing life practices and their archives' (Chakrabarty 2000, 20). European cat-

egories are indispensable, he acknowledges, but one needs to ‘release into their space’ what might be learned through ‘close and careful attention to languages, practices, and intellectual traditions present in South Asia’ (Chakrabarty 2000, 20). He turns for inspiration to the hermeneutic tradition that ‘produces a loving grasp of detail in search of an understanding of the diversity of human life-worlds’ (Chakrabarty 2000, 18).

‘Hermeneutical loving grasp of detail’, the ‘understanding of diversity of life worlds’, the ‘careful attention to language and practice’: all these descriptions belong as much to anthropology as they do to the phenomenological traditions. If these phrases describe the domain of phenomenology within the traditions of philosophy, then they describe anthropology’s project in the domain of the empirical disciplines. This is no coincidence. I have argued elsewhere for the substantial overlap between the two (Ram 2013, 2015). The phenomenological principle of describing a life world before moving on too quickly to producing a more abstract account of it – let alone one that begins with the presumption of critique – is one that is shared with central aspects of anthropology. Chakrabarty’s conclusion has been resoundingly prefigured in forthright statements by anthropologists such as Sahlins, who finds in ‘different cultural orders their own modes of historical action, consciousness, and determination – their own historical practice’ (Sahlins 1983, 518).

### **3 The cleaving of time and place: can we put Humpty Dumpty together again?**

We have come full circle in the argument. A postcolonial or de-colonizing critique of anthropology instructed anthropologists to turn to history in order to integrate time into its account. Historians similarly moved by de-colonizing impulses found history to be based on a ‘singular historical consciousness, which is that of modern, professional, Western, or now global historicity’ (Ballard 2014, 102). Postcolonial critique helped to locate the reasons why religion suffers from interpretations that based themselves on such a modern historical consciousness. However, the politics of critique has itself been too reliant on certain categories of modernity to be able to accord any positive capacity for conscious critical change within religious consciousness and religious communities. Historians troubled by this have called for a hermeneutical phenomenology which, particularly where it entails involvement with non-European languages and practices, is virtually a description also of anthropology.

We are in effect witnessing an oscillation between a discourse that concerns itself with time and a discourse that concerns itself with place. The absences in each, taken together, point to a deeper underlying problem which is the artificial cleaving of time and place. The problem of the colonial politics of knowledge does not lie within one discipline. It is rather located in the division of labor in which both history and anthropology participated. By the late nineteenth century, time and place became the subject matter of two different disciplines. Both disciplines shared an orientation towards a critique of universalism. In this sense, yet another disciplinary demarcation was taking place, one which separated the relativizing disciplines of history and anthropology from philosophy. Henceforth, the universalisms of philosophy would be subject to relativizing critique based either on historicity or the particularities of place. *Both* are to some extent impoverished by this division of labor, as indeed is the bifurcation between utter relativism and a premature universalism. Thus if anthropology is interpreted exclusively as a relativizing discipline, then it does indeed encourage a tendency to continually presuppose and separate the west and the rest. Once the domains are separated in this manner, the best we can argue for is an ethical attitude of respect and tolerance for alterity and of critical reflection on one's own differences from the 'Other'.

One of the reasons it is possible for both a historian and an anthropologist to turn to phenomenology at this point is because it offers a way of recapturing what phenomenology would describe as a more 'primordial' unity of time and place. Phenomenology also orients us to recognizing continuities of experience – neither identity nor the polarized 'us' and 'them' of relativism. Temporality is no more the prerogative of one discipline than place is a prerogative of another. Rather, both time and place are embedded and embodied in the synthesis we create through our practical involvement with wider ecologies that entail the non-human environment as much as the human. These ecologies constitute places in their concreteness, unlike the abstractions of space derived from geometry and science (Casey 1996). But such syntheses are themselves temporal. This is true both across generations and in the course of an individual's lifetime. We inherit ecologies, we are born into them, and these ecologies we inherit are nothing other than the syntheses already effected by previous generations, bequeathed to us both as material culture and the practices that enable us to inhabit that material culture. There is also temporality in the synthesis we each of us effect in our embodied activities over a lifetime, making it uniquely individual as well as part of a tradition.

In this sense, temporalities are as varied as our activities and practices. The time of music making is as distinctive as the time of gardening or of writing a paper. And these rhythms will vary according to the degree to which we have per-

formed that synthesis between body, tasks and environment – the rhythm of a skilled musician is very different to that of a novice, the rhythm of the final draft of a paper is very different to the awkwardness that afflicts every fresh beginning.

What does this mean for the scholar of religion? How does one gain access to syntheses one is not born into nor has acquired by adulthood? The question is one I faced in relation to spirit possession. But let us note that the way we have posed this question already moves us away from the domain of asking whether we have to believe and consent to the beliefs of others. I still do not have *nampikkai* or belief in the sense that the potter spoke of. But understanding is something that can proceed without necessarily entailing belief and in fact can happen even without choosing to do so. Agreement, faith and belief may count for less ultimately in the relationship between the non-religious scholar and the worshipper, than for the scholar to arrive at a slow incorporative mode of understanding which is born of the other dimension the potter questioned me about, namely *anubhavam*, experience. Even if I have not had the direct *anubhavam* of the goddess – although I am not sure even of that any longer – I have certainly had direct experience of many others who have. And some elements of this understanding pass over into one's own embodied activities. Over a period of time, I knew which parts of the village held ghosts, which routes were shorter but meant passing an old temple of the fiery goddess. Guided initially by the fear and circumspection of my companions, by the end I did not need others to guide me – my feet would steer me away from there. To recover and value the full potential of anthropological practice requires moving away from the model of knowledge that is described as objectivism by phenomenologists, and which has prevailed within anthropology as well as history. Writing of anthropology from an existential phenomenological perspective, Jackson lists the legacies of this tendency:

Subjectivity was conflated with roles, rules, routines....And just as the natural sciences created the appearance of objectivity through specialized, analytical language, so the social sciences cultivated an image of objectivity by reducing persons to functions and identities: individuals filled roles, fulfilled obligations, followed rules, performed rituals and internalized beliefs. (Jackson 2013, 3)

The charges take us back to the critique of overly static account, though Jackson is less concerned with historical time and more with existential time in all its eddies and flux. On the other hand, the *same* discipline that can objectify knowledge also provides us with the wherewithal for quite a different conception of what it is to know something. And the same phenomenology that can be used to locate omissions in anthropology can also be used to instead 'uncover', or

‘disclose’ as Heidegger would put it, a very different understanding that already exists in anthropology of what it is to understand something initially foreign to oneself. That understanding lies not so much in the strictly hermeneutical moment of trying to interpret another culture as if it were an alien text (Bourdieu’s trenchant critique of this model remains unsurpassed, Bourdieu 1977), but rather in the practice of living with others over a prolonged period of time. This is also a process that creates shared time, not just in terms of larger events that the anthropologist participates in along with others, but in the shared time of doing everyday things together. Buried under the rather prosaic and naturalistic title of ‘field work’ is a thoroughly phenomenological understanding of ‘being’ as ‘being-with’. This is one of Heidegger’s central theses in *Being and Time*, such that ‘Even Dasein’s Being-alone is Being-with in the world (Heidegger 1962, 156–157). This understanding exists in a practical form in anthropology. But it might be strengthened by the explicit framework supplied by a philosophical alternative to a long standing epistemological tradition, such as we encounter in Heidegger’s opening in *Being and Time* or in Merleau-Ponty’s radical integration of bodily activity and sensory perception into philosophies of subjectivity in *Phenomenology of Perception* (Merleau-Ponty 1986).

For in relation to field work we stand at what Foucault describes as the cusp of a discourse that has just ceased to be ours. It is precisely the temporality of research, as long term engagement and involvement in the lives of others, which is being rapidly whittled away, certainly in Australia, by the rise of the market model within university research funding. We are speaking here of the mere three and a half years allotted for Ph.D.s in Australia, allowing no time even for acquiring language. Being on such a cusp affords the opportunity to make explicit what has often remained implicit. Of the many dimensions one could discuss, I focus on the one involving change. Reformulations of fieldwork as ‘inter-subjective’ constructions obscure a number of aspects of the interaction. I have elaborated on this elsewhere in terms of the need for a concept like the ‘habitus’, which indicates that there is already a history flowing into the present moment of inter-subjectivity (Ram 2015, 41–42). For the very same reason the change that occurs in the interactions of field work is not equally distributed – it is far more radical for the researcher than for those around her. She is there without the supports of her wider social and physical ecology (another way of describing the habitus) while others continue to enjoy those supports. It is she who must adapt – or suffer further isolation, and the more radical the difference between her current situation and her past, the more she must change and adapt to the subjectivity of others.

Ethnography gives us many instances of such alterations, although given the centrality of the process for anthropology, there should be a lot more. In a piece

published in 1990, Hastrup describes her experience of field work in Iceland as involving months of 'loneliness, of sexual assaults, loss of identity, and offensive enemy spirits' – yet one of her greatest shocks was, 'to be reminded about her own world' (Hastrup 1990, 46). At the end of a year, she receives letters addressed to an academic called Kirsten Hastrup she no longer recognizes. While she acknowledges that that is just what she had to return to, she nevertheless insists on the radical nature of field work which 'implies that the well-established opposition between subject and object dissolves' (Hastrup 1990, 46).

My own experience of field work in a fishing community on the west coast of Kanyakumari was much happier. I spoke the language, though I discovered that what I thought of as an undifferentiated Tamil was in fact marked by my caste background as well as the particular parts of Tamil country my parents came from. I lived with an affectionate family, with whom I developed deep bonds and through them, with their relatives in the village as well. But an early intimation of the changes I had undergone came after I had been living in the fishing community for nearly a year. A young Nordic couple pulled up in their sailing craft in the neighboring larger port town of Colachel. My companions, some younger than myself, were very curious and I went along with them. I found myself pushed to the foreground to act as an intermediary, at which point I discovered I was goggling at the visitors like any villager – as 'white' people, utterly exotic and alien – as if friends and my own husband back in Australia were not 'white' and 'western'. I felt nothing like an intermediary, although I forced myself to chat and translate for the benefit of others.

A few years later it happened again. This time I had come back to catch up with my adoptive family. At the time I felt they were closer to me than my own family in India, and I was very emotional about seeing them again in their new home near Chennai. I was with young teenagers Sheela and Babu – their mother had shooed us out for the day so she could prepare a special dinner for my return – and we were at the seashore town of Mahabalipuram, whose splendid Pallava dynasty rock carvings make it a notable tourist attraction. Suddenly Sheela averted her eyes, abashed by something she had seen. When I enquired, she pointed to tourists who were, in her eyes, wearing next to nothing. I found myself invaded by a shared sense of embarrassment and indignation at white tourists with no sense of propriety. My Sydney self, utterly used to the beaches and beachwear, had disappeared.

Such responses point to a permeability, a porosity in us, which means the 'social' in social science succeeds in radically re-defining what it means to be a science at all. This does not mean we have 'gone native', as the colonial phrase had it. The shared identity I felt at these moments might easily be replaced by a sense of being quite alien in another context. Indeed, how else can we explain

the fact that ‘possession’ – precisely the quintessential situation where subject and object completely collapse into one – remained a provocation for me for so many years. Yet it is worth emphasizing these moments where the subject/object dichotomy dissolves, however temporarily, since they are easily obscured by intellectualist theories of knowledge. A method which integrates *mitsein* as a central feature allows for modes of understanding that are not simply a matter of cognitive comprehension of initially unfamiliar categories employed by others. We move magically, as it were, into adopting the gestures and orientations of the social group we are with. Such magic is not merely a matter of ‘performance’ in the conventional sense since there is a bodily movement into the situation of others. Nor is it a matter of empathy since it entails a slow alteration and change on the part of the researcher to the point where she can move into the stance and orientation required by those she is with at the time.

Here we might connect the *longue duree* of change in the researcher herself to the distinction drawn by phenomenologists between knowing about something and understanding something. The former preserves a radical distinction between the enquiring subject and the object of enquiry. ‘Understanding’, in contrast, presupposes a period of bodily involvement and familiarization on the part of the ethnographer. We might then call this form of temporality the embodied time it takes for a modicum of human *re-socialization* to take place. Such *re-socialization* is not confined to the time spent ‘in the field’ – it carries over into the practices of sustained writing, teaching, reading and ongoing reflection; all of which are part of anthropological practice. In my book I call the work done by the spirit medium a process of ‘making room’ for the alien spirit. What the ethnographer performs over a lifetime is not so different. But the sign of absorbing and ‘understanding’ a phenomenon, even a radically alien experience such as spirit possession, lies not in being able to say one now ‘believes’ in it – a question my students frequently ask me. Rather it lies in being able to place one’s own experiences on a continuum with that which initially seemed utterly alien. In my book I write about the many intermediary states we all inhabit from time to time, states in which it is hardly appropriate to describe ourselves as a subject facing an entirely external object. We ‘lose ourselves’ in creativity, in writing, making music but also in those quotidian moments of flow such as driving along a well-known route. In both cases, if we are asked to formally state how we ‘got there’, we would be at a loss. In all these cases, the loss of self-consciousness is not the opposite of agency, it is the very essence of a certain kind of agency.

These are not just analogies with possession. They are located on a continuum of experiences that are not simply states of consciousness, since they radically involve bodily skills, aptitudes and orientations. Moreover we could be

propelled at any point to a lesser or more extreme end of that continuum – in extreme states of love and grief, for instance. The ancient Greeks thought of love as a form of possession by the deity Aphrodite. Death too can generate a state where possession can seem a more apt description than many others. At the time when I am writing this paper, my husband has just died, only a few months ago. He died very reluctantly and sadly, since his whole being was burgeoning with fresh and potential projects for new novels, essays, writings of all kinds, as well as his love for his wife, daughter and friends. He died keenly aware that his skills as a novelist were now honed to a fine craft, and at the peak of the powers he valued the most. I have learned that there is injustice not only in a ‘bad death’ such as the ones that led to possession, there is a lingering sense of injustice in deaths such as his. Perhaps there is a sense of injustice in all death insofar as it extinguishes the potentiality we all carry with us to varying degrees right until the moment of death.

I realize that all such unspent potential has the potential to haunt and to possess the living who are closely intertwined with the dead. In the time immediately following his death, I found myself attending the plays and films *he* would have attended, reading poetry *he* would have read. Suddenly Islam, something he spent a lifetime reflecting on since his period in Pakistan as a very young man, meant a good deal to me as well in a new way. I wrote a new lecture on Islam in South Asia, following the footprints he had left in the sand into his library. It has been much more than a way of feeling close to him, although that is part of it. His tastes and preoccupations were coming through as urgent needs on my part. No doubt the ground for shared tastes had been laid slowly for both of us over thirty five years together. But it was now happening in a particularly dramatic and urgent fashion. What is equally notable is that it has also simultaneously been an expansion of my agency – not in the sense of an expansion of deliberate choices, for I experienced it as simply being drawn to *his* kind of films, books, and plays. It is an expansion in the sense that it is a dilation of my older self and new experiences and tastes are being born out of the experience. As it is with Tamil villagers, such experience opens up more than just an experience of the dead – the actions they prompt lead in turn to an expanded range of possibilities for the living, as well as a curtailment of others.

My arguments about possession and agency are no longer an ethnographic argument. They are no longer a description of something outside myself. They have become integrated into my own experience, my *anubhavam*, of life and death. And out of that integration can come new possibilities – of reflecting back more deeply on the existential truths in the widespread tendency found in cultures around the world to link violent death with possession. Equally,

the possibilities generated may spill outside of the subject matter of possession, and extend into a new phenomenological interest in death and bereavement.

Understanding religion if one is not religious, or indeed understanding any framework that is initially alien, does entail temporality. But it is not the temporality of progress and evolution, or the decisive temporality of choice, but rather the slow time that is more akin to acquiring a taste for unfamiliar cuisines.

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# ‘Cloning Minds’: Religion between Individuals and Collectives

**Abstract:** Human nature is double – it is biological as well as cultural. The evolution of social life has depended both on the particular properties of human cognition and on cultural technologies. Among the most effective of these are norms without which there would be no humanity as we know it. The unique human mode of *normative cognition* allows humans to act, communicate, have culture and build societies along the rules, norms and values they themselves create. The hypothesis here is basically functionalist in that religion is considered a supra-individual collectivity ‘device’ that is scaffolded on the biological propensities for communal, joint, and collective activities. Religion is, in this sense, an amplification of certain traits of human nature: Humans share, they can have collective plans, intentions and activities and religious traditions repeatedly emphasize this. Thus, religious traditions ‘clone’ minds in the sense that biological differences between individuals are overridden and governed by norms of similarity and uniformity.

**Keywords:** cultural evolution, consilience in science, dual inheritance hypothesis, hybrid mind theory, imagination, collective intentionality, institutions, normative cognition, individuality, philosophy of language

Humans have evolved as a hyper-social species, one that has further created ultra-social technologies such as language, culture, and religion to assist it in all manners of its hyper-sociality. Which is the more hyper-social tool will depend on the chosen perspective; in this case, religion is the subject matter. The theoretical object, however, is somewhat different because it consists of both the evolved social cognition mechanisms and the socio-cultural technologies that jointly enable humans to develop ‘we-mode’ collective intentionality and what I shall call the socio-cultural ‘cloning’ of the mind. Among the most effective social technologies are norms, and were it not for the human ability to act according to norms, there would be no humanity as we know it. The unique human mode of *normative cognition* allows humans to act, communicate, have culture and build societies along the rules, norms and values they themselves create (Jensen 2013). The hypothesis here is basically functionalist in that religion is considered a supra-individual collectivity ‘device’ that is scaffolded on the biological propensities for communal, joint, and collective activities.

Religion is, in this sense, an amplification of certain traits of human nature. Human nature is double – it is biological and it is socio-cultural. Correspondingly, the theoretical object here is also double as the cloning of minds derives from the coupling of the biological and the socio-cultural. This is not, however, unique to religion for so do also, e.g., sports, politics and cuisines. In that sense, religion is also a case of normative cognition (Jensen 2010). Religious traditions are packed with norms for uniform behavior; members of religious groups are imagined as kin; adherents are required to imagine similar future scenarios and share emotions and thoughts. In short, religious traditions appear as coercive ways of cloning minds. Bypassing a prolix battle over definitions, I use ‘religion’ here as an abstract umbrella term for a whole suite of social, cultural and psychological phenomena. Logically then, many things can be said about religion and religions: from being systems of social power relations to existential coping management and salvific imagination programs.<sup>1</sup> Definitions of, theories about, and the debates over religion have been countless and they seem to ever increase in number (Stausberg 2009). A simple reason for this situation is that religion is so often seen ‘as’ something and then, whatever counts as relevant for that something then also counts for the view on religion. When a ‘new turn’ in theory emerges, it will influence the theoretical topography of religion by creating different perspectives. These carry with them new opportunities as well as new constraints (Rota, Mostowlansky 2015). Among the later arrivals in theories of religion are those with evolutionary and cognitive inclinations. If a scholar or scientist decides to go with any of these, she will be able to see and say things that were formerly unavailable or invisible but she will also *not* be able to continue working in previous ways. In this presentation, I shall introduce a theoretical framework that aims at taking the sciences at full value, and underline the importance of vertical integration, that is, seeing ‘the human mind as *part* of the human body rather than as its ghostly occupant’ (Slingerland 2008, 11).<sup>2</sup>

## 1 Two natures – in one mind

As noted, humans have two natures: the biological and the socio-cultural. Without the first, they would not exist and without the latter, they would not exist as human. Our heritage is dual and culture is now seen as much more influential

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1 On the issues of what is religion and what is not, Schilbrack 2014 is mandatory.

2 The term ‘vertical integration’ was originally introduced by Barkow 1992.

than before (Richerson, Boyd 2006; Tomasello 1999). In this context I shall try to 'square the circle' – do what is not so common – namely endorse the idea of an explanatory continuum, so that informed scholarship may make the social constructionist (e.g. discourse analysis) and biological (e.g. cognitive science, psychology) 'ends meet' and so close some of the disciplinary gaps that seem to prevent interdisciplinary 'poly-logue' (Jensen 2015). In the case of religion, it is obvious that they should meet because religion is 'done' by humans that are biological creatures living in symbolic cultural niches. Anything that helps us understand those complex relationships should be welcomed. Thus, biology and the socio-cultural levels meet (somewhere) and consilience is required if we want a fuller understanding of what is going on in religious behavior (of all kinds). Briefly, the concept of 'consilience' refers to the principle that evidence from different and seemingly unrelated sources can 'converge' to robust conclusions.<sup>3</sup> Consilience is the key to richer or 'thicker' understandings of individuals in religion as well as religion in individuals.<sup>4</sup> The sociobiologist Edward Wilson noted that '[t]he strongest appeal of consilience is in the prospect of intellectual adventure and, given even modest success, the value of understanding the human condition with a higher degree of certainty' (Wilson 1999, 10). The value of consilience lies especially in the fact that '[t]he explanations of different phenomena most likely to survive are those that can be connected and proved consistent with one another' (Wilson 1999, 58). There is a direct reference to the present topic in that '[t]he mind is supremely important to the consilience program for a reason both elementary and disturbingly profound: Everything that we know and can ever know about existence is created there' (Wilson 1999, 105). A direct encouragement for the study of religion comes with Wilson's conviction on future developments: 'For centuries consilience has been the mother's milk of the natural sciences. Now it is wholly accepted by the brain sciences and evolutionary biology, the disciplines best poised to serve in turn as bridges to the social sciences and humanities' (Wilson 1999, 291).

Humans are social and cultural creatures and they show a preference for religion, too. Archaeology, anthropology and the history of religions amply demonstrate this. For millennia, the modes of the socio-cultural existence of humans were shaped in relation to religion. For the student driven by curiosity it is indeed fortunate that there is *no* shortage of data. The question is how to use the data, for which purposes and how to *make* the data (in the first instance).

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<sup>3</sup> 'Consilience' as a general notion has a history in philosophy from William Whewell onwards, but the current use of the term was introduced by Wilson in 1999.

<sup>4</sup> Geertz 2013 is an apt example of the valuable effects of methodological consilience.

The unavoidable aspect-dependency is directly related to theory-ladenness. That in turn depends on and feeds back dialectically to the making and use of concepts and models (Jensen 2009). That is, when taking something to be an instance of ‘religion’, then whatever scholars theorize consciously or unconsciously will feed back into what they perceive and into what they then conceive (Jensen 2015). There is no theory-free concept of religion. Concepts, models and theories are the scholars’ ‘windows to the world’. This applies equally to their conceiving of the world of religion and religions. Therefore, the questions of what counts as data for what, how, and why are as relevant in their study of religion as they are anywhere else. How may they theoretically relate the examples, e. g., of the feeding of a statue of the Buddha, the sermon of a sixteenth century Protestant preacher, or the ritual seclusion of African boys in an initiation ritual? What are the common denominators that warrant generalization and comparison of ‘matters religious’? In the following, I shall attempt to demonstrate how religious behaviors and institutions unambiguously build on human nature, biological as well as cultural. Religion consists of human behaviors; it is as simple as that. Thus, all other kinds of facts, constraints and functions that relate to general behaviors should deductively also apply to religious behaviors – from neurons and hormones to dreams and self-flagellation. There is in that sense nothing mysterious about religion. Scientific consilience should attest to that.

Although contemporary Western (at least) culture stresses the aspects that refer to individuals and individuality and so supports the idea of an increasing degree of individuality and individualism also in religious life, the very idea of *individual* religion is as problematic as the idea of private language or private money. Even the most individual of religious beliefs and behaviors are but variations on and of collective and social forms, simply because of the fact that religion is inherently collective and social. The view espoused here is plainly both Durkheimian and Wittgensteinian, however much they might otherwise seem to differ; the hypothesis here is that they are in deep agreement because of underlying, evolved human bio-social traits – including the socio-cultural products of humanity.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, when we wish to probe into the relations between individuals and groups in religious contexts, we may simply consult research on individual and group relations in general. Of the many different aspects that might enter the picture, the main focus here will be on the semantic, linguistic, semiotic properties of the cognitive networks in which human individuals are embedded.

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<sup>5</sup> In their time these traits could only be surmised. More on this issue below.

These networks ultimately derive from human nature. Although religions commonly direct attention to other than human agents, religion *really* derives from and concerns the nature of humanity. In a certain sense, religion is human nature 'writ large'.<sup>6</sup> Jesse Bering offers a very plausible account of how that came about through a combination of human psychological features, acquired during human evolution (Bering 2011). Then the cultural evolution history 'took over' and the evolved psychological substrates became overlaid with ever more complex symbolic technologies (e.g. Tomasello 1999). Much later in history, these phenomena became the objects of human self-understanding – in theology, in philosophy and, lastly, in science.

To recapitulate a bit of research history: Ludwig Feuerbach (1804–1872) explored how sacralizing human projections influence human, socio-cultural existence in indirect, reciprocal ways. He discloses how the nature of humanity is the indirect object of religion; how religious consciousness is the indirect consciousness of humanity and its self-consciousness (Feuerbach 2004 [1845]). Humans anthropomorphize their universe, create worlds and gods, and attribute human properties to it all. In this manner, he launched a naturalistic (i.e., psychological) theory about religion as based on human projection. Religion appeared as 'wishful thinking' – the dream of the human spirit. In whatever forms they may take, religious traditions require the work of the human imagination for their emergence, transmission and continuation. However, not everything goes: there are restrictions, constraints and specific bases for the projective constructions. Two very different versions of this principle can be found, one of which in Pascal Boyer's work, where the French title directly echoes Karl Marx: 'Et l'homme créa les dieux'. He insists on the work of the imagination in cognitive schemata, templates and counter-intuitive notions and ontologies (Boyer 2003). At the other end of the ideological spectrum, Jonathan Haidt points out in 'The Righteous Mind' how a set of foundations have evolved in moral psychology (Haidt 2013). These may have provided the bedrock for the development of religious moral institutions. At any rate, the epidemic of projections (the distribution of religious ideas) requires the intervention of language, which may in this case be proven the 'ultimate artifact' (Clark 1997). When Max Weber and Clifford Geertz (later) explained how humanity is suspended in 'webs of significance' it became obvious how such webs are human social constructions that are transmitted in narrative and discourse, and solidified in norms and institutions.

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<sup>6</sup> Although the arguments and consequences presented here differ profoundly from those of Loyal Rue, he has similar ideas (Rue 2006).

## 2 Troublesome terms – with great potentials: meanings and universals

‘Meaning’ is a notoriously troublesome term in English and in relation to religion it becomes no less so (Jensen 2004). Words have meanings, so do sentences, narratives and discourses, but there is a long way from what concerns words and sentences, that is linguistic meaning, to the questions about the ‘meaning of life’. In the English language there really is little to connect the different connotations beyond the fact that the single term ‘meaning’ is used. However, as it happens, it is the practice of religious traditions to do that very thing, namely, to mediate between these levels of ‘meaning’. Religious cosmologies are composed of mythologies, narratives and discourses that put the world into language – make the world ‘speak’ so to say – as ‘religion is the audacious attempt to conceive of the entire universe as being humanly significant’ (Berger 1967, 28). Religious traditions are ‘world-making’ (Paden 1994). Throughout history, socio-cultural semantic webs have primarily consisted in religious ideologies and discourses – with authors (more or less known) from different ‘worlds’ – in the sense that gods, ancestors, prophets or reformers were often seen as the originators of speech. The terminologies of pre-modern, traditional languages are saturated by religious meanings with built-in values and norms – they are languages to ‘live by’, and so they are as they become internalized by their users. Religious traditions provide meaning on most if not all levels in cultures and societies and so they may universally be seen as ‘semantic engines’ or ‘meaning machines’. Like most other engines and machines they are invented and operated by humans.

It was Claude Lévi-Strauss’ genius to see how myths think themselves in humans without their knowledge of it. In traditional cultures, religious meanings present themselves as ‘what goes without saying’. They modulate and regulate human thought, emotion and behavior in normative cognition and so merge and unite the two natures, biological and cultural: the cultural becomes the natural and the natural becomes cultural. On the psychological level it is now common to see the human cognitive machinery as consisting of an innate fast biological system and an acquired socio-cultural system that are modulated and regulated by socio-cultural norms and institutions in complex normative cognition mechanisms (Jensen 2013). In that sense, religious traditions ‘invade’ minds as the norms and values and the terminologies and cosmologies become internalized in the members of the groups. However, this is not specific to religion; it is how all societies and cultures are reproduced. Thus, although religions consist of social facts that have some distinctive characteristics – depending on the

chosen definition of religion –, universals in religion will resemble the universals found in society and culture in general. Religions share most of their properties with other socio-cultural formations. Religions are not that unique when viewed as human phenomena. The study of religion in general and as part of something more general would disclose a range of universals that religion shares with other human and social 'facts'. Here is a list of abstract universals found in all religions:

Imagination, experience, intentionality, narrative, discourse, classification, cognitive governance, emotion regulation, action, behaviour, roles, social control, authority, institutions, power, economies, exchanges, reciprocity, sociality and world-making. *All this* goes against the idea of religion as 'a primitive notion'; that is, a notion, or a phenomenon, which cannot be broken down into constituent parts and elements (Jensen 2014, 171).<sup>7</sup>

Where is the individual when social facts such as ideologies and discourses exert massive influences over human minds? In all likelihood, the individual is right in the middle of the matrix of social facts. It is a conviction in contemporary media discourse (notably in the Western world) that the present time is more individualistic and that individualization is the key to understanding present-day social, cultural and religious forms. However, there are good reasons to suspect that individualization is precisely one more ideology-driven mode of discourse. If that is correct, individualization may then be studied (not to be exercised here) as any other social fact that has a history, as do all other social facts. One of the first to recognize an emergent individualism in European history was the art historian Jacob Burckhardt (1818–1897). In the Middle Ages, said Burckhardt (in 1860),

[m]an was conscious of himself only as a member of a race, people, party, family, or corporation – only through some general category. In Italy this veil first melted into air; an *objective* treatment and consideration of the state and of all the things of this world became possible. The *subjective* side at the same time asserted itself with corresponding emphasis; man became a spirited *individual*, and recognized himself as such (Burckhardt 1990, 80).

The interesting aspect of this change was that he recorded it in the shifting styles in painting, that is, the increasing degree of individualism in encoded and recorded artefacts that are objects of *collective* cognition. Individual artists were driven by collective, social and cultural tendencies – using material objects as cognitive anchors in a joint process. The individualization inspirations were

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<sup>7</sup> Add to 'all this' also the just mentioned universals 'semantic engines' and 'meaning machines'. Unfortunately these two terms are already taken as designations – for things that are very different from the innocent sense they have here.

given shape and objectivated so that other individuals could internalize them as social facts.<sup>8</sup> This is what usually happens in the transmission of religion across time and space.

### 3 E-religion: ‘external religion’ and i-religion: ‘internal religion’

The simultaneously public and private character of religion may be conveniently designated by the terms ‘i-religion’ and ‘e-religion’ (Jensen 2014, 41–43).<sup>9</sup> Historians of religions, archaeologists, anthropologists and sociologists of religion have (mostly) studied as observable ‘e-religion’, that is, ‘external’ religion that is ‘outside-the-head’ in texts and expressed in social practices, such as rituals and institutions, and in material culture. For more than a century there has been a general consensus in the study of religion to focus on ‘e-religion’, as witnessed in most textbooks and introductions to the study of religion. When studied in texts, religious beliefs have *also* been treated as ‘e-religion’, and ‘i-religion’ has mostly remained the province of the psychology of religion. Obviously, many have attempted to bridge the gap (either way) but often this had lamentable consequences. Historians are normally not adept at psychology, nor have psychologists had the necessary insights into historical detail, cultural variations or philological skills. However, it is a sign of growing consilience that this set of problems is recognized and dealt with in theory and in method. It is apparent that it can be done, because religion, in any social manifestation, actually (by itself) bridges the gap between i-religion and e-religion. Humans have ‘hybrid minds’ with the capacity to make use of extensive cognitive networks (Donald 2001). That is what they do and studying both will only bring forth their mutual dependency. That is why it also makes sense to study beliefs in texts, because the same beliefs are replicated (more or less) in minds, and beliefs are what they are because they are products of minds. That is also why cognitive historiography is becoming ever more relevant.<sup>10</sup> Overall, it seems that religiosity was never as individualistic as the more belief-centered accounts of religious life envisaged. Nor

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**8** Along the classic theory and explanation of ‘Externalization, objectivation and internalization’ in Berger, Luckmann 1967, 60–61.

**9** Joseph Bulbulia was (presumably) the first to transfer the distinction from linguistics to the study of religion. (See Stausberg 2009, 156).

**10** *The Journal of Cognitive Historiography* (edited by Esther Eidinow and Luther H. Martin) is a recent addition to the world of journals. See also Martin 2015.

does contemporary 'spiritualization' seem to be so, as current conceptualizations of spiritual individualization appear remarkably similar. These considerations raise the question of 'How private is the individual?' Bringing philosophy and psychology into the discussion may help clarify these issues.

## 4 Philosophical and psychological considerations on the scope of individuality

In his important essay 'The Myth of the Subjective', the philosopher Donald Davidson stated the following on subjective first-person authority and the very activity of thinking in one's own mind: '...thought is necessarily part of a common public world. Not only can others learn what we think by noting the causal dependencies that give our thoughts their content, but the very possibility of thought demands shared standards of truth and objectivity' (Davidson 2001, 52). Whichever way one wishes to think this can only be done in the words, concepts, models and perspectives that the participation in linguistic practices offer. They offer possibilities, but also constraints and restrictions. It is difficult to think of anything that does not have a name. The upshot of this is that the subjective is much more public than we habitually consider it to be. We may individually have the default impression of having private thoughts, but they depend on there being public thought. Having useable individual amounts of money in our pockets depends on the existence of a shared economy. In a similar fashion, my own thoughts are individual tokens of the shared world of thought. Another philosopher, John McDowell has cogently attacked 'the Myth of the Endogenous Given', that is, the idea that individual cognitive competence is based on innate capacities only. He wrote that:

I think we should be suspicious of the thought that we can simply credit human individuals with this equipment, without benefit of anything like my appeal to initiation into a shared language and thereby into a tradition. I think the idea that this cognitive equipment needs no such background is just another outcropping of Givenness (McDowell 1996, 185–186).<sup>11</sup>

It is difficult to imagine just what a human being would be without any such initiation into the social world and into language. Humans do not have private cultures or private languages. Ludwig Wittgenstein once explained the impossibility

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<sup>11</sup> McDowell reiterates Wilfrid Sellar's attack on the 'myth of the given'. For an introduction to Sellar's argument, see <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/sellars/>

of private language in this manner: ‘The individual words of this language are to refer to what can be known only to the person speaking; to his immediate private sensations. So another person cannot understand the language’ (Wittgenstein 1973, §243). Consequently, it is ‘... also unintelligible to its originator who would be unable to establish meanings for its putative signs’ (Wittgenstein 1973, §243). Likewise, the value of a private currency would be nil. The value of having shared words, concepts, models and perspectives is that they allow for communication and so ‘make us smart’. The psychologist Michael Tomasello presented an in-depth inquiry into (as he terms them) the cultural origins of human cognition: ‘...the uniquely human forms of thinking... derive from, perhaps even are constituted by, the interactive discourse that takes place through the medium of intersubjective and perspectival linguistic symbols, constructions, and discourse patterns’ (Tomasello 1999, 215). In short, humans are like ‘fish in the water of culture’ (Tomasello 1999, 215). Now, perhaps fish do not even notice the water – but it certainly adds to the understanding of their behavior to have an appreciation for the importance of water. Humans mostly do not seem to notice culture, but it is there – it is like gravity, no one escapes it. It is probably trivial to note that the contemporary world offers more in terms of choice, liberty, and rights to individuals than ever before in the history of humanity. However, that should not lead to the conclusion that humans are ‘islands’ (note that islands have their ‘being-in-the-sea’ as a common universal property). Even in the most post-modern, post-industrial and hyper-individualist of sub-cultures it is remarkable how fads, fashions, and styles create clusters of conformity. Humans are mimetic beings.

The notions of the ‘Individual’ (and all derivations) have complex conceptual histories and sociological consequences. Contemporary Western society includes ideological constructions that are extremely individual-focused and they are most likely the products of market ideology and consumerism. Individualism is part of the ‘modern mythology’. It is through ideologies that humans are made to imagine that they really are ‘individual’, and often individual after a collective fashion. Not least political liberalism takes the individual as a natural ‘given’ – it is not. Ideologies have histories and in this case, they are long histories. Fuchs and Rüpke point out how religious individualization can be found, analyzed, explained, and understood in historical perspectives and how it is ‘not bound to a macro-theory of modernisation’ (Fuchs, Rüpke 2015). Thus, the ‘individual’ is a discursive formation: as individuals, we would not even be able to think of ourselves without shared language, shared norms and shared institutions. Paradoxically, entertaining notions about individualization may thus also be a way of ‘cloning the mind’. Just like ideologies, religious traditions also emphasize how their solutions are simply the best – for some or for all.

Therefore, they require allegiance, deference and uniformity. This leads to the main point here: how and why the mind is cloned and why religious traditions matter.

## 5 ‘Cloning the mind’

‘Cloning the mind’ involves synchronizing cognitive governance, that is, regulating the ways that humans feel, think, and act in religious traditions through ways of life, rituals, institutions, dogmas etc. – all that which regulates human life from womb to tomb. Religious traditions emphasize consistency, regularity, and uniformity – the examples are unending. Imitation is the keyword and with some exceptions, religious traditions stress equality and fairness. The Dao de Ging applies for all of being, the Ten Commandments in the Hebrew Bible hold for all the Israelites, the Qur’an emphasizes specific behaviors for Muslims, the Buddhist text on Dependent Origination explains why all humans suffer, and Inuit stories about the Angakoq (shaman) and the Sea Woman goddess stress taboo restrictions. The apex would be ‘that they may become perfectly one’ (John 17:23). The trusted functionalist story about religion as ‘social glue’ still seems to hold (along with the in-built opposite, of religion as the root of social discord and exclusion). To the characterization of religious traditions as the ‘cloning of minds’ three questions come into view: What, how, and why?

### 5.1 Question One: ‘What?’

First, the answer to the ‘what’ question is that all religious traditions (explicitly or implicitly) promote and enforce social norms and the institutions that these are embedded in. The processes of ‘making the social world’ have been instructively and convincingly demonstrated by the philosopher John Searle (Searle 2011). Norms and institutions support the networks of trust that are essential social governance instruments; society would not exist nor be able to function if there were no such networks. Briefly stated and all other things considered, religions are traditional means of affirming communities of trust, predictability, and familiarity. At a closer look, it seems that religious traditions universally have super-human agents (gods, spirits, ancestors etc.) that have ‘full strategic knowledge’, so they are able to observe and commend or punish humans. Just one example: the Inuit Sea Woman knows who has broken a taboo, which is why the wild animals do not present themselves as prey. The Shaman mediates this knowledge to the community and forces the declaration of guilt in breaking

taboos. There is thus an institutional ‘loop’ between humans, their subsistence sources, super-human ‘policing’ and knowledge, and morality. This manner of super-human ‘policing’ not only provides social information but simultaneously supports and strengthens the norms of the society and its traditions. In so doing these also provide a measure of high-level ‘predictive coding’ in that they are based on the regularity of the norms and the behaviors (in mind, body and group) that they regulate. The possibilities of predicting behaviors rest on a human propensity for regularity and doing as others do. In social psychology, this tendency is known as ‘conformity bias’. ‘Group think’ is another version of this predisposition that can be exploited in cognitive governance as ‘regulating the mind’. Cognitive governance is often achieved by producing and employing ‘standard version’ narratives that are common and perhaps tacit knowledge in a (social, cultural, religious) collective. Narratives express values and norms, emotions and actions that are relevant to the group, and they may have fundamental importance and valence in identity formation, individually or collectively (Jensen 2011). Religious narratives have ‘exogram’ functions in cognitive and semantic ‘anchoring’, that is, they are outside and between minds before and when they are internalized by individuals (Donald 2001, 308–315). They govern the flow of ideas, distribute memory and thought, guide shared learning, and justify custom and morality and – not least – they provide *meaning*. Narratives often present and contain the constituting norms and institutions with their rules and deontic powers. In other cases, the institutions are explicit and the narratives implicit and so the underlying narratives require reconstruction. At any rate, no society, from the smallest band of foragers to the Chinese empire, could endure without institutions and all that they entail. Their origin or *sine qua non* is the human capacity for normative cognition, that is, the ability of normative values and institutions to modulate and regulate thinking, feeling and acting. There can be no doubt that religion, generally and universally, ‘rides piggyback’ on evolved traits in humans. There is growing evidence from moral and evolutionary psychology that religion has evolved in and through a combination of human psychological traits (Haidt 2013; Bering 2011). This also explains why religions, despite many differences at the surface level, display underlying generalities and universals. For instance, the five ‘moral foundations’ in Jonathan Haidt’s model of moral psychology also appear as universals in religious traditions. These are all (to varying degrees) preoccupied with harm-care, justice-fairness, in- vs. out-group, hierarchy, and purity and sanctity.

## 5.2 Question Two: 'How?'

The second question, the 'how' of the cloning of minds, refers to the extended functions of the elements in the previous point, especially narratives. Religious narratives function in and as social cognition; they support and boost collective intentionality; they provide the means for collective meta-cognition and the norms for monitoring the behavior of self and others. Humans are social animals and 'we-mode' social cognition may well be considered the natural state of human collectivity. Humans are also very good at manipulating others, but they would not be able to do so if the other party did not act as the receiving end. Cheating presupposes trust. The socio-cultural scaffolding for interactions may be very diverse, some societies are more just than others, but this only proves the point about the validity and importance of narratives, norms and institutions – they may provide conventions with such an aura of factuality that they seem natural to whoever lives by them. That is how narratives integrate individuals into themselves. We learn to understand ourselves through stories about others and through 'cultural life scripts' – inherent in religious narratives (Nelson 2006). This is why storytelling is so fundamentally important in all the world's cultures. Religious narratives and life scripts provide the 'forward biographies' of members of the interpretive community as they present examples of behavior. Myths, legends and hagiographies of all kinds make up the cultural life script for adherents – for the do's and the don'ts of the society and not only so in literate traditions.<sup>12</sup> Only seemingly are religious narratives about superhuman agents – they are really about humans, for humans and by humans (this was Feuerbach's original insight). Religious narratives tell humans who they are: not only individually, but collectively as well.

Narratives integrate groups. They set up cognitive ecologies, provide common values, motivate action co-ordination, govern social institutions, regulate intentionality and emotions – and deliver the means for mind control. In order to move beyond any individual's perceptions, communication, language and narrative (in all forms and modes) are needed to 'mediate' and that is how the narratives function as tools for cognition: they provide means for knowing what is in 'other minds'.<sup>13</sup> The psychologist Jerome Bruner (in 'The Transactional Self') famously noted that '... our sensitivity to narrative provides the major link between our own sense of self and our sense of others in the social

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<sup>12</sup> For examples of myths in non-literate societies, see Jensen 2009a, e.g. the contributions by Pierre Clastres and Edwin Hutchins.

<sup>13</sup> Include here body-language, mime, material objects – anything that may be attributed, and convey, meaning.

world around us' (Bruner 1986, 69). He is seconded on this point by the neuro-psychologist Merlin Donald: 'Narratives are a very sophisticated means of constructing wider representations of intricate and abstract social events... the capacity to construct narratives is linked to the capture of long and intricate social events' (Donald 2012, 44). In this sense, narratives are a way of 'slowing down' the work of the brain and thus enabling the communicative functions. In religious narratives, humans are able to construct representations of intricate relations to and interactions with superhuman agents: uniting living and dead, human and super-human in a single, complex fictional space.<sup>14</sup> In this manner it becomes understandable, how i- and e-religion abstract objects, such as values, norms, ideas and representations of super-human agents may become manifested in material objects and all things that can be *narrativized*, that is, talked about and attributed meaning. Any human being who is a member of a society is thus plunged into the seas of meaning. In this case, the seas of religious meaning are the primary object. Although no one knows for just how long, there is no doubt that these 'seas' have been with humans for a very long time. It is obvious that social communication and other forms of exchange have greatly facilitated cooperation and human social life in general.<sup>15</sup> This relates, again to the accepted functionalist views of religion as social glue and complexity reduction. Needless to say (but here it is), in-group solidarity may well breed and feed on out-group hostility as well as the detection of in-group free-riders and defectors (e. g. Boyer 2001, 265–296).

### 5.3 Question Three: 'Why?'

Turning to the third question, the 'why?', it must be noted that another dimension has surfaced in research in recent years: one that adds important facts to the understanding of that question. It has become clear that the predictive potential of the human brain is key and that 'predictive codings' are the default processes. The brain is constantly predicting and aligning; it is 'pattern-seeking' and trying to make sense of sensory inputs. The brain is not just recording, but also actively trying to figure out 'what next'.<sup>16</sup> It turns out that the human cognitive

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<sup>14</sup> An example: Ed Hutchins' analysis of the living Trobriand Islanders and their relations to the mental states of the Baloma spirits (in Jensen 2009a, 337–357).

<sup>15</sup> 'Costly signaling theory' has provided clues for an understanding of how such communication works; see e. g. Bulbulia 2013 for a concise overview.

<sup>16</sup> There is a growing body of technical literature on this topic, but see the article by the philosopher Andy Clark (Clark 2013) for an overview.

machinery extensively provides expectations and predictions to which the sensory input is matched, modulated, and perhaps corrected in accordance with existing knowledge. This knowledge can (and often does) consist of social and cultural conventions that furnish multi-level downward predictions, as in the form of 'Oh, this is what we habitually consider sacred' (or clean etc.), and respond accordingly. Therefore, the contents of religious traditions may serve as means for high-level predictive coding. In the collectivist theoretical paradigm endorsed here, this also means that when the individuals who belong to a particular tradition or interpretive community internalize the prevalent norms and values they also acquire predictive 'tools'. Religious traditions contain norms and values that are already encoded; cosmologies and classification systems are often totalizing ideologies, which influence all that comes under their sacred canopies. On the other hand, there are also benefits as the resulting uniformity and congruence help individuals and groups predict, monitor, and understand the behaviors of self and others. Seen in this perspective, religious traditions prove their worth as 'prediction-machines' with the potentials for complexity reduction: knowing that others share the same codes can be helpful (from imagining ancestors to affect regulation). These functions also benefit the individual and increase its social fitness and value as a group-member. Coalitional psychology and conformity bias go a long way to explain why group adherence is so strong in humans. The study of religion (and culture in general) then furnish higher-level explanations of *how* groups and individuals behave.

Religions are and provide social facts *between* minds – in norms, values, and institutions that stabilize communication even when mediated across time (through generations) and space (geographical distribution). Holy scriptures, rituals, and institutions allow for distributed cognition that enables collective action with others *not* present: 'we' may imitate, attempt to think, feel, and act like a holy person of somewhere else and some other time. Humans do 'tune in' to one another; it is part of their nature to do so.<sup>17</sup> Social and cultural institutions support these functions in cognitive and behavioral alignment (Jensen 2015). Religions are very much about imitation. Imitation, or *mimesis*, is the default mode of human learning. Without it, there would be no human culture, no accumulation of ideas and skills. Thus, imitation is the backbone of religious

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<sup>17</sup> The story about 'mirror neurons' has become ever more complex. There is no doubt that they are necessary in an explanation of the bases of human social behavior (Rizzolatti, Sinagaglia 2008). Questions remain as to just how important they are and what else is involved in human co-operation (Hickok 2014).

practice, or inversely and somewhat sacrilegiously, religious ideologies' practices shape the sanctification of mimesis.<sup>18</sup>

Even the most individualizing (religious) behaviors are deeply social and collective – not least for their interpretation *as*, e.g., religious.<sup>19</sup> Even the most drastic and rebellious reformers need to use the previous terminologies of their interpretive communities: Buddha, Jesus, Fidel Castro.... Humans depend on their relations to others in order to create meaning in the first place. Religious traditions strive to stabilize meanings as results of interpreting their 'ultimate sacred postulates' (Rappaport 1999, 277–312). The danger of conflict is then elevated to the sphere of that which is 'set apart and forbidden' as in Émile Durkheim's famous definition of religion as a 'moral community'.

Religions traditions encourage humans to think, feel, and act in unison (which they then do more or less). When so doing, religious traditions do not impose anything new or different to human nature, as noted above on the mimetic nature of religious behavior. Religion is in that sense *natural* – as an extension or amplification of the human propensity to act with others. This is one more reason why it is easy to be religious and much easier than doing science.<sup>20</sup> When Pascal Boyer published *The Naturalness of Religious Ideas: A Cognitive Theory of Religion* in 1994, it was a milestone in the development of scientific thought about religion. On a more modest scale, I shall suggest here that the 'cloning of minds' to a large degree results from the naturalness of religious *behavior*. However, it should be noted that this idea would not emerge nor be supported were it not for the confluence of scientific and scholarly inspirations, data, and evidence from a whole range of different fields and disciplines that work with phenomena on many separate levels. Previously, it was common to consider higher-level phenomena, e.g. 'culture', as devoid of causality at lower levels, e.g. biology, but this persuasion has been challenged (e.g. Tomasello 1999; Boyd, Richerson 2006; Clark 2013). There is no reason why 'culture' – and thus 'religion' – could not be both caused and causal (Plotkin 2003, 104–105). So-called 'downward causation' is a probable effect and so social and cultural phenomena may well be responsible for functions in lower-level mechanisms. Cognition is causal in relation to culture but culture is also causal in relation to cognition (Jensen 2002). Remember that culture is not a thing, but a term

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**18** The capacity for mimesis is the basis for human cultural evolution as demonstrated in Merlin Donald's extensive theory of the evolution of human consciousness (Donald 2001).

**19** Hyper-individual pathological behavior excluded.

**20** See Robert N. McCauley on this issue (McCauley 2013).

that denotes a whole range of psychological and social processes.<sup>21</sup> To state it briefly: something as 'ethereal' as religion may be very much involved in the behavioral patterns of individuals and (thus also) groups. If and when religious traditions regulate emotions in particular rituals, they also regulate the hormonal responses in the same individuals.

## 6 Conclusion

Religion is about more than belief. On the 'cloning of minds' hypothesis, religious traditions and all that they involve are also about bodies, emotions, and coalitions, and among other things, belong to an inclusive science of religion. 'Inclusive' because it accepts as many levels of description as are necessary for the given task. Here, the task was to describe and explain how religion functions between individual minds so as to make up corporate social bodies and how the ensuing 'cloning of minds' posits religion as a socio-cultural superstructure that has its roots in human biology and thus psychology. A clear example of this principle is provided by the developmental psychologist Daniel Siegel in his program for an 'interpersonal neurobiology', that is, how humans are connected as products of their brains and their relationships. Siegel states that: '...human connections shape neural connections, and each contributes to mind. Relationships and neural linkages together shape the mind. It is more than the sum of its parts; this is the essence of emergence' (Siegel 2012, 3). Thus, studying the individual helps to understand the social – and vice versa. Biologically, humans are individuals – but culturally they are not. They are much more 'cloned' than they would ever imagine from a first-person perspective. Anyone who has 'grown a baby' will know this: socialization is really about 'tuning in' until the cultural becomes so natural that it could not have been otherwise. 'Consilience' is the catchword for future research on such issues because scientifically the world of humans is a highly complex theoretical object. The study of religion – in its many varieties – demonstrates this more clearly than do many other fields of study.

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**21** 'Cultural priors' is the technical term for the socially induced expectations that individuals (and groups) have. They build on previous experiences and are responsible for the subsequent processing of perception. In terms of religious traditions, such priors may determine, for instance, how various foodstuffs are perceived and evaluated.

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# Of Yellow Teaching and Black Faith: Entangled Knowledge Cultures and the Creation of Religious Traditions

**Abstract:** The spread of Tibetan Buddhism to the Mongolian regions in the late sixteenth century did not only result in often violent confrontations between Tibetan Buddhist monks and Mongolian religious specialists, the male and female shamans, but also led to a reification process of local religious practices and concepts resulting in the creation of a single tradition on the discourse level. In my paper I will show how the ‘teaching of the shamans’ has come to be formed as both a concept and a practice in early-modern Inner Asia. By analyzing its discursive formation and entangled historical configurations, from late sixteenth century Mongolia to late nineteenth century Buryatia, the paper aims to shed light on the question how religious traditions are discursively created and socially affirmed.

**Keywords:** ‘teaching of the shamans’, Tibetan Buddhism, Mongols, Buryats, *šasin*, *böge mörgöl*, Shamanism, global history of religion, entangled history, religious traditions

## 1 Introduction

Sometime in the first decades of the seventeenth century, the Mongolian Buddhist monk Neyiči Toyin<sup>1</sup> traveled in nowadays Eastern Mongolia, using his healing powers and magical abilities to convert the Mongols to the ‘Yellow Teaching’, the dGe lugs pa-form of Tibetan Buddhism. His hagiography, entitled *Garland of wish-fulfilling jewels* (Mo. *Čindamani-yin erike*), written nearly a century later, tells us about the reaction of the indigenous religious specialists, the shamans, when they heard that Neyiči Toyin was approaching their region:

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<sup>1</sup> The classical Mongolian is rendered according to Rachewiltz 1996, with the exception of the letter *j* which is given without the haček. For well-known Tibetan and Mongolian terms, however, I use the popular spellings, thus ‘Dalai Lama’ instead of ‘Dalai Blama’. The Tibetan is transliterated according to Wylie, Sanskrit is transliterated according to the internationally accepted rules.

[...] these shamans talked to each other: ‘From the western direction a very powerful lama is coming. Upon his arrival there will be no place where he can stop and rest, so, when he calls on us, we will not come’ (Prajñasagara 1739, fol. 53r-53v).

The text suggests that in their refusal to meet the Buddhist monk the shamans acted as a unified social body. This information is contrary to all historical knowledge about shamans. In historical Mongolian communities male and female shamans were ritual specialists who were individually called by the spirits and who acted on their own. We do not have any historical evidence of ‘shamanic associations’ or any kind of institutional shamanic organization in the Mongolian territories other than the short passage I just quoted. Why, then, are the shamans treated in our source as a compact social body?

Another case: In the late seventeenth century the Kangxi emperor of the newly established Qing dynasty in China had successfully integrated the Mongols of Inner and Outer Mongolia into his empire. Subsequently, the Qing dynasty promoted ‘inner peace’ in the outer regions of the Empire by legal measures. The first law code to be commissioned by the Qing was the so called ‘Mongol law code of the Kangxi Era’ (1662–1722), published sometime after 1694 (Heuschert 1998, 46–50). This law code, of all in all 152 articles, contains one article on the community of the Buddhist lamas and the community of the male and female shamans (Mo. *lam-a-nar-yin ayimaγ. Böge iduγan-u ayimaγ*) (Heuschert 1998, 215–216 [fol. 39v-41r]). The article lays down the punishments administered to lamas and shamans who do not follow the socio-religious injunctions (Mo. *yosun*) of their respective communities. The Qing administration thus dealt with the highly individual indigenous religious specialists of the Mongols in the same way as they dealt with the Buddhist monks. They treated both as social groups and as juridical bodies.

Actually, it was this law code that a couple of years ago made me aware of the rigorous reification process the Mongolian male and female shamans were subjected to and which led to the discursive formation of a religious tradition called in translation ‘teaching of the shamans’ (Mo. *böge-ner-ün šasin*) or ‘veneration of the shamans’ (Mo. *böge mörgöl*) in seventeenth century Mongolia, long before the ‘shamanism paradigm’ was formulated in Enlightenment Europe (Kollmar-Paulenz 2012). Shamanic practices and shamanic imagery have been and are, despite the strong influence of global neo-shamanism, not a coherent system, but rather a collection of representations, which can appear at different places and be employed in various ways (Humphrey 1999, 192). Their fluidity defies standardization. Even today, they are best studied in their particular social settings in contexts of local power relations. Notwithstanding that, in late sixteenth and early seventeenth century Mongolia we can observe how these

local ritual practices that were performed by particular religious specialists were gradually turned into an abstract, homogeneous and ahistorical entity by subsuming them under a generic terminology that discursively identified a specific field of social interaction and was articulated mainly in antagonistic categories (Kollmar-Paulenz 2013, 167–173). In the following, I will explore how this standardized and stable religious tradition of ‘shamanism’ was established and naturalized in early-modern Mongolia and shaped people’s perception of social reality. I hope that a closer look at the discursive formation of Mongolian ‘shamanism’ will help to shed light on the general question how religious traditions emerge and are established. To this aim, after some short remarks on my conceptual approach, I will first focus on the events that led to the Buddhist transformation of the Mongolian religious landscape in the late sixteenth century. Secondly, I will examine the discourse that accompanied and shaped this transformation and led to the construction of a reified system of ‘shamanism’. The third part of this chapter concentrates on the Buryat-Mongols and analyzes the changes the discourse on the ‘teaching of the shamans’ underwent under Russian-European influence in the nineteenth century.

The discursive creation of a ‘teaching of the shamans’ touches on one particular aspect in recent theoretical debates in Religious Studies, the relation between Non-European and European knowledge systems. If one is familiar with the Mongolian configuration of the ‘teaching of the shamans’ and early key texts like Dorji Banzarov’s highly influential *The Black Faith or Shamanism among the Mongols*, first published in 1846 and to this day one of the classics in shamanism research (Banzarov 1846), it is impossible to ignore that the European debate about shamans was influenced by the Mongolian discourse. Up to now, however, this goes mainly unnoticed in scholarship. Although postcolonial theory explicitly acknowledges, in the words of Robert Young, ‘that the intellectual and cultural traditions developed outside the west constitute a body of knowledge that can be deployed to great effect against the political and cultural hegemony of the west’ (Young 2010, 65), the debate still privileges Western knowledge systems, often to the exclusion of their non-Western counterparts. Indeed, scholarly opinion has shifted from the assertion of the complete silence of native voices to what Charles Hallisey has called the ‘intercultural mimesis’: that is, ‘aspects of a culture of a subjectified people influenced the investigator to represent that culture in a certain manner’ (Hallisey 1995, 33). And yet, the history of those ‘aspects of a culture’ in their own contexts and networks of relations and interactions is still ignored. All too often, non-European knowledge cultures seem to emerge out of their obscurity and come into existence only in their relation and response to the encounter with Europe, in the process losing their own historical legacy. In this way, the stereotypes of an active, theory-producing West

and a passive, theory-consuming non-West, are continued rather than abandoned.

We may ask ourselves whether it is still promising to follow theoretical models into which unquestioned dichotomies of the European 'self' and its 'other' are inscribed. With regard to a global history of religion (Kollmar-Paulenz 2010, 265–268, 274–275; Bergunder 2011, 50–55; Kollmar-Paulenz 2013, 185–187), it could be more fruitful to undertake a radically new positioning, to do a new survey of the religious landscapes and to draw new maps that no longer privilege Europe as the beginning and end of the history of religions, to explore new spaces and historical entanglements. To realize such an endeavor, Religious Studies could (and indeed has already started to do so) probe into approaches that are used in Global History Studies, particularly the concept of history as an 'ensemble of entanglements' (Conrad, Randeria 2002). Writing history as *entanglement* entails taking the many interactions of different world regions as a starting point for a transnational historiography that concentrates on the de-centralized character of global entanglements. Intimately connected to, or indeed a special focus of, a Global History perspective, an entangled history approach does not treat the subjects of historical examination as stable, given entities, but as man-made constructions into which specific mechanisms of power are inscribed. This approach no longer allows for a fixed, regional-geographic center or a privileged subject, and opts for a 'co-equality' with regard to epistemic cultures.<sup>2</sup> It stresses the fundamental role that the interactions between different regions of the world have played for the formation of a global modernity.<sup>3</sup>

Extending the entangled history approach to religious cultures, I will examine the respective interactions and entanglements of the Tibeto-Mongolian Buddhist cultural regions. My main geographical focus will thus be on Tibet, Mongolia, China and Russia. To counteract the still unsolved problems of this approach which I see mainly in the terms and taxonomies we use for analysis and which are all taken from a European intellectual context,<sup>4</sup> I will combine the entangled history approach with a micro-historical analysis, in which special attention will be paid to local dynamics and concrete historical spaces.

Methodologically, this contribution is situated in historical discourse analysis that asks about the ways how in the historical process knowledge is produced (Landwehr 2008). I rely on a variety of individual Mongolian and Tibetan sources

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<sup>2</sup> Compare Chakrabarty 2000, 29.

<sup>3</sup> One illuminating case-study is provided by van der Veer 2001.

<sup>4</sup> For the problem of the universal use of historically particular analytical categories and theories see Pernau 2007.

that belong to different literary genres: historical chronicles<sup>5</sup> and biographies;<sup>6</sup> colophons of the Mongolian Buddhist canon (Mo. *Ganjuur*) (Ligeti 1942; Kas'yanenko 1993; *Siluyun budayun üye onoqui neretü sudur*); ritual texts, both Buddhist and non-Buddhist (Heissig 1992; Chiodo 2009); legal documents (Heuschert 1998; Bajarsajchan 2004), and bi-lingual terminological dictionaries (*Dag yig mkhas pa'i byung gnas*; Ye shes rdo rje 1959). This heterogeneous corpus of texts allows me to follow the dynamics of the discourse in different segments of the historical realities it produces. The sources span a time period of roughly three hundred years, the earliest having been written around the year 1600, the most recent in the last decade of the nineteenth century. They have their origins mostly in the Inner and Outer Mongolian regions that during that period were part of the Manchu-Chinese Qing Empire, and nearly all of them are written by Buddhist authors. For the nineteenth century, I also draw on Buryat-Mongolian historical chronicles (Toboyin 1863; Yum Čüng 1875). The Buryats were subjects of the Russian Empire, a fact which did have a significant impact on the formation of their knowledge systems, as we will later see.

## 2 The Mongols turn Buddhist

When in 1578 the then most powerful ruler in the Mongolian steppes, Altan Qayan of the Tümed Mongols, and the Tibetan Buddhist monk bSod nams rgya mtsho, the later Third Dalai Lama, met at the temple of Čabčiyal at Kökenor lake, their meeting marked the beginning of the Buddhist domination of the Mongolian regions (Sagaster 2007). Soon after the meeting of the ruler and the monk, Tibetan lamas began to spread the *dharma*, the Buddhist teaching, among the different Mongolian peoples, and within a time span of not much more than fifty years the Mongols had nearly completely taken up Tibetan Buddhist concepts and practices and were effectively Buddhicized. Only in the adjacent regions of nowadays Buryat-Mongolia this process slowed down and Buddhism took root in these regions as late as the eighteenth century. The historic meeting did not only lead to the formation of a new social class in Mongolian societies, the Buddhist *sangha*, that was politically put on a par with the Mongolian nobility, but also brought about the – at first glance – thorough Buddhist

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5 Vanchikova 2001; Anonymous 1607; Haenisch 1955; Anonymous 18<sup>th</sup> century; Anonymous 1980; Lubsandanjin 1655; Byamba Erke Dayičing 1677; Siregetü Guosi Dharma 1739; Rasi-pungsu 1774/75; Jimbadorji 1834–1837.

6 Prajñasagara 1739; Bawden 1961; Kämpfe 1976a; Kämpfe 1976b; Kämpfe 1977; Kämpfe 1979a; Kämpfe 1979b.

transformation of the Mongolian religious landscape. This landscape was characterized by a multiplicity of local religious practices that were grounded in and at the same time constituted a specific perspectivist ontology that has recently been coined as ‘transcendental perspectivism’ (Holbraad, Willerslev 2007). Mongolian *baiyal*, ‘nature’ that is not separate from but includes human beings, is envisaged as vibrant with entities that have their own ‘majesty’ (Mo. *siir*) or effectiveness (Mo. *čadal*) which is simply there (Humphrey 2003, 136). Shamans receive their power from these energies which are often visualized as spirits (Humphrey 2003, 151). Framed in a narrative of the clash of two opposing world views, the Buddhist encounter with these local religious specialists was in many aspects a battle for social and political authority. The Buddhist monks were quick to challenge the authority of the dominant Mongolian religious specialists, the male and female shamans. They had on their side the Mongolian rulers and the nobility who actively sought to implement the new religion among their subjects. The local rulers in late sixteenth century Mongolia issued laws that prohibited shamanizing and those religious practices related to it (Hae-nisch 1955, fol. 77r). Such practices included the worship of the *Ongyod*, the powerful ancestor spirits and spiritual helpers of the shamans, and blood sacrifices. However, the rituals and practices that belonged to every-day socio-religious life, like the worship and cult of the mountain, the fire cult or the veneration of the hearth deity, as well as the various groups of gods, demons and spirits believed to enliven the world, were not forbidden, but gradually transformed and incorporated into Buddhist practices and beliefs.<sup>7</sup>

Local rulers prohibited the practice of shamanizing, and also actively persecuted the male and female shamans, as the Mongolian biography of Altan Qayan, entitled ‘Sūtra named “precious clearness”’ (Mo. *Erdeni tunumal neretü sudur*), suggests:

After they had set on fire the outer *Ongyod* images, they weakened and eliminated the ecstatic and ignorant male and female shamans (Anonymous 1607, fol. 29r).

The burning of the *Ongyod*, the spirit-helpers of the shamans and thus of highly symbolic value, is reported in our Mongolian and also some Tibetan sources (Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho 1984, 148). The destruction of the *Ongyod* and other shamanic paraphernalia, like the clothes or the drum, contributed to the growing invisibility of shamanic representations in the social field.

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<sup>7</sup> See the *Collected Works* of the Third Mergen Gegen (1717–1766) (Mergen Gegen 2006) who among his many writings composed Buddhist texts for local spirits (Humphrey, Ujeed 2013, 187).

The secular authorities did not only try to put an end to the activities of the shamans by purges and by law, but also bribed the people into performing Buddhist rituals. According to the *Garland of wish-fulfilling jewels* the ruler of the Qorčïn Mongols in Eastern Mongolia publicly proclaimed material rewards, for example a cow or a horse, if the local people learned to recite Buddhist formulas (Prajñasagara 1739, fol. 46v). Moreover, the monks themselves employed this method to win people over, as the same source reports (Prajñasagara 1739, fol. 74r-74v).

While the central Qing government did not actively persecute the shamans, the imperial policy of supporting the Mongolian Buddhist institutions indirectly contributed to the social marginalization of the shamans in the Mongolian societies. The success of this reconfiguration of Mongolian social reality is again transparent in the legislation: the article about the lamas and the shamans was annulled at a later date in favor of a new article which, however, only addressed the lamas (Bajarsajchan 2004, 224–229; Heuschert 1998, 136–137). From then on, the shamans were rendered invisible in the Qing law codes.

### 3 Creating a new religious tradition: The ‘false view of the male and female shamans’

The Buddhist advent in Mongolia was accompanied by a narrative that established Buddhism as the ‘true teaching’ and the shamanic practices as the ‘false view’ (Mo. *buruyu üjel*). In a text fragment about the ritual repelling of bad omens found in Xarbuxyn Balgas and dating around the year 1600 (Chiodo 2009, 182), I came upon the first such statement that singled out shamans as a distinct social group and attributed to them a specific world-view. The appellation *buruyu üjel-tü böge iduyan*, ‘male and female shamans possessing a false view’, was often used in direct opposition to *burqan-u šasin*, the ‘teaching of the Buddha’, as the following example illustrates:

In this way, the false view [of the shamans] was brought to its end, and the teaching of the Buddha emerged pure and clear (Prajñasagara 1739, fol. 54r).

The network of concepts used to articulate this narrative and the normative assumptions underlying it are part of the Indo-Tibetan knowledge systems. Mongolian *buruyu üjel* translates the Tibetan term *lta log* (‘aberrant view’) which in a Tibetan Buddhist context usually denounces controversial doctrinal views and thus an alleged erroneous understanding of the *dharma* and its practice. This philosophical terminology belongs to a broader inner-Buddhist discourse

about philosophical doctrines and their soteriological values (Lopez 1996). Thus, the Mongolian use of *buruyu ijel* confirms an inner-Buddhist discourse about the religious ‘other’. Its application illustrates the reifying processes in the Buddhist discourse of the time with regard to the shamans and shows that their practices were judged from a normative and exclusivist Buddhist viewpoint. The terms employed, *ijel*, ‘[world]view’, and *nom*, ‘teaching’ (in the statement *yadaγadu nom*, ‘outer teaching’), are associated with concepts and practices that are considered karmically wrong, like blood sacrifices.<sup>8</sup> However, in the communicative process of translation, the Tibetan philosophical term and concept of *lta log*<sup>9</sup> was subtly accommodated to the Mongolian context. The semantic field of Mongolian *ijel*, ‘the act of seeing, beholding, view, conception’ stresses the notion of the individual as interdependent part of the community and the role visuality plays in the individual’s relationship with the group. In contrast to the Tibetan concept of *lta ba* which focuses on philosophical expositions, the discourse structured by the semantic field of *ijel* emphasizes the role of the actors and their performance, as well as their emotional and intellectual responses to seeing and being seen.

The attribute ‘male and female shamans’ designates the actors of the ‘false view’ who in the narratives are recurrently represented as ‘morally bad’ (Mo. *mayu*), as fake-healers and evil sorcerers. This personalization gives us an important clue about the structural aspect that allowed the Tibetan monks to include the male and female shamans in the same social field of interaction as themselves and thus ascribe a common generic taxonomy to them. Their activities are described in competition to the Buddhist monks: they performed publicly as healers and exorcists for the benefit of their communities. Such activities have not only been the main field of interaction for shamanic practitioners, but also for many Buddhist religious practitioners that are subsumed under the Tibetan generic term *chos pa*, ‘people who are expert of religious practice’, as a Tibetan dictionary explains (Zhang Yisun 1985, 840). Many Tibetan monks are very apt at employing rituals and practices primarily aimed at healing and divination, at exorcizing and conjuring up evil forces. The Mongolian Bud-

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<sup>8</sup> See, for example, the extensive discussion about the ‘aberrant cutting’ (Tib. *gcod log*) practice in Khams smyon ‘Jigs bral chos kyi seng ge 1974, fol. 70v-74r. An aberrant view necessarily leads to an aberrant practice: the author accuses the practitioners of the ‘aberrant cutting’ of cannibalism and the use of drugs (fol. 70v).

<sup>9</sup> The dGe lugs pa-understanding of ‘aberrant view’ which is also valid in the Mongolian Buddhist context includes ‘a denial of cause, effect, functionality, and existent phenomena’ (Hopkins 1983, 260–261). The ‘aberrant view’ is one of the five ‘afflicted views’ (Tib. *lta ba myon monggs can*) which build one of the six root afflictions according to the dGe lugs pa Prāsaṅgi-ka-Mādhyamika philosophy (Hopkins 1983, 256).

dhist sources are full of stories in which a Buddhist lama competes with a shaman in healing a sick person. The *Garland of wish-fulfilling jewels* reports the particularly impressive story of an old blind female shaman who is healed by the famous Buddhist missionary Neyiči Toyin and in the aftermath ‘the shamaness worshipped with true and sincere faith’ (Prajñasagara 1739, fol. 44r). The shamans occupied the same social role and function as many a Buddhist monk, and were thus categorized according to their social function.

Yet other taxonomies, not all of them stressing differences, structured the emerging discourse about ‘the teaching of the shamans’. In Mongolian texts of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the terms *šasin mörgöl* for ‘Buddhism’ and *böge mörgöl* for ‘Shamanism’ were used. Mongolian *mörgöl* literally denotes ‘the act of bowing’, stressing the bodily performance of venerating the *dharma* or, respectively, the shamans. Both terms emphasize the visible and performative aspects of the Mongolian embodied construction of ‘religion’. Perhaps the most important reason for the rapid Buddhist transformation of the Mongolian societies lies exactly in the fact that the Mongols and the Tibetans shared a very similar socio-religious *habitus*. The *habitus*, as Bourdieu has shown, cannot become subject to reflection without being distorted. Habitual knowledge remains inarticulate and unable to express itself. In a fundamental way it is anchored in our bodies and may be addressed as practical and enacted knowledge (Bourdieu 1993, 122–146). The shared Mongolian-Tibetan *habitus* is most obvious in the ontological perception of the natural environment which both Tibetans and Mongols imagine as enlivened space constituted of natural entities whose unpredictable energies and powers call for intersubjective interactions. In early modern Mongolian societies the acting out of such embodied knowledge was of crucial importance. To ‘spread the *dharma*’ first of all implied to carry into effect Buddhist rituals and practices and to inscribe them bodily, in loud recitations of Mantras and Dhāraṇīs, in acts of bowing and throwing one’s body to the earth etc. Further, in counteraction to the shamanic performance that always needs a public, the *dharma* also had to be performed publicly. The body itself became a visible marker of a Buddhist religious identity, and therefore both bodily performance and spatial presence were effective means to appropriate socio-religious power and prestige. The Buddhist monks provided additional and sometimes also new meanings to bodily engrained patterns of socio-religious knowledge, thereby slowly and subtly transforming existing practices and rituals. It is important to note that these new meaningful conceptions did not replace the older ones but were transformations of them.

The ‘teaching of the shamans’ was also addressed as (Mo.) *qara šasin*, ‘black teaching’, in binary opposition to (Mo.) *sira šasin*, ‘yellow teaching’, which the dGe lugs pa, the dominant Tibetan-Buddhist school in Mongolia, used as a

self-referential designation in the Mongolian regions. Mongolian *qara*, ‘black’, is a highly inauspicious color among the Mongols. Therefore, normative assumptions underlie the narratives of the ‘black teaching’, authorizing and naturalizing a definition of shamans as a social group whose concepts and practices principally endanger their respective social communities, imagining them to apply negative forces to achieve their sinister aims. We know from Buddhist chronicles and the few shamanic prayers which have been written down that very soon shamans adopted and reconfigured this appellation, this time with a partly positive self-ascription: they associated ‘black’ with spiritual potency. From then on, black shamans were considered to be the most powerful ones, untouched by Buddhist concepts and practices. Yet at the same time they were believed to be potentially harmful to their communities. This ambivalent image of the ‘black shaman’ is still valid today (Heissig 1992, 205; Pedersen 2011, 76 and 88).

On the one hand the Mongolian discourse, structured by the terms *üjel*, *nom* and *šasin*, has to be read against the Tibetan epistemic background. On the other hand the Tibetan concepts that were transported by these terms were adjusted to their new communicative contexts. With regard to their respective contexts, the Tibetan terms have a broad semantic scope, but, as already explicated, most often they emphasize a well-ordered system of doctrines and teachings. Therefore, when the practices and rituals the shamans performed were appropriated as ‘[world]-view’ or ‘teaching’ on the discourse level, this appropriation brought about a change in the Mongols’ perception of socio-religious reality. The shamans were now treated as a distinct group which adhered to a fixed and stable corpus of rules, doctrines and practices, a development that is also attested in the afore-mentioned legal codes of the Qing Empire. Discourse and social structure are thus dialectically related, as discursive acts are simultaneously descriptive and constitutive of social reality. The degree of self-evidence the ‘teaching of the shamans’ had reached in the eighteenth century is particularly revealing in a short chronicle entitled ‘History of the *Ongyod* “Black Protector”’ (Mo. *Ongyod qar-a sakiyus-un teüke sudur bičig*). Composed by an unknown author who must have had insider knowledge about shamanic lineages and narratives, the chronicle provides in an epic narrative an origin hypothesis for the emergence of shamans and shamanizing, making use of the term *surtayun*, literally ‘that which is studied, science, rules, doctrine’ (Lessing 1960, 740), to identify a ‘doctrine of the female shamans’ (Mo. *udayun-u surtayun*) (Anonymous 18th century, 4).

The discursively created religious tradition of the ‘black teaching’, or ‘black faith’, as the Buryat scholar Dorji Banzarov translated the term, is socially present in the religious specialists, the male and female shamans, but it excludes the lay people that in a Christian understanding build up a religious community. No

Mongolian source from the Mongolian territories within the Qing Empire addresses lay people as building part of the social organization of the 'shamanic' tradition. The concept of lay-followers as opposed to religious specialists and the idea that both groups constitute a religious community of a specific persuasion has been extremely rare in early-modern Inner-Asian societies. The question of who belonged to which religious tradition was in most contexts not relevant outside the circle of religious specialists.

## 4 European influences on Tibetan and Mongolian knowledge cultures

Our Mongolian sources are curiously lacking in one important aspect. We have seen that since the late sixteenth century a shamanic view or teaching was singled out in discourse, the male and female shamans being the agents of this teaching. But what do we learn about the configuration of this teaching, about its doctrines, its practices, its ethics? All our primary sources from the Inner and Outer Mongolian territories do not provide any data about shamanic doctrines and practices, apart from the already mentioned healing and exorcizing practices. No text gives a detailed description of the concepts and practices that are evoked in the examined terms and statements. Even the article in the Kangxi law code of 1694 contains nothing concrete about the shamans.<sup>10</sup> At a closer look, in the discourse of the Mongols of the Qing Empire, the 'teaching of the shamans' remains curiously opaque.

This changed only in the nineteenth century, in a different geographical and cultural environment. Siberian Buryat-Mongolia, the colonial backyard of the Russian Empire, provided a fertile ground for the encounter and entanglement of Tibeto-Mongolian and European knowledge cultures. Therefore, in the last part of my contribution I will explore how in the nineteenth century this Inner-Asian discourse was shaped by the encounter of European concepts. More concretely, I will follow up the discursive construction of the 'teaching of the shamans' in the text production of the Buryat-Mongols who were separated from the other Mongols by a political divide. Since around 1700, the Buryats living along the Eastern shores of Lake Baikal, in the Transbaikalian regions, were Buddhists. They belonged to the greater Tibeto-Mongolian Buddhist cultural sphere that had its center in Lhasa, the capital of Tibet. At the same time, they were separated from this Buddhist universe by a political divide. The treaty

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<sup>10</sup> Contrary to its expressed focus, the article deals exclusively with the Buddhist community.

of Kiakhta in 1727 had finally fixed the boundary lines between the Russian and the Qing Empire and had drawn an artificial border between the Mongols on each side (Perdue 2005, 161–173). Whereas in the Qing Empire Buddhism enjoyed state patronage from the emperors, who towards their Buddhist subjects acted as ‘protectors of the *dharmā*’<sup>11</sup> and actively used Buddhism as a means to consolidate and legitimize their power (Berger 2003; Schwieger 2015), the Russian Empire favored the Christian Orthodox Church, and the Buddhists of the empire were confined to a marginal position (Tsyrempilov 2012). The simultaneous belonging to the Russian Empire and the greater Tibeto-Mongolian Buddhist world helped shape the Transbaikalian regions into a complex amalgam of diverging cultural influences that contributed to the formation of the Buryat-Mongolian knowledge cultures. The Transbaikalian Buryats constantly negotiated their self-perceptions and participation in these often conflicting worlds in visual and performative practices and in texts. Thus, the Russian Tsar was venerated by his Buddhist subjects as an emanation of the female bodhisattva White Tārā<sup>12</sup> that traditionally has a close relationship to Avalokiteśvara, Tibet’s most revered bodhisattva. In this way, on a visual and symbolic level, Tibet and Russia were inextricably linked together.

Like their Mongolian brethren across the borders, the Buryats put great efforts into writing down their history. Historical chronicles were wide-spread and popular especially in the nineteenth century. Their authors were most often people who worked in politically powerful, yet subaltern, positions in the Siberian colonial administration, the steppe *duma*, and, due to their social and educational background, participated both in the Tibeto-Mongolian and the Russian cultural spheres. I have analyzed two of these chronicles in regard to their literary relations and epistemic structures. The chronicle ‘What happened in the past of the Qori- and Aga-Buriyads’ (Mo. *Qori kiged aγuyin buriyad-nar-un urida-dayan boluγsan anu*) dates from 1863 and was composed by the ruling chief (*taisha*) of the Aga Buryats, Tügülder Toboyin (Toboyin 1863). The second chronicle, entitled ‘Tale of the origin of the lineage of the people of the eleven fathers of the Qori’ (Mo. *Qori-yin arban nigen ečige-yin jun-u uy ijaγur-un tuγuji*), was written in 1875 by Vangdan Yum Čüng, an official of the Qori steppe *duma* (Yum Čüng 1875). Both chronicles contain chapters about the ‘teaching of the shamans’. While the discourse on shamans in Inner and Outer Mongolia was shaped by the Indo-Tibetan and the indigenous Mongolian knowl-

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<sup>11</sup> The Qing commitment to Tibetan Buddhism tended to include only the dGe lugs pa, defining all other Tibetan-Buddhist schools as heterodox (Petech 1972, 106–107). The Tibetan dGe lugs pa government actively supported this politics (Schwieger 2015, 166–170).

<sup>12</sup> This veneration is nowadays extended to the Russian president (Bernstein 2013, 1).

edge cultures that mutually influenced each other, these chronicles also show distinct Russian influence. They are informed by three different epistemic models: In the tradition of Mongolian history writing they are genealogical accounts. By drawing on important Mongolian historical works, both authors place themselves firmly in the Mongolian historiographical tradition (Kollmar-Paulenz 2014b). Secondly, in separate chapters Toboyin and Yum Čüng provide systematic overviews of the religious traditions extant among the Buryats: that is Buddhism and the ‘teaching of the shamans’. The chapters on the ‘teaching of the shamans’ follow, in structure and topic, Indo-Tibetan doxography, the so-called ‘presentation of tenets’ (Tib. *Grub mtha’i mam bzhag*). In texts of this genre religio-philosophical schools, both non-Buddhist and Buddhist, are presented in a systematical way (including their historical development) that allows the Buddhist scholar to compare them with respect to their soteriological quality (Hopkins 1996). The genre had been already popular in India and was further developed in Tibet since at least the eleventh century. One doxography, bearing the title ‘Crystal Mirror of good explanations, showing the sources and assertions of all systems of tenets’ (Tib. *Grub mtha’ thams cad kyi khungs dang ‘dod tshul ston pa legs bshad shel gyi me long*) and written in 1802 by the Mongolian scholar Thu’u bkvan Blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma (1737–1802), a resident of dGon lungs monastery in Northeastern Tibet (Amdo), was particularly popular in the Buriyad regions (Thu’u bkvan Blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma 1802; Thuken Losang Chökyi Nyima 2009). A comparison of the two chronicles with this doxography brought to light that both Buryat authors closely follow this doxographical model to present knowledge (Kollmar-Paulenz 2014a). But there is, thirdly, one striking difference, and here Russian influence comes in: while *Grub mtha’ mam bzhag* texts focus almost exclusively on worldviews, both chronicles give much more attention to the shamanic actor, including his initiation, attire and practices. This focus on the agents of religious doctrines bears marked resemblance to eighteenth and nineteenth century Russian and German ethnographic accounts about North Asian ‘shamanism’ (Georgi 1776–1780; Pallas 1980) including Banzarov’s famous work on the ‘Black Faith’.

Furthermore, in Yum Čüng’s chronicle the ‘teaching<sup>13</sup> of the shamans’ no longer refers exclusively to the religious specialists who constitute its semi-institutional social body, but also includes lay-followers. For the first time, the author speaks of (in literal translation) ‘the people of the teaching of the shamans’ (Mo. *böge-nerün šasin-un ulus-nar*) (Yum Čüng 1875, 92), or, as one Russian translator

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13 Instead of *šasin*, he uses the term *mörgöl* comparatively, thus *šasin mörgöl*, ‘Buddhism’ (Yum Čüng 1875, 63), and *böge-ner-ün mörgöl*, ‘Shamanism’ (Yum Čüng 1875, 91).

more smoothly renders the phrase, ‘the people of the shamanic faith’ (Poppe 2011, 46). Thus, the semantic scope of the Mongolian *šasin* is once again transformed, this time including a Christian understanding of what constitutes a ‘religious tradition’.

## 5 Conclusion

I have provided a short and rather sketchy insight into one particular aspect of Mongolian epistemic cultures in which reality is assessed by second-order categories that are socially constructed. The Indo-Tibetan taxonomies that had a specific emphasis on philosophy and epistemology, in the process of their integration into Mongolian epistemic cultures and their implicit ontologies, were renegotiated and came to include the inter-relational, visual and performative aspects that are addressed in the terms and the concepts of *mörgöl*, *üjel* and *šasin* that structure the Mongolian discourse. The narrative of ‘shamanism’ that gained dominance in the Mongolian societies since the late sixteenth century was the result of and simultaneously formed the politics of the local rulers and the newly emerging, powerful social class of the Buddhist *sangha*. The continuous reiteration of discursive and non-discursive, especially bodily, practices shaped the Mongols’ perceptions of shamanic practices and Buddhist teachings alike. On the one hand, the interplay of Tibetan and Mongolian knowledge formations led to a reconfiguration of a Buddhism that was deeply shaped by Mongolian ontological perspectives. On the other hand, the shamans and their teachings emerged as a distinct social group with a fixed and stable set of practices and concepts, and ‘shamanism’ as a distinct religious tradition took shape in late sixteenth, early seventeenth century Mongolia. Thus, this case study shows religious traditions to be established as discursive formations, fields of statements and practices. Furthermore, and here I follow Gavin Flood, religious traditions are made up of collective representations, of fluid ensembles of cultural resources that in encounter situations are discursively condensed into distinct and stable entities (Flood 1999, 50–51). This reification is initiated when cultural boundaries are crossed and rival religious actors compete, among other things, for material resources and social prestige. The emergence of religious traditions is also constitutive in relation to other forms of power, in our case the centralized polity of the Qing state and its alliance with the Buddhist *sangha*. Religious traditions are thus simultaneously the result of complex social, cultural and political processes and discursive constructions that shape them.

My case study has further theoretical implications. It has brought to light that the Mongolian taxonomic field of *üjel*, *nom* and ultimately *šasin*, the last

term employed since the later eighteenth century in comparative contexts, singling out Buddhism and ‘shamanism’ as well as Islam and later Christianity as distinct and comparable fields of social interaction, can be meaningfully related to the European discourse field of ‘religion’. This taxonomic field did not emerge in the encounter with Europe and a European concept of ‘religion’. The historical legacy of the normative and theoretical concepts that shaped Mongolian perceptions of social reality lies in the complex entanglement of Mongolian ontological concepts and the rich epistemic cultures of Tibet. European notions of ‘religion’ started to inform the Tibeto-Mongolian conceptualizations only when Buddhism spread further north to the shores of Lake Baikal. It is important to note that this complex interplay of Tibetan, Mongolian and Russian epistemic cultures critically influenced our own scholarly discourse about ‘shamanism’ which took its distinct shape in the twentieth century. The Mongolian conceptualizations of ‘shamanism’ found their way into European academic scholarship<sup>14</sup> through the mediation of Buryat scholars like Dorji Banzarov, Tsyben Zhamtsarano (Tolz 2015) and others. But already in earlier times, German and Russian ethnographers had reported about Mongolian and Buryat-Mongolian shamans, and partly they had done so using Mongolian taxonomies that had been formed in the confrontational encounters between Tibetan-Buddhist monks and Mongolian shamans since the late sixteenth century. A scientific study of religion that ignores non-European knowledge cultures in their historical dimensions is prone to overlook these multiple interactions and entanglements that took place long before the ‘global’ twentieth century. Indeed, in recent years the genealogy of eighteenth and nineteenth century European shamanism-discourse has been reconstructed by a couple of scholars,<sup>15</sup> but these reconstructions have not included the non-Western discourses on the term and the concept, thus once more producing an ‘intellectual map of the world’ (Coronil 2002, 179) that excludes non-Western cultures. Following the project of a global history of religion, I suggest to explore the discursive configurations of the religious field in different cultural settings by paying due attention to the legacy of non-Western epistemic cultures, as today’s multiple modernities are rooted in and shaped by a multitude of different historical knowledge cultures.

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<sup>14</sup> My use of the term ‘European scholarship’ includes, of course, Russian scholarship.

<sup>15</sup> Flaherty 1992; Hutton 2001; Stuckrad 2003; Znamenski 2007.

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# Global Intellectual History and the Dynamics of Religion\*

**Abstract:** The essay sketches a new approach in Global Intellectual History: a theory of ‘over-extended’ reference or intentionality, especially during the age of European expansion. These over-extensions took place for instance when scholars of the seventeenth and eighteenth century inquired about exotic languages and religions, as they did by collecting translations of the Lord’s Prayer. What if some of these religions had no concepts for God or Holiness? If one admitted the possibility of atheistic peoples, the proof of God’s existence through a ‘consensus gentium’ was in danger. Some Lutherans therefore developed a theory of a ‘penumbra’, a half-shadow, for places where the knowledge of God was obscured, but not totally absent. In order to find traces of this darkened knowledge they turned to the interpretation of rituals. It was – with all its misinterpretations and mis-references – a sort of globalized mapping of religion.

**Keywords:** globalization, scholarship, languages, Africa, atheism, ritual, apologetics

## 1 Over-Extensions

In recent years there has been a growing chorus of voices demanding a global intellectual history. Undoubtedly intellectual history has until now been largely oblivious to the general globalizing trend within historiography. Historians of ideas might assert that ideas are in any case ‘the most migratory things in the world,’ as Arthur O. Lovejoy once expressed it (Lovejoy 1940). But such a statement is insufficient. Today’s global history will not settle for vague conceptions of how theories and concepts traveled from ancient Greece into modern Europe, and then from Europe to America. Rather this kind of history poses discomforting questions about the colonial ballast attached to ideas when they travel and questions about ideas traveling in the opposite direction to the well-known European expansion. This kind of history is interested, for example, in how Indian and African experts participated in the scientific revolution or in the development of modern cartography. It asks about the ‘entanglements’ of East and

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\* This paper was translated from its original *German* by Andrew McKenzie-McHarg.

West, North and South, about the idiosyncratic adaption of ideas in distant lands and the contact zones in which different ideas collided with each other.<sup>1</sup>

Where does religion find its place here? What is the relationship between global intellectual history and the dynamics of religion, which is the topic of discussion of this volume as it was of the 2015 IAHR Congress? Perhaps the question is premature because a precise conception of how intellectual entanglements are actually to be treated does not yet exist. Instead we have disparate suggestions made by, for example, Samuel Moyn or David Armitage (Moyn, Sartori 2013; Armitage 2012a; Armitage 2012b). I would like to try and stimulate the discussion by putting forward some of my own ideas for an approach to early modern globalization in terms of intellectual history and to follow this with a case study in which religion plays a decisive role.

The German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk emphasized a number of years ago in his book on globalization *Im Weltinnenraum des Kapitals* that we should understand the individual of the early modern period – exposing him- or herself to the risks of ocean travel and learning new techniques – as a ‘doer of *new* deeds, an originator of *new* effects, a carrier of *new* ideas’: as someone who embodied a solid ‘liaison between subjectivity and assertiveness (*zwischen Subjektivität und Offensivität*)’ (Sloterdijk 2005, 108). My suggestion for the fundamentals of a global intellectual history goes in the same direction but focuses on a particular character trait of this subjective assertiveness.

For this assertiveness manifested itself in ‘over-extensions’ (*Überreichweiten*), as I call them. These over-extensions resulted from intentional strivings or a collective intentionality which in reaching for something were still not precise and often overshot or missed the mark.<sup>2</sup> With ‘over-extended intentionality’ I seek to describe references to the most distant objects, references which carried bundles of beliefs and intentions: one speaks in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, for example, of the riches of the Far East, of the peoples on the edge of the world, of the deluge and the early prophets, of recently discovered Amerindians and of the source of the Nile. In this regard, it is possible to see in the early modern period an age of over-extensions, as the points of reference were mostly vague, askew or completely false.

The gist of my thoughts is to understand these over-extensions spatially as well as temporally and to not overplay the difference in these aspects. I would like to mention a number of examples. Hermes Trismegistos, the Egyptian

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<sup>1</sup> See, for instance Schaffer et al. 2009; Raj 2010; Schiebinger, Swan 2005; Rodgers, Raman, Reinitz 2014; Ben-Zaken 2010; Gruzinski 2008.

<sup>2</sup> Strictly speaking, sometimes the references were also ‘under-extensions’, of course.

sage, who was seen as just as venerable as Moses, if not even older and therefore more dignified, played a large role in the intellectual discussions in Europe at this time. Many of the avant-garde philosophies of the Renaissance were inspired by the Hermetic writings. Only in the course of time did it dawn upon scholars and intellectuals that the point of reference had been placed way too far back in time. Instead of writings dating back to 1500 BCE or earlier, one was in fact dealing with writings originating in the second or third century CE (fig. 1). Similar revisions would befall other datings put forward by scholars in the early modern period (Mulsow 2002).

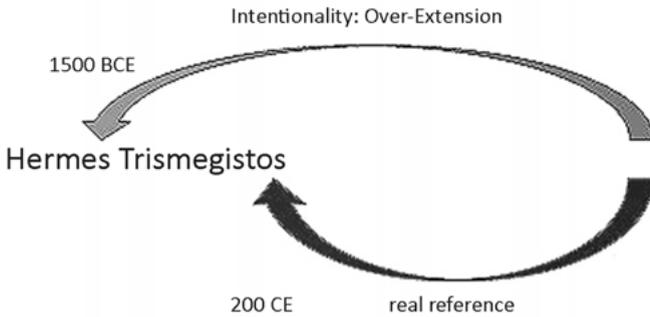


Fig. 1

These questions of time and dating were often connected to questions of space, and they were also simultaneously questions of authority. The most evident example here is Columbus' over-extension, when he thought to have reached India but in fact had discovered America (fig. 2). As the Spanish began extracting gold and silver from the mines of Potosí and other places in South America and transporting it to Europe and China, speculation circulated that this had to be the legendary land of Ophir from where King Solomon derived his wealth. One 'over'-extended the imagination both in time and space and conjured up the image of a Solomonic Atlantic fleet in order to understand the present and integrate it into the broader framework of known history. Only from our current perspective is it possible to recognize how far off base such speculation was.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Gliozzi 1977; Pagden 2015, 39; Ben-Dor Benite 2009, 139. On similar topics see MacCormack 1995, 79–129.

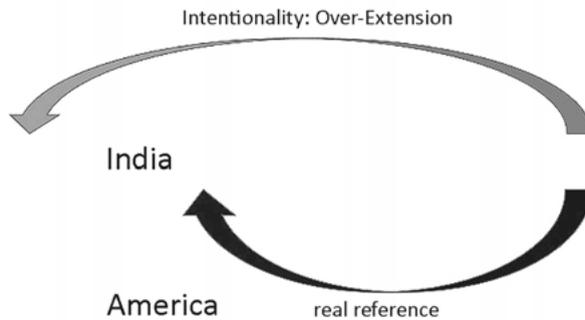


Fig. 2

When one spoke of inaccessible places, such as Ethiopia, which had briefly been visited by the Portuguese before they were expelled, then there was a tendency to project onto such places mythical notions, for example of the Prester John, who purportedly waited there with his army and upon whose support one could call in an alliance directed at the Ottomans in current wars (Silverberg 1996).

Over-extensions are not only a question of error, projection and ignorance in the early modern period. They arise out of a different mental constitution of the world, employing different coordinates from those with which we are familiar. This is also directly relevant for the history of ideas. What is needed is a theory of the varieties of reference for the early phase of globalization.<sup>4</sup>

## 2 The impulse to reach for the exotic

How did the production of over-extensions take place? There were naturally countless mechanisms in politics, nautical science and military expansion which in a very literal sense over-extended themselves. Without knowing what the destination was and equipped with only vague myths and economic desires, early modern individuals set sail for new and unknown shores. But ‘over-extensions’ could also take the armchair as their point of departure. European scholars learnt languages which until then none of their predecessors had mastered, such as Syrian, Arabic, Coptic or Ge’ez, and from their study dens their minds penetrated the depths of time and space (fig. 3). Texts became available which

<sup>4</sup> Some thoughts on this are developed in Mulsow 2015a, 25–26; Mulsow 2015b, 47–66.

opened up new horizons and conveyed knowledge about peoples and events which until then had been fully unknown. The leading discipline in this study of language was at first Biblical philology, animated by the expectation that knowledge of near Eastern languages would help to clarify the meaning of obscure concepts and contexts in scripture or deliver corroborating evidence for early Christian rituals, as was expected from a study of Ethiopian or Armenian sources.<sup>5</sup>

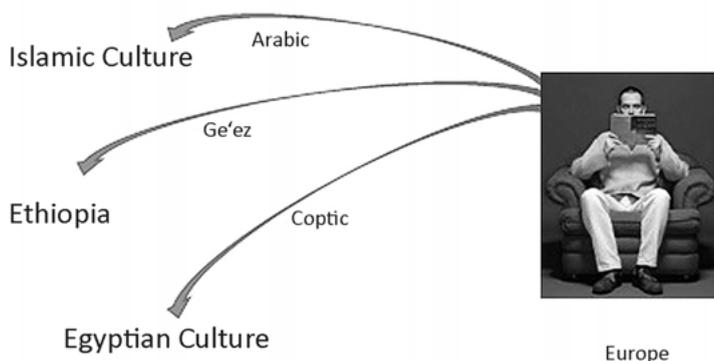


Fig. 3

Exotic religions by contrast, which had nothing to do with the Bible, were classified, as we know, as forms of idolatry.<sup>6</sup> The languages associated with them were also studied and deciphered in the course of time, but here the discipline leading the way was not Biblical exegesis, but rather apologetics. Foreign cultures were threatening cultures, and the presumption was that the Christian religion was obliged to defend itself against them by showing that these religions were only forms of a primitive idolatry which worshipped the sun or the moon, the wind or lightning, the trees, animals and spirits of nature. At the same time, this interpretation had to be careful to not overshoot the mark because this would then conflict with the *consensus gentium*, the ‘agreement among all peoples.’

This *consensus gentium* had already been developed in ancient times as a proof of God’s existence (O’Briant 1985). It declared that, in general, every tribe or nation within humanity practiced some form of divine worship. If all

<sup>5</sup> See e.g. Toomer 1996; Hamilton 2006; Miller 2012; App 2010.

<sup>6</sup> See Schmidt 1990; Stroumsa 2010; Mulsow 2001; Miller 2001; Sheehan 2006; Rubiés 2006.

people believe in God, then there must be a universal idea of God, and this indicates that there really is a God. But in making such a general statement, an *advocatus diaboli* is waiting in the wings to pose the question: Are there exceptions? As soon as a general statement admits an exception, its validity is overturned. This way of proving God's existence would then collapse.

The exception, which the devil whispered into the ears of early modern intellectuals, took the following form: In some cases there are atheist peoples. And indeed the exceptions began to accumulate in the early modern period as explorers brought back to the European public more and more accounts of their encounters with exotic peoples. This marked the hour for the theologians to deploy their casuistic skills in discussing which cases and which circumstances allowed one to speak of atheism. In what follows I will reconstruct these discussions in their context of language, literacy and religion, as this area witnessed the culmination of a dynamic at play in the intellectual history of globalization: the over-extensions of armchair-Orientalists and armchair-Africanists were considerable.

Let me preface this with a warning: I will use the concepts 'Hottentot' and 'Kaffir,' which have, especially in English, strong derogatory connotations. In the early modern period they were still used as neutral names, and in this sense I will adhere to the early modern language of the sources.

### 3 The collectors of 'Our Father's

In the Franckesche Foundation in Halle there is a cabinet of scripts. In this cabinet, which was set up in the 1720s and the 1730s, scripts are displayed whose origins range from Middle-Eastern, to Indian, Russian and East Asian (Link, Müller-Bahlke 2003). They represent at the same time a monument to Babylonian confusion. The different types of writing cast their spell and tantalize the observer with the suggestion of something exotic. At the same time, the differences inspired the search for some connection between the 72 languages which gave rise to all the confusion upon replacing the original Adamic language. From the second half of the seventeenth century there was a veritable competition to discover and penetrate new languages and scripts; at some stage the number 72 was dropped as the realization set in that there were far more idioms than the number posited in the Bible. This competition was closely linked to the business of missionizing: for if one wanted to bring 'heathen' people into contact with Christianity, then it was necessary to understand their language in order to translate the Christian message into it. In the reverse direction the missionaries supplied the linguists at home with their material. Already in the fifteenth century the former

crusader Hans Schiltberger had had the idea of choosing the Lord's Prayer as the prototypical text on whose basis one could identify the different languages and test their translatability (Borst 1957–63, 1025–1026).

It would, however, take more than two hundred years for the undertaking to really gain momentum. This was thanks in part to a provost from Berlin, Andreas Müller, who had returned from London where he had worked with Brian Walton on the polyglot Bible and with Edmund Castell on a polyglot dictionary. Müller was an idiosyncratic, but ingenious linguist. He had mastered dozens of languages, among them Arabic, Syriac, Chinese and Japanese. He had promised to present the Elector of Brandenburg with a *Clavis sinica* which would enable a fast and easy acquisition of the Chinese characters, and for several years he drew a pension for this work. But he never completed it and he died embittered after burning all his notes and preliminary studies (Noack 1995; Osterkamp 2010; Kraft 1976). In a work dealing with *Alphabeta [...] diversarum linguarum* he had documented seventy different alphabets and, publishing in 1680 under the pseudonym Thomas Ludekenius, he had assembled a collection of almost one hundred 'Our Father's (Ludekenius 1680). Men like him collected versions of the Lord's Prayer like butterflies, pinning them next to each other in the vitrine according to schemes of classifications.

Müller's efforts were the catalyst for a succession of scholars who hoped to clarify the relationship of the languages among each other. Among them were Leibniz, Nicolaus Witsen, Gisbert Cuper, Adrian Reland, David Wilkens, Hiob Ludolf, Mathurin Veyssière La Croze and John Chamberlayne (see von der Schulenburg 1973). Leibniz sent wish-lists of linguistic questions to the Jesuits in China as well as to the participants in expeditions to Siberia and South Africa, which the missionaries or explorers working in the field should attempt to answer.<sup>7</sup> He also tried to persuade Andreas Müller to publish his studies on Chinese and in this way to contribute to the development of a conceptual language. Ludolf wrote extensive annotations into his copy of Müller's book. Chamberlayne finally drew a line – even if only of a provisional nature – under the intense debate by publishing a compilation of 150 'Our Father's, often accompanied by specialist disquisitions which documented the exchange of ideas among the linguists (Chamberlayne 1715).

It was something exotic, akin to the hunt for lions and butterflies, which motivated the acquisition and – in particular – the demonstration of an acquisition of foreign languages and alphabets. If we cast a glance into the *alba amicorum* and the title pages for dissertations in the second half of the seventeenth centu-

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<sup>7</sup> See Leibniz 1982, *Desiderata*. On the genre of desiderata lists see Keller 2015; Stagl 2002.

ry, then the scholars' partiality for using foreign alphabets in an ornamental manner is immediately apparent. The mistakes that they made in this give testimony in their own way to the over-extensions of scholarship.

## 4 Language and religion

The preface to Chamberlayne's collection, written by David Wilkins, begins with the sentence: 'Under the firmament there lives no people – be it ever so blinded by the thick fog of heathenism or ever so submerged in the superstition of religion – which does not believe in the very great utility of appeals to the *Godhead* (*numen*) to the extent that they do not try to avoid the threat of an immediate or future calamity, reap the bounty of goodness and sink in humble supplication.'<sup>8</sup> This was at the same time the premise for the postulate that one could find everywhere linguistic equivalents to the Lord's Prayer. What was one to say, however, if difficulties arose in translating 'Our Father'? If the word 'god' could not be translated because the culture in question had no corresponding word in their vocabulary? We can see Leibniz grapple with this problem in the posthumously edited *Nouveaux Essais* (1,3 § 8).

Leibniz had engaged in an extensive correspondence with Nicolaus Witsen and Hiob Ludolf, and then later with La Croze, about such matters (Waterman 1979). Witsen wrote for the first time on October 16, 1697 in response to Leibniz' request for versions of the Lord's Prayer in distant languages (Peters 2010, esp. 260 ff.; Groenewald 2004): 'I take the liberty of sending you a piece in the language of the Hottentots, with the apostolic creed and the Ten Commandments, as well as a Lord's Prayer in the Mongolian language which I obtained with much trouble from a Mongolian slave who belonged to the delegation from Moscow. If they have members of other foreign peoples with them, then I will also try to obtain their versions of the Lord's Prayer. The Uzbek language is the same as Persian. That of the Kalmyks and of the Mongolians is also identical. Even if there are no Samoyedic people in the delegation, I will attempt to obtain an 'Our Father' in their language from Archangelo and I hope to send it to you in three or four months.'<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> David Wilkins: *Praefatio* (no pagination), in Chamberlayne 1715, *Oratio Dominica*: "Nulla sub Coelo vivit Gens vel spissa paganismi caligine occoecata, vel ludicris religionum superstitionibus immersa, quae non maximam precum utilitatem credens, ad Numen suum, ut malum imminens vel futurum averruncet, et quaevis bona in se derivet, supplex devolvatur."

<sup>9</sup> Extracts of Witsen's letters to Leibniz have been edited in Leibniz 1717, here: 361.

Witsen gained access to the Hottentots as a member of the Dutch East India Company, as the Dutch had bases at the Cape of Good Hope. The so-called Hottentots were the Khoi or Khoikoi, a network of closely interrelated peoples in South Africa and Namibia.<sup>10</sup> Much effort was expended in drawing some kind of connection between what one knew of their culture and the little which was otherwise known about Africa. On this basis, Simon de La Loubère, a diplomat returning from Siam, believed to discern in the names Asdrubal and Bocchus the echo of ancient rulers and commanders from Carthage and Mauritania (de la Loubère 1691, 141–142; cf. Smithies 1999). He also thought that he could recognize a belief in a good and an evil principle: in other words, some form of Manichaeism. In this regard the Hottentots did not seem to him to be devoid of all religion, even if all their expressions were rooted in the senses. Witsen used a question mark in transliterating the click consonant of the Khoi.<sup>11</sup> And he – or his informant in Africa – pointed to the exact problem which Leibniz would later recall: instead of ‘holy’ the Hottentots would use the word ‘happy,’ and the Holy Spirit therefore had to be formulated as ‘den gelukkige adem of windeke,’ the ‘happy breath or breeze’.<sup>12</sup>

## 5 The ‘Kaffirs’

Things were even more difficult in the case of the so-called Kaffirs (Lanni 2003; Kropf 1889). This was mostly the denotation for the Xhosa people in South Africa. Yet the word could also refer to more than just the Xhosa people. It was derived from the Arabic كافر (Kāfir) where it means infidel, or non-Muslim or at least someone who does not subscribe to one of the monotheistic religions. When the Portuguese on their journeys to India sailed around the coast of Africa, they adopted this term, which was wide-spread on the east coast, and elevated it to an ethnological term without linking it to a specific people; only as a result of

<sup>10</sup> See Fauvelle-Aymar 2002; on the Khoikoi see Elphick 1977; Johnson 2012; Nutz 2009; Lounay 2002.

<sup>11</sup> Leibniz 1717, 375–376: ‘Het Onse Vader in Hottentots’: ‘*Cita bô, t? homme ingá t’siha, t? sa di kamink ouna, hem kouqueent see, dani hinqa t’sa inhee K? chou ki, quiquo t? homm’ ingá, maa cita heci cita kôua sequa bree, k? hom cita, cita hiahinghee quiquo cita k? hom, cita dóua kôuna, tire cita k? choá t? authummá – k’hamta cita hi aquei hee k? dou auna, –t? aats kouqueetta, hique t? aats diaha, hique occisa ha, nauwi.*’ It follows the comment: ‘*Staat te letten, dat de Hottentotten voor’t vwoord heylig, gelukkig (quasi beatum) gebruyken, en voor’ Koningryke, ‘t geen by haar onbekend is, heerschappye, en verders sodanig als by ieder vwoord, by hen niet gebruykelyk, geannotteert staat.*’

<sup>12</sup> Leibniz 1717, 382 (‘Symbolum Apostolicum in Lingua Hottentotica’).

a subsequent contraction of the term's application did the South African Xhosa come to be called Kaffirs.

In the intentional striving for distant lands it was not always easy for the armchair-Orientalists to avoid confusion. When Hiob Ludolf received news from his source of information on Ethiopia, Abba Gorgoryos (cf. Smidt 2006), that there were godless people in Africa, Ludolf's mind began to generate associations with barbaric peoples 'without God, without King and law' (*sine Deo, sine Rege & lege*), nomadic, 'wild, naked,' with deformed lips. Ludolf was reminded of the Troglodytes about which he had read in the ancient Latin author Pliny: 'They dug caves which they used as houses, [...] they have no voice and only hiss.'

Ludolf continued: 'The Portuguese have the custom of calling these people *cafros*,' in other words: infidels. With this Ludolf was referring to not only the Xhosa, but also the coast-dwellers on the Red Sea and those African coast-dwellers who spoke Swahili, just as Pliny had already referred to those living on the coast and not in the inner highlands. But Gorgoryos had already named another concept in Ge'ez: ሻንቅላ (*shanjella*), which means something like 'negro' in a pejorative sense.<sup>13</sup> The Ethiopians did not refer to the coast-dwellers but rather to the people of inner Africa, in the West and Southwest of the highlands (Freeman, Pankhurst 2003). It is possible to see this on the maps (fig. 4) which Ludolf drew with the help of his African friend.<sup>14</sup>

We have arrived at a point at which we can use the over-extensions of early modern scholars to do something which always seems necessary to me in the context of a global, entangled history of ideas: namely to leave the narrative which until now informed the story of European-initiated contact with distant people, and to thus subvert and deconstruct this narrative. For until now our own narrative was a reconstruction of the globalizing endeavors of European travelers and linguists. Now we have the chance to leave this perspective and to pose different

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**13** Ludolf 1681, lib. I, cap. 14, §§ 51 ff.: 'Adhaec dantur barbari populi plurimi, sine Deo, sine Rege & lege, in arenosis atque desertis locis palantes: moribus linguisque diversi: nullas certas sedes, nisi quas nox cogit, habentes: feri: nudi, sima quoque nare et turgidis labris deformes: agriophagi: imo pamphagi: dracones enim, elephantos et quidquid occurrit, mandunt, sordissimi ac vilissimi mortalium: .... : Gregorius vocavit; eosque mihi, ut Plinius Troglodytas, descripsit. Nam specus excavant, quae illis domus sunt, victus serpentum carnes, stridorque non vox. Lusitani id genus hominum Cafros vocare solent, vocabulo ab Arabibus mutuato, qui Cafir, in plurali Cafiruna infideles seu incredulos vocant omnes eos, qui unum Deum negant.' See Plinius 1741, lib. V, cap. VIII (vol. I, 252). On the concept, see Smidt 2010.

**14** Ludolf: Map of Ethiopia, Senckenberg University Library, Frankfurt, Ms. Ff. Ludolf II 32 Fasc. E No. 3 Frankfurt. Ludolf corrected old maps of Ethiopia with the oral information given by Gorgoryos. The manuscript map was later printed in the *Historia aethiopica*.



Fig. 4

questions (fig. 5): What perceptions did the Africans have of each other? How did, for instance, the Ethiopians see the Bantu tribes? How far did this perception extend? Did it extend the full 4000 kilometers to the Kaffirs who are today called Xhosa? One can stretch this question in the dimension of time when one takes into account that the Khoisan people, to whom the Hottentots belonged, sometime between 3000 and 1000 years BCE already inhabited an area stretching into what is today Kenya, in other words close to Ethiopia. Meanwhile the Bantu, to whom the Xhosa belonged, expanded their territory southwards (Diamond 1997, 376–401; Ehret, Posnansky 1982). Such considerations are located on a far more fundamental level than the perspectives adopted by a history of ideas, but they give contours to the ethnological frame of reference with which we are concerned. Educated highland Ethiopians often still believe today that the old Ethiopia had knowledge of extended areas of Africa, which was certainly not the case. Even some southern regions which today belong to Ethiopia were unknown or only known from obscure rumors.<sup>15</sup> The perception does not always correspond to reality.

But the perception conditioned and gave contours to this reality just like the Biblical pre-conceptions, which even left their impression on the cartography. For example, because the Bible tells of one of the four rivers of Paradise, Gihon, ‘flowing around’ the land of Kush (Gen 2:10–14), and because since Flavius Josephus at the end of the first century CE the Gihon had been equated with the Nile (Scafi 2006), the maps produced by Ludolf with Gorgoryos’ help display

15 I am grateful to Wolbert Smidt for this information.

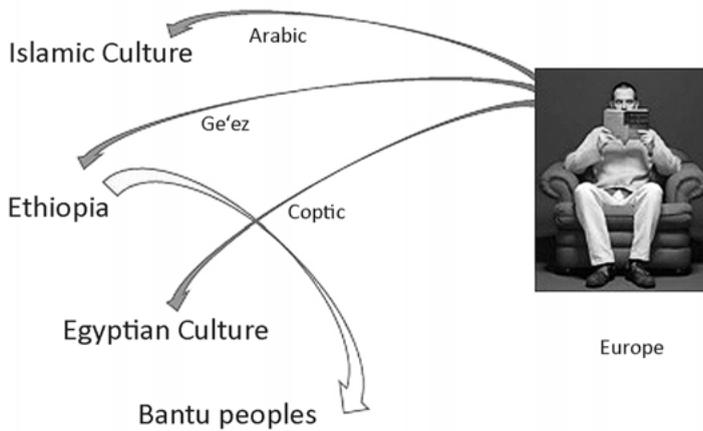


Fig. 5

the upper course of the Nile in the shape of a ring, even if the geographical reality looks totally different.

The European scholars extracted the word ‘infidel’ or ‘unbeliever’ out of the word Kaffir and were then anxious about the validity of their *consensus gentium*. In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries the ranks of these problematic peoples were joined by numerous others who Jakob Friedrich Reimmann assiduously listed in his *Historia universalis atheismi*: the Tupinamba Indians in Brazil, for example, who were regarded as cannibals, or numerous tribes of Canadian Indians (Reimmann 1725; on the Tupinamba, see Ginzburg 2012; Mahlke 2005). To the scholars, these were cultures in which the worship of some kind of idols was absent; instead there was simply a vacuum as far as religion was concerned. Nevertheless, the desire to investigate their languages remained. There was still a curiosity about how an ‘Our Father’ would sound in their languages, if they were to pray it.

## 6 *Consensus gentium*

Leibniz was loath to enter into the *question de fait* about whether there were atheistic peoples (Leibniz, *Nouveaux Essais*, against Fabricius 1682). But there was no shortage of scholars who insisted on dealing with the factual question of the *consensus gentium*. In this regard it is worth noting how Socinians (the antitrinitarian Christians) and Remonstrants (liberal Calvinists) were open to acknowledging exceptions to the *consensus*. This may have to do with the way

these streams of Christianity rejected a natural theology and recognized only divine revelation. For this reason they were receptive to travel reports which came to Europe from America, Africa, India or North Asia. They were joined by sceptics such as Pierre Bayle who in his *Pensees diverses* and especially in the latter's *Continuation* of 1704 enjoyed quoting travel reports in order to develop *ad absurdum* the argument of the consensus. Not only were there numerous exceptions, but the premise upon which the consensus-argument rested, namely that the beliefs of all peoples were true, tended to bestow upon all forms of magic and superstition the dignity of truth. In addition to this, one could see, according to Bayle, that the atheist peoples lived peacefully among themselves and alongside their neighbors and that they were not therefore moral monsters (Bayle 1704, vol. 3, §85). In this regard the Hottentots were also mentioned, as was then later the case in Voltaire's *Dictionnaire philosophique* [s.v.].

Bayle was not alone in the fun he had with this topic. Attacking the *consensus gentium* became a point of pride in particular for the authors of clandestine manuscripts (Schröder 1998, 203–208). Thus, the *Symbolum sapientiae*, a skeptical-atheist text produced sometime around 1690 in Germany declared: 'There are numerous peoples, numerous nations, which do not possess a bean of knowledge about God, for example the Kaffirs on the Cape of Africa' (Canziani, Schröder, Socas 2000, 237–238).

## 7 Light and shadow

The confessional dynamic in Europe, the battle between Catholics and Calvinists, Lutherans and Socinians fueled the globalization of knowledge and encouraged the interpretations, along with their over-extensions, to reach into the most distant villages of Amerindians. How did the orthodox theologians react to this situation? They had to preserve the *consensus gentium* and therefore they had to find some way to respond to the reports of exceptions (Barth 1971, 172–197). Some Lutherans tried to argue using the gradations implied by the metaphors of God's light and its diffusion: the light of the knowledge of the true God might have been weakened as it spread from the point of origin in the revelation given to the Hebrews. The result was that it was only dimly present in the deeper shades in which those in more distant parts of the globe lived. And yet – so the implication of this alternative model – the light in all its refractions remains present even in the deepest shadows. This is the line of argument adopted by those who did without natural theology and rather presumed a theory of diffusion as the light of revelation spread out from its origin. This was empirically more sophisticated, but it also aroused the special interest of those interested

in the affinities and the transmission of religions – in other words, the precursors to today’s study of religion. At this point the circle closes – we began with the fascination among scholars for exotic languages and scripts and have arrived at these proto-practitioners of a study of religion who – almost by force of logic – ended up developing an interest in exotic languages.

Among such linguistic acrobats numbered also Christian Hoffmann and Johann Ernst Gerhard in Jena. As a young man, Gerhard, the son of the famous theologian Johann Gerhard, undertook a journey for purposes of education to Holland and France, and a glance inside his *album amicorum* reveals the role foreign alphabets played in this experience.<sup>16</sup> In 1667, Hoffmann, with the active support of Gerhard, wrote an interesting book addressing issues in the history of religions: *Umbra in luce, sive consensus et dissensus religionum profanarum, Judaismi, Samaritanismi, Muhammedismi, Gingis-Chanismi, atque paganismi*.<sup>17</sup> The title page of this work presented – in keeping with the aforementioned cabinet in Halle – an exotic script, namely the Samaritan words *tlal benur* for ‘shadow in light.’

Hoffmann’s book is remarkable because it represents one of the earliest attempts to present all religions of the world. Within this frame Hoffmann attempted to replace the stark opposition of atheist and religious cultures with a complex interlocking of *consensus* and *dissensus*: for the religions of the world might display numerous differences to Christianity, but in essence they also possessed some similarities. For this reason the talk was not of light and shadow, but rather shadow in the light. ‘Shadow is the privation of light (*luminis*),’ according to Hoffmann, ‘but not in every respect.’ ‘The impenetrability of the body lying in-between,’ Hoffmann continued, ‘refuses to let the shining rays pass, but to the sides it disperses the rays that fall upon it. From this the sheen (*candor*) gives a weakened filial representation (*degenerem filiam*) – or the wayward daughter – in the middle.’<sup>18</sup> What is Hoffmann trying to say with this unusual model taken from optics?

It is obvious that Hoffmann is thinking of the phenomena of solar and lunar eclipses in which the light, in a manner of speaking, reaches around the intermediate body and weakly illuminates the area within what one calls the ‘penumbra’ (fig. 6). This area is to be distinguished from the umbra shadow or complete

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<sup>16</sup> In private possession. I am preparing an article on it.

<sup>17</sup> Gerhard, Hoffmann 1667. On the general discourse in which this book has to be situated, see Loop 2013; Stroumsa 2010.

<sup>18</sup> *Umbra in luce*, fol. B3r: ‘*Umbra privatio est Luminis; sed non omnimoda. Tenebrarum hoc Laudemium. Corporis interpositi opacitas nitentibus radiis transitum pernegat, ad latera tamen circumcirca tangents disjicit. Inde in medio sibi opposite degenerem filiam candor effigiat.*’

shadow which no rays of light are able to reach. Rather than the unrelieved darkness of a barren atheism there is an indirect illumination from God manifested in the varied forms of the tribute paid to him. This is the penumbra. Hoffmann goes on to say: 'In particular there is a crucial difference in the shadows. The dividing line separating the one from the other remains unexplored.'<sup>19</sup> A footnote points to 'the remarks made by Doctor Weigel on Pliny,' either an unpublished manuscript or notes taken in the lectures of Erhard Weigel, the colleague of Hoffmann and Gerhard in Jena. Among other things, Weigel was a specialist in optics and astronomy and in 1654 he undertook to map for the first time a solar eclipse and its trajectory upon the earth (Weigel 1654; Schielicke et al. 1999) (fig. 7). The circles mark in this manner the penumbra shadow of the moon while the axis which links the center of the circles marks the '*via umbrae lunae*' – the path of the total solar eclipse.

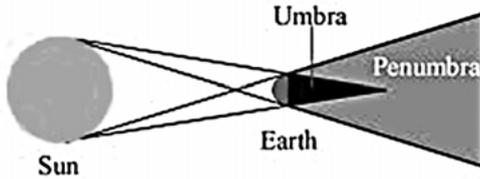


Fig. 6

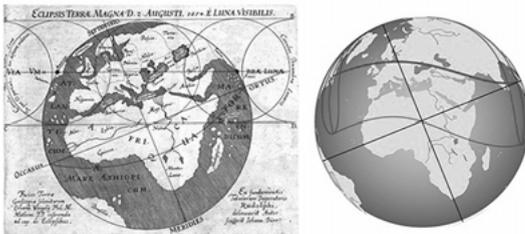


Fig. 7

<sup>19</sup> *Umbra in luce*, fol. B3r: 'Magna insuper umbrarum varietas. Terminus alius alio imperceptor.'

## 8 In the penumbra of globalization

In an analogy to this map one can understand Hoffmann and Gerhard's book as a cartography of the penumbra cast by the 'true religion' upon the whole earth. Is there a better metaphor for the globalization of religious studies? The connection of subjectivity and assertiveness in the form of daring over-extensions in scholarship (fig. 8)? We will see to what degree these over-extensions generated characteristic mistakes and projections. Rather than complete atheism, in Hoffmann and Gerhard's book the 'wayward daughters' of the Jewish-Christian revelation are detailed, with all their strange alphabets, languages and rituals. Hoffmann traces the slow degeneration of the revelation, beginning with the Samaritans who reject the Mosaic law and mix the Hebrew traditions with the cults of their ancestors to create a syncretism. For this reason the exotic Samaritan script adorns the title page and serves there as an emblem of the merger of light and shadow (*Umbra in luce, Antifixa*, §7).

In this undertaking Hoffmann did not ignore the problematic regions of his religious map, that is, those regions of the world which lay far from the light. And in this context they once more make their appearance: the Hottentots. They appear under the lemma of the '*deus triunus*' among the possible exceptions to those that had knowledge of this God. There, we read: 'Admittedly the power of natural judgment is so great, even among barbarian cultures, that they recognize against their will a higher nature which is to be worshipped in the highest. After they have conquered their enemies, they turn their eyes towards heaven. That He who guides and directs everything has His seat there, is something they silently acknowledge. Some call the Hottentots who live on the Cape of Good Hope wild animals. And Mandelslo claims that they recognize neither God nor the devil. Nevertheless they congregate at dusk, take each other's hands, perform songs and dances and raise their voices to heaven. In order to praise the creator of heaven and earth, in whom those who were asked said they believed, they made this noise.'<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> *Umbra in luce, De Deo triuno*, § 4: 'Sane tanta vis est naturalis iudicatorii, apud Barbarissimos etiam, ut superiorem aliquam naturam, maximeque venerabilem vel invite agnoscant. Adversis pressi oculos ad coelam attollebant. Moderatorem sc. Omnium ibi sedem fixisse, taciti subinuebant. Bestias dicas Nationem Hottendot, / quae Caput Bonae Spei occupat. Neque DEUM neque Diabolum nosse, Mandelslo asserit. Sub diluculum tamen conveniunt, minibus se invicem apprehendunt, choreas agitant, sonoque meleagridum gocitantium aemulo clamorem oelo tollunt. Causam ceremoniae vel Davus conjecerit. Creatorem Coeli et Terrae, in quem se credere ipsi interrogati confitentur, ululate isto celebrare forte satagunt.' On Mandelslo see Lanni 2003.

What is Hoffmann doing here? He suggests an implicit form of belief at work even among the allegedly atheist peoples such as the Hottentots by interpreting their rituals as an unstated worship of the divine. He draws upon the travel report provided by Johann Jakob Saar – with its repeated observations of exotic people’s behaviors and routines – to provide counter-evidence to the reports which were typically submitted, with their rather bald statements and conclusions.<sup>21</sup> Hoffmann goes beyond the statements and looks at the rituals to defend his thesis of the ‘penumbra’ – the shadow which is not completely dark, but suffused with a half-light – in the discussion about atheism. The need to hold fast to the *consensus gentium* gives rise to a different form of religious studies, one which also integrates behavior and rituals into the scope of its inquiry.

Furthermore, Hoffmann does not just take into account rituals, but also objects. Gerhard had shown him his collection of cultic artefacts which he had assembled partly as a result of connections with the Dutch East India Company. These objects, such as an Indonesian Kris-handle or shadow puppets, were inter-

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21 Saar 1672, 157–158: *‘Diese Heyden werden gemenet Hottendot, fast Ummenschen [...]. Man kann nicht wissen / was Ihre Religion sey: aber frühe / wann es Tag will werden / so kommen Sie zusamm / und halten einander bey den Händen / und tanzten / und schreyen auf Ihrer Sprach gegen den Himmel hinauf / daraus zu præsumiren / daß Sie doch von Gott einige Wissenschaft haben müssen / wie Sie dann einsmahls Selbst gesagt / als man nach Ihren Glauben fragte: Sie glauben an den / der alles erschaffen habe / Himmel / Erden / Meer / und alles / was auf Erden sey.’* Saar remarks in a footnote: *‘Es sagte zwar Herr von Mandelslo / und Jürgen Andersen / II. cc. Sie wissen weder von Gott / noch dem Teufel / fürchten Sich auch für nichts / als allein für Ihre grausame und schädliche Nachbaurn / die grossen Löwen / so allhier in grosser Anzahl sind / vor deren Einfall machen Sie des Nachts grosse Feuer um Ihre Läger herum. Es saget aber doch / neben dem seel. Reisenden / auch Herport / pag. 14. also: Ihre Religion oder Gottesdienst richten Sie nach der Sonnen / und den Mond / welche Sie verehren / und anbeten. Wann der Mond voll / oder neu / ist / so sind Sie die gantze Nacht beyeinander an dem Ufer des Meers / machen grosse Feuer / und tanzten darum mit einem grossem Geschrey / neben Ihren vielfältigen Spielen / mit Trummeln / und andern Instrumenten. Obbemelter Dapper gehet auch dahin. Es scheint / schreibt Er / I. c. p. m. 627. daß Sie einigen Aberglauben an den aufgehenden neuen Mond haben. Dann wann dieser zu erst gesehen wird / kommen Sie gemeiniglich Hauffen-weiß zugelauffen / und bringen die gantze Nacht mit grossen Gejauchze / mit Tantzen / Springen / und Singen / zu / dabey Sie auch in die Hände klopfen / und etliche Wort hermurmeln. Bey dieser Freude haben Sie gemeiniglich einen Topf mit einem Fell steif überzogen / fast auf dieselbe Weise / wie die so genannten Rummel-Töpfe bey den Faßnacht-Spielen in Holland. Darauf schlagen Sie mit der Hand ohn Unterlaß. Neben diesen Spiel-Zeug haben Sie noch ein anderes / als ein Bogen gestaltet / mit einer Seite / und einer gespaltenen Feder-Spuhle / an dem einem Ende. Darauf blasen Sie / und es gibt einen Klang ohne Streichstock oder Fiderbogen / wiewohl Er nicht stark ist / ob Sie schon Ihren Athem stark genug ausblasen / und wieder einholen. Ja / man sihet auch zuweilen / daß die Frauen / und Kinder / vor aufgerichteten Steinen / niderknyen / und Sich neigen.’*

preted as dim, diluted reflections of Christian dogma, in this case the dogma relating to the devil. Such ‘things of knowledge’ are inevitably central points of orientation for a globalized history of ideas, particularly when it comes to religion, and here the over-extensions become manifest: while on Java shadow puppets generally represent nobles from the old Indian epics, Hoffmann and Gerhard’s intentional striving projected onto them the near Eastern devil.<sup>22</sup>

This makes clear the degree to which Hoffmann and Gerhard’s undertaking was a subtle attempt at rescuing the *consensus gentium*: an attempt which, contrary to their intentions, led them into entirely different fields of study and inspired all kinds of wild speculations about the spread and transmission of culture, where recourse was sought in the thought of Athanasius Kircher, who himself was no stranger to wild speculation.

## 9 Summary

Let me attempt a short summary. A global history of ideas which treats the European early modern period (sixteenth to eighteenth centuries CE) as a period of over-extensions needs to examine the motive forces which generated these over-extensions. In contrast to the standard form of global history this form of history will not focus so much on the explorers, merchants and missionaries who embarked from Europe on their journeys around the world, but rather on the armchair-travelers who as linguists and theologians remained at home while interpreting the travel reports and linguistic discoveries. In this regard we can discern apologetic motives which, fueled by confessional disputes, extended the reach of the interpretations into the huts of the most distant native tribes. The more exotic and the greater the deviation from the norm, the more interesting. A casuistry of religious ethnography arose, along with a cartography of religious deviation, with, as we have seen, Hoffmann and Gerhard borrowing from the diagrams for solar eclipses. Finally the need to explain away godlessness brought forth an attentiveness to rituals and objects and as such a new level of sophistication within the study of religion.

It was left to the French philosopher Voltaire to swap the places of highest and lowest, when he turned the condescension of the Europeans towards the Hottentots on its head. In his *Philosophie de l’histoire* he wrote in the chapter about the ‘savages’: ‘First one has to admit that the indigenous people of Canada, and the Kaffirs, which we took the liberty of calling savages, are far outdone

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<sup>22</sup> I am preparing a publication on this topic with Paola von Wyss-Giacosa, Zurich.

by our own savages [in Europe]. The Hurons, the Algonquins, the Illinois, the Kaf-firs, the Hottentots, all possess the art of completely fulfilling their own needs, which is something our own people do not understand. The tribes in America and Africa are made up of free people; our savages do not possess the first inking of a concept of freedom' (Voltaire 1963 [1756], 23; cf. Ginzburg 2001).

In the eighteenth century Voltaire managed to criticize the European situation by adopting the viewpoint of standing on the outside looking in. He was concerned with freedom in Europe and in this regard the comparison with the Hottentots was simply clever rhetoric. For us, however, Voltaire's reversal of perspective can serve to stimulate a modern entangled history: not only the European narratives count, and this qualification applies equally to the history of ideas. Rather these narratives need to be complemented by new, unusual questions, which can dock onto specific points in our story but then open up new unexplored paths. I have only been able to intimate that with regard to the Ethiopians and the Kaffirs. This is, however, the direction which our own map, re-configured by a new awareness of the globalization process, tells us we need to follow.

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# Narrating, Performing and Feeling a 'Religion': On Representations of Judaism

**Abstract:** This article aims to use Judaism as a privileged case to discuss how religious representations were produced, circulated, and influenced Jewry against the backdrop of a rising modernization during the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Furthermore, I claim that representations of Judaism were not exclusively produced by cultural agents, such as scholars and intellectuals, but they were performed into a wider cultural and political arena where they were appropriated or misunderstood, creating communities, or fueling debates over society. I claim that, despite its limited demographic dimensions, Judaism, its history and symbolism, became a point of departure to discuss issues related to modern society and religion at large.

**Keywords:** Modernity, urbanism, Judaism, messianism, prophetism, Semitism, nostalgia, Orientalism, performance, science, diaspora

## 1 The un-binding of Prometheus: science and Judaism

The period between the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was characterized by extraordinary creativity in terms of analytical tools and methodology applied to culture, society, and religion. New disciplines were founded, although the boundaries between them were not strictly defined, and all of them, from anthropology to sociology, from psychology to comparative philology, were involved in the analysis of the 'religious fact', which in turn required a definition of religion.<sup>1</sup>

In those times, scholars were giants whose *mythopoiesis* was parallel to the creation of ancient mythological narratives, as Karoly Kerényi stressed when writing about Sigmund Freud's *Totem and Taboo*.<sup>2</sup> The 'un-bound of Prometheus' (Landes 1969) unleashed a bounty of creativity, a positive attitude toward worldly activities, providing a whole new set of concepts with which to map the social and symbolical realms: the one inhabited by humans and the other inhab-

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1 A definition in Azria, Hervieu-Léger, 2010.

2 Kerényi in Freud, Italian version, 1969; Facchini 2008.

ited by the gods. Many intellectuals claimed that religion was doomed, due to the difficulties that religious communities were facing in coping with a society that was changing rapidly because of industrialization and modernization. Nevertheless, religion still attracted deep interest among scholars, reformers, and politicians.

'Science' – wrote Stefan Zweig, a famous Austrian Jewish writer – 'was the archangel of progress'<sup>3</sup> and accordingly, this was the period when 'scientification of religion' produced many accounts and descriptions of Judaism that played relevant roles in the public domain.<sup>4</sup>

Judaism may be an appropriate case-study to describe the transformation that religion underwent in the modern period, especially if the scholar is able to link the realm of discourses and representations to the realm of social reality. This article aims to use Judaism as a case-study to discuss how religious representations were produced, circulated, and influenced Jewry against the backdrop of a rising modernization. More specifically I claim that, despite its demographic irrelevance, Judaism, its history and symbolism, became a point of departure to discuss issues related to modern society and religion at large.

The attempt to reconstruct Judaism as a 'modern religion' implies an understanding of the social and cultural context of the time, which usually leads to notions of modernity and 'secularization'. If modernity is difficult to define properly, 'secularization' is definitely an inaccurate notion for the period in question, and scholars are increasingly questioning it.<sup>5</sup> However, modernization is a notion that addresses the Jews with special relevance. If modernity is, in the words of Yuri Slezkine, 'about everyone becoming urban, mobile, literate, articulate, intellectually intricate, physically fastidious, and occupationally flexible', and 'about learning to cultivate people and symbols', then it is undoubtedly true that Jews were fully involved in those processes (Slezkine 2004).

As Jewish social success in the modern period increasingly became more visible and measureable, intellectuals started to ask whether it was linked to religion. Observing the social and economic performances of Catholic minorities – or more broadly of nations that had a strong Catholic tradition, as in the case of

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3 Zweig 1942, 'Fewer cripples and maimed and persons with goiters were seen on the streets, and all of these miracles were accomplished by science, the archangel of progress. Progress was also made in social matters; years after years new rights were accorded to the individual, justice was administered more benignly and humanely, and even the problem of problems, the poverty of the great masses, no longer seemed insurmountable.'

4 For the term scientification, von Stuckrad 2014.

5 Martin 1979; Bremmer 2008; Asad 2003; Pérez-Agote 2013.

Italy or Spain – led to the inference that religion influenced social behavior and economic performance (Ferrari Zumbini 2001).

As Slezkine aptly argued, representations of Judaism varied as a positive or negative image was attached to modernity. In other words, if the critic's outlook on the modern world was positive, then the Jewish achievement was celebrated. If, on the other hand, the critic feared modernity, as in the case of Houston Stewart Chamberlain or Werner Sombart, Judaism was seen as strange and dangerous. Thorstein Veblen, the American sociologist, attributed Jewish preeminence not to Jewish tradition, but precisely to its radical rejection (Veblen 1919). Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu – the French intellectual who so deeply loved American democracy – stressed, in a famous book against anti-Semitism, that modernity was not created by Jews, but that Jews, by virtue of the rejection of their religious identity, became its best practitioners. He insisted that modernity started, in fact, with Christians of varying beliefs, and therefore the modern world was the outcome of Christian culture (Facchini 2010).

In the case of Judaism, the modern period is of great interest because Jewish society, more than other cultures, faced extraordinary challenges. Moreover, what especially fascinates about this period is that the diversity of the Jewish diaspora, a critical attitude toward tradition, and modernization all contributed to the diffusion of a wealth of images of Judaism, ranging from negative to positive, which often entangled with other cultural and political issues. To write about Judaism keeping in mind all those entanglements is a fascinating – and yet difficult – task.

But what shall we say about Judaism, the religion that had somehow contributed to tying together Jews since the destruction of the second temple, as the core master narrative would claim? Is it a religion, first of all? If yes, is it a viable religion to face the rise of the modern world? Is this religion able to cope with the challenges of this new world? These were some of the questions debated among scholars, religious leaders, philosophers, and intellectuals. Quite often the debate involved Christians as well.

Where do I start if I want to offer a representation of Judaism in the modern age? Shall I start from the 'community', following Durkheim's idea that a religious system, among other things, is defined by the presence of a community (Durkheim 1912)? That is actually very relevant as, in fact, Judaism may be represented without Jews, being such a rhetorical and symbolical trope of Christianity (Nirenberg 2013). But let us say that we decide to begin with the concept of community, what kind of community do we search for? How do we locate the group that contributed to the making of Judaism? Was the definition drawn

from the *Halakhah* sufficient, in the modern age, to define membership?<sup>6</sup> And then, are Jews necessarily tied to religion? What kind of religion? And if not, who then are they? Are they Jews or are they something different once they leave religion or a traditional way of life?<sup>7</sup>

All these questions are of great relevance, especially against the backdrop of modernization. Although it is undeniable that group formation in earlier periods was more complex than is usually thought, in modern times options for membership varied to an extent that was previously unknown. ‘Who is a Jew?’ is one of those questions that haunted modern society, Jews and Gentiles alike.<sup>8</sup> Needless to say that, as happened for other religious groups, Jews were often defined by non-Jews, and especially by the legislation according to which they negotiated their corporate and individual lives. Membership in Judaism was not therefore just a matter of rabbinic law, as notions of peoplehood, nationhood, religion and, last but not least, race were defined and questioned in different areas of the Diaspora world.

However, if we try to visualize what Jews may have looked like at the turn of the nineteenth century, it is better to think of some images, which may capture the perception of the plausible community.

## 2 A cultural geography of Judaism

We could take several photographs that capture the overarching world of Jewish Diaspora. Together with Sigmund Freud and Émile Durkheim, who despite their commitment to modern society never left their own communities, we could choose among dozens of bourgeois middle class intellectuals or professionals who actively toiled within and integrated into their societies. We might select family photographs depicting Jews in their traditional attire. Their garments betrayed their social class and the local culture: we could observe women and men

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<sup>6</sup> Traditional Jewish life was ruled by the authority of *halakhah*, rabbinic law, which depended on the recognition of the host society. During the nineteenth century, the process of political emancipation slowly eroded rabbinic law, leaving ample areas of civic law to be ruled by the law of the state. Many conflicts arose as far as concerned norms relating to marriage, inheritance, and so forth. These questions opened up an interesting debate. For some discussion: Katz 1973; Berkovitz 2004. The literature on emancipation and assimilation is plenty.

<sup>7</sup> Endelman 2015.

<sup>8</sup> David Ben Gurion launched an international debate when in 1952 he asked ‘Who is a Jew?’. Criteria were then different from the ones in the nineteenth century, because they were defined by the organization of the state of Israel.

in Moroccan or Turkish outfit together with Jews portrayed in the American Far West. We would have to notice, alongside the deployment of wealth and status, pictures of tremendous poverty, which may be gathered from the villages in the Pale of Settlement to the peddlers in New York.<sup>9</sup> We would encounter, following such travelers' reports as Joseph Roth's *Juden* or Albert Londres' *Le Juif errant*,<sup>10</sup> poverty stricken Hasidic Jews living isolated in the mountains of Ruthenia, or fierce Mountain Jews of the Caucasus. On the roadway to Asia we would encounter Chinese and Indian Jews.<sup>11</sup>

If we could travel back in time and send a questionnaire inquiring about religious experience, more or less as William James did in his path breaking research on the 'varieties of the religious experience',<sup>12</sup> we would find shared common practices and beliefs, but also differences from place to place. Some Jews would have expressed attachment and devotion to rabbinical Judaism as it kept its authority over the community, and especially to norms and rituals. Others would have emphasized their rejection of traditional faith in order to enjoy fully the pleasures of urban culture and modernity. Still others would have converted to different religions, and not necessarily, as Heinrich Heine stressed, 'as the entry ticket to Christian society' (Bauman 1988; Mendes Flohr, Reinhartz 2010). Then as well, we would have encountered personal interpretations of religion and Judaism. Some Jews would even have developed theories about its deep historical role in the great narrative of humankind's development. Maybe we would face some significant differences along the gender divide.<sup>13</sup>

From Odessa to Berlin, from Florence to Paris, from London to New York, from Tesseloniki and Alexandria to the villages of the Pale of Settlement, Jews, women and men, would know they were Jewish, but would also be involved and partake in the social and cultural life of their society, at times with very different agendas (Facchini 2011). Herein, I try to highlight how being Jewish entailed a number of different allegiances, and even if it implied a certain degree of attachment to traditional religious values, it also entailed a certain amount of criticism or rejection of traditional lifestyles.

Furthermore, being Jewish and being religious became, in the course of time, increasingly disconnected, as the notion of religion itself was never stable, and its definition clearly influenced the politics of religious identity. The features of

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<sup>9</sup> For pictures of American Jewish life see: <http://access.cjh.org>

<sup>10</sup> Roth 1927; Londres 1930.

<sup>11</sup> The controversy about Chinese Jewry was inaugurated by the Jesuits: Davidson Kalmar, Penlar 2004; for Indian Jews see Katz 2013.

<sup>12</sup> James 1902.

<sup>13</sup> On Judaism and women see Baskin 1998; Kaplan 1991; Hyman 1995; Salah 2015.

Judaism were therefore changing, and the whole of the Jewish world never agreed upon one single shared interpretation of what Judaism was and was going to become.

If we look at the geography of the Jewish diaspora, three over-arching issues shall be outlined. The first issue refers to the host society. In the nineteenth century most Jews dwelled in culturally Christian-driven areas, albeit under different ‘regimes of religious toleration’ – among which, the rising national state (Walzer 1999). Their settlements were placed in the midst of three multi-religious and multi-national empires: the Russian, the Habsburg, and the Ottoman. The partitioning of Poland provoked the incorporation of densely populated Jewish areas both in the Habsburg and the Russian empires. Enforced Russification and religious conflict became two recurrent issues in some areas of Eastern Europe.<sup>14</sup>

Jews also constituted a part of Muslim societies, where they represented a minority under Ottoman rule and other Muslim cultures, as in Morocco. The history of Judaism in these societies has been overlooked, although it should be properly investigated for our purpose. The religious features of ‘Sephardic Judaism’, at least the variety that blossomed in Muslim societies, were influenced by some regional elements, namely special local traditions and policies of modernization. Alongside the main Jewish ritual practices tied to life cycles and shared public liturgy, other rituals were created, some of which bear similarities to local Muslim traditions or to the development of certain beliefs, which were spread also in other areas, like the fear of evil spirits (*dybbuks*) or the cult of charismatic leaders.<sup>15</sup>

The second over-arching issue, to which we may only briefly refer, relates to ‘modernizing agencies,’ which were also interconnected with the rise of nationalism. As the reader would imagine, this certainly makes our picture extremely complex. Who were those interested in modernizing Jews from Muslim countries? What exactly did it imply to become an Ottoman or a Moroccan Jew? How did the Jewish elite appropriate modernizing ideologies? In this very case, a different world-view coalesced, as German, French, and British Jewish agencies mingled with these communities, providing educational programs and expertise. The *Alliance israélite universelle* was just one of the most influential agencies to exert its influence in many Mediterranean countries.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Frankel 1981; Frankel 1997; Frankel 2009.

<sup>15</sup> I give general references to the history of Jews in Arab lands or Muslim countries: Bashkin 2012; Marglin 2014; Cohen 2014; Cohen, Abrevayeva 2014; Abecassis, Direche, Aouad 2012; Levy 2011; Miccoli 2011; Schreier 2010.

<sup>16</sup> Harrus 2001; Rodrigue 2003; Kaspi 2010.

This rough map of the Jewish diaspora aims at highlighting the question of political rights and emancipation, along with the subsequent public discussion about 'religion' which was, with the exception of the Habsburg empire, conducted in countries like France, England or Germany, not to mention Italy, all of which hosted very small communities. In order to reduce the level of ethnocentrism, which has characterized the debate on Judaism and modernity, and leaving aside the scholarly research on the era of political emancipation, it is worth mentioning that, as far as Jews and Judaism in Muslim countries is concerned, representations of religion were pivotal in guiding the path to modernization or its rejection. One story evokes this quite clearly. In his book *In an Antique Land*, the renowned writer Amitav Ghosh narrates the story of the discovery of the Cairo Genizah, recalling how Solomon Schechter, the great British Jewish Hebraist born into a Hasidic family from Romania and who eventually became one of founders of Conservative Judaism in America, felt uncomfortable with Egyptian Jewry while trying to disclose the complex reality of their medieval history (Ghosh 1992). Whilst Jewish elites in Muslim countries modernized as much as their European counterparts, the rest of the community remained a sort of Orientalized other, whose voices were never fully acknowledged. Moreover, the past of medieval Jews in the Muslim world became increasingly idealized as a model for modernity.<sup>17</sup>

I shall return to the question of the 'inner Orient', which was embedded in many Jewish trajectories of the time, and was accordingly rejected, romanticized, and/or appropriated. What I shall stress now is the fact that these communities were part of a system of representations, which entered the scholarly imagination and the modernizing policies of their society. These images contributed to nurturing the debate over religion and ethnicity, or religion and nationalism, and of course, religion and modernity. Furthermore, the rise of Zionism would contribute to making the picture even more complex, although we will not touch upon it.

The geography of Judaism discloses another structural element of Jewish society: migration and, inevitably, mobility. Subsequent to the disruptive effects of the aftermath of the Spanish expulsion (1492), which caused a remarkable number of Jews and new Christians to leave and search for better settlements, the Jewish diaspora began stabilizing (Israel 2002). In the nineteenth century, however, the Jewish diaspora underwent a second major wave of migration, mainly

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<sup>17</sup> Jewish philosophy in Medieval Muslim culture became a model for rational religion. Works on Maimonides and other medieval philosophers occupied especially German *Wissenschaft des Judentums*: Seidler 2007; Hughes 2010; Hughes 2014. Interesting, at least for the American reception, the works of Leo Strauss 2013.

due to poverty, religious persecution, and political oppression. Migration is a key issue for the understanding of Judaism in this period because Jews had to relocate in different cultures and therefore translate their religious heritage into a different context. The first and most relevant wave of migrants until the 1920s moved to North America, where they created forms of Judaism that suited or could integrate into that society, while minor waves were directed to South America and Palestine, the latter under the Ottoman rule and then the British mandate.

As historians have recently suggested, a huge migration wave was directed toward the cities of the Russian empire and later to the Soviet Union.<sup>18</sup> As one should just imagine, this part of the Jewish diaspora, as much as part of their Christian counterpart, was destined to ‘kill religion’, especially everything that was connected with the world of tradition. However, the murder of religion proved to be a complicated attempt and, as we shall see, it was exactly from this world that Jews reinterpreted part of their traditional heritage through means of new media, such as literature, cinema, or photography. In order to understand how religious representations were produced and how we shall represent Judaism in the age of modernity, the relationship between religion and migration is a key element.<sup>19</sup>

A final issue we must mention, which is related to the alleged consequences of modernization and migration, that is ‘urbanization’. Judaism was a relatively urban religion even in the early modern period, although in Eastern Europe the village was the most typical form of settlement. In Muslim countries as well, Jewish quarters, known under the name *mellah*, were generally at the center of the city, although it is undeniable that other forms of settlement in non-urban contexts also existed.

From the nineteenth century on, the impact of urbanization, both westward and eastward, was extremely dramatic. Millions of people left Southern and Eastern Europe for the New World – leaving behind violence and poverty but also families and social relationships. They entered a web of different relations, which had begun with the journey from their native lands and ended with their arrival in their new homes. Religion was a cultural element that had to be addressed once the immigrant reached the new country. Although immigrants were often politically engaged with modern parties or secular ideologies, especially the ones who had joined socialist and anarchist groups in their home-

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<sup>18</sup> Slezkine 2004; Bemporad 2013; Veidlinger 2009; Veidlinger 2016.

<sup>19</sup> For American Jewish history and religion see Sarna 1997; Diner 1992; Howe 1976; Soyfer 1997.

lands, 'religion' remained one of the many features that contributed to their social integration. Therefore, the 'translation' of Judaism into the cultural language of the host society was one of the most important tasks that Jewish leaders and intellectuals endeavored to complete in any possible context, particularly in the emerging metropolises of the new world.

### 3 The White City: exhibiting religions

In order to grasp the relevance of the urban character of the period I would like to turn to one very relevant event for the understanding of my article. In 1893 the city of Chicago hosted quite a symbolical event. Alongside the 'World's Columbian Exposition' the emerging industrial metropolis organized the first 'World's Parliament of Religions', offering which might be called the first ecumenical ingathering of representatives of different religious traditions.<sup>20</sup> What made the event striking was the public visibility of religions, which were known only to a fairly small number of scholars. Although Protestants were in the majority, a significant number of representatives of different religions attended. Three eminent rabbis and scholars represented Judaism: Emil Hirsch and Kaufman Kohler, supporters of the newborn Reform Judaism that had originated in Germany at the beginning of nineteenth century, and H. Pereira Mendes of the more conservative Sephardi synagogue of New York.<sup>21</sup>

Precisely due to its millenarian flavor, the Fair and its Parliament of Religions are ideal contexts to catch the atmosphere of the time. The context of the Fair deployed both the global discourse on religion and the superiority of Christianity, whilst downplaying the most disruptive phenomena of the time, colonialism and racism.

Before I develop a bit on the relationship between fairs and religion, it is useful to ask how Judaism was turned into a 'world religion', given its demographic irrelevance and its historical aversion to missionary work.<sup>22</sup> Tomoko Ma-

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<sup>20</sup> Burg 1976; Badger 1979; Appelbaum 1980.

<sup>21</sup> Lévy Kaufmann Kohler (1843–1926) and Emil Hirsch (1851–1923) were architects of Reform Judaism in America, and they were committed to the cause of the modernization of Jewry, which to them meant acculturation and Americanization. They were also important theologians, whose works we cannot analyze here. Meyer 1995; De Lange 2000; Facchini 2008; Cohen 2008; Langton 2010.

<sup>22</sup> See Eisenstadt's remark on this issue, which draws from the genetics of monotheistic taxonomy. For Eisenstadt what characterizes Judaism as a civilization is its being part of the axial age cultures, and the bearer of both a universal and particular religious worldview. Eisenstadt 2003.

suzawa has attempted in part to explain this scholarly enterprise, although its history deserves more detailed research and a methodological reassessment (Masuzawa 2005). What is more relevant, going beyond taxonomies that do not necessarily work in every context, one should be reminded that Judaism was also defined by features quite opposite to the notion of a ‘world religion’, since it was described as an archaic fossil, a remnant of a deluded past, a racial and racist religion, or as a religion unable to create any sort of civilization; last but not least, it was often described as a criminal religion.<sup>23</sup>

These images were partly derived from the interaction between discourses on religion stemming from the realm of scholarly research – yet, not necessarily institutionalized within academia – and the heritage of a polemical attitude nurtured by Christian traditions and its ingrained supersessionism.<sup>24</sup>

Be that as it may, at the Columbian Exposition, representatives of different religious traditions emphasized the greatness of their faiths. World Fairs were one of the most important types of social and cultural gathering of the second half of nineteenth century, and they continued to be quite relevant public events well into the twentieth century. From them, we do know what representatives of different religions claimed and wrote, how they presented their religious traditions, and what they wanted to achieve, as scholars and leaders of religious communities.

The functioning of the World Fairs offers an unusual and yet privileged point of departure in order to assess how religion and modernity may be approached because the World Fairs displayed and narrated, among other things, a certain story about religion and modern society. In the case of the Chicago Exhibition, for example, one could underline *two narratives*. The first one derives from what representatives of different traditions narrated within the framework of a ‘world parliament’. Historians have observed that each representative – Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, Jains and so forth – voiced certain features of his/her religious tradition, which drew from a shared set of notions and some sort of modern knowledge. Although they were selected to fulfill the political and cultural agenda of the Exhibition, it is worth saying that they also voiced their own agendas. Catholics and Jews felt the necessity to prove they were as modern as Prot-

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<sup>23</sup> I especially think of the spread and dissemination of ‘blood libel’ charges that greatly increased in the nineteenth century. Bibliography is vast. I refer mainly to Lindemann 1991; Frankel 1997; Walser Smith 2002; Biale 2008; Weinberg 2014; Levin 2014; Zweig 1915.

<sup>24</sup> Supersessionism or replacement theology is a contested notion that describes a theological doctrine, created among some of the early Church fathers, according to which the *verus Israel* was the Church, and the Jews were to be considered remnants of the old covenant, unable to understand their own Scriptures. Bori 1983; Fredericksen 2008; Tapie 2014; Simon 1983.

estants, whereas Asians, despite their differences, aimed at unity, which was meant to express, *vis-à-vis* the Protestant sense of universalism and cultural superiority, a similar grand narrative of Oriental religious traditions (Kittelstrom 2009). The experiment of early ecumenism made it possible for each one of them to set forth a certain seminal role of each tradition: for instance, Jews stressed the universal and social agenda of Judaism, and Swami Vivekananda's opening address highlighted how the noblest and most ancient tradition of religious tolerance was grounded in Hinduism.<sup>25</sup>

Out of the context of the World Fairs there is another narrative I want to pinpoint, which is related to the visual and material narration of religion, and which seems to prefer the language of nostalgia or tradition, even when it selected modern means of communication. As Richard Cohen has indicated, the World Exhibition (*Exposition universelle*) held in Paris in 1878 not only featured an exhibition of the first collection of Judaica (sacred objects) – opening up the notion of 'Jewish art' – but it also conveyed a feeling of 'nostalgia' for the 'ghetto' (Cohen 1998). Jewish ritual objects, which in the previous centuries were part of a visual narrative related to the written word, were now exhibited as a testimony of a vanishing world, the world of the fathers. The same rationale inspired the Anglo-Jewish exhibition held in London in 1887, and to an extent the exhibit of American Indian ritual art in Chicago in 1893.

Representations of religion were produced, exhibited, and sometimes performed. Religious images and images of religion were not just part of a discursive endeavor, they were meant to capture religious life as it was, even when it faded away. They displayed nostalgia, and yet they portrayed and exhibited the richness of religious experiences.

## 4 Performing religion

In this chapter I will provide some examples of how scholarly analyses of religious beliefs had a second life, as in fact they could be performed through appropriation and adaptations using other media, such as theatre plays, opera, fictional narrative, visual art. Religious notions that were analyzed by scholars and intellectuals were also performed in the public arena, once they were used within a specific political and religious agenda.

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<sup>25</sup> Swami Vivekananda was an Indian guru who became famous around Europe and America after the Chicago World Fair. He paved the way to the appreciation of Indian philosophy and religion in the West, stressing the superiority of Asian spirituality. Flood 1996.

Prophetism, messianism, and the notion of ‘Semites’ were the creation of scholarly discourse on religion.<sup>26</sup> The first two themes are both ancient and modern, meaning that they do have a long history, which is linked to the polemics of religious confrontation. The third one is a sheer invention of modern scholarship, as in fact the notion of the ‘Semites’ is much indebted to comparative linguistics, one of the most powerful hermeneutical and methodological enterprises of the nineteenth century.<sup>27</sup>

#### 4.1 Prophecy

Prophecy was a key concept in nineteenth century scholarship. The work of exegetes and biblical scholars on prophecy, especially in Germany and the Netherlands, greatly contributed to a new insight into biblical texts, while conceptualizing different modes of religious experience that would roughly coincide with national, universal and sectarian forms of religion (Kuenen 1882). The results of the most outstanding research were appropriated and accordingly reinterpreted in other countries. Both Jewish and Catholic reception was cautious, not to say suspicious. By the beginning of the twentieth century ‘ethical prophecy’ became a classical topic of the sociology of religion (Weber 1922 and 1963).

However, I shall highlight how research on the meaning of biblical prophecy was not exclusively discussed within the borders of academia; in fact, it was also performed by religious leaders, social reformers, and political activists.

Exploiting the teaching of the prophets, I.N. Mannheimer, a Jewish German rabbi who sympathized with religious reform, preached about justice and freedom during the German Revolution of 1847/48.<sup>28</sup> Freedom and social justice were the key notions through which biblical prophecy was given new meaning and strength.<sup>29</sup> Prophecy afforded a more appropriate means of communication, a more effective and *affective* way to reach the public. For example, a theatre play, *The prophet (Il profeta 1866)*, written by the Italian Jewish politician David Levi, entered the public arena of patriotism. Now forgotten, this theatre play received positive responses and was considered, by literary critics of his

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**26** We lack a systematic genealogy of these notions and concepts. For modern scholarship see Scholem 1971; for a critical appraisal, Wasserstrom 1999.

**27** It constituted a contested notion since its invention: see Leroy-Beaulieu 1894; Oesterreicher 1941 (a theological perspective); Poliakov <sup>2</sup>1991; Olender 1989; Olender 2009; Anijdar 2008.

**28** Meyer 1995; Miller 2011.

**29** Facchini 2014.

time, one of the most sublime examples of Jewish 'national literature' (Facchini 2005; Grazi 2015).

In those years in France, Joseph Salvador and Ernest Renan confronted each other over the role prophecy would eventually play for the future of the universal religion of humankind (Facchini 2005). Where was the 'religion of humanity' to be located? Should it be rooted in the Bible or should it be located elsewhere? If it were to be located in the Bible, where exactly? Did it dwell among the Jews, or among the Christians?

Furthermore, the teachings of the prophets were to be encoded in the 'Pittsburg Platform' of 1885, which inaugurated the social life of the Reform Movement in Judaism in the United States (Meyer 1995; Sarna 2005). Its role was destined to increase in defining Jewish ethics for the modern world. Prophecy coped with the language of social conflict and it accordingly offered a template to link tradition and modern problems, which were visible through the impact of industrial capitalism. Social reformers were by no means godless men and women. They, in fact, called for the implementation of the word of God, and offered alternative discourses *vis-à-vis* socialist and communist movements. A concern for social justice drawn from biblical prophets would easily overlap with images of Jewish suffering, which became also tangible through emigration, when the *Ostjuden* flocked to European metropolises. One lyrical example is sound: in the 1930s, in the midst of rabid anti-Semitism, the French Catholic Charles Peguy claimed that he saw the faces of the prophets and their suffering among the Jewish immigrants who lived in Paris (Pierrard 1997; Aronowicz 1998).

## 4.2 Messianism

For the time being disregarding its polemical genealogy, we can turn to debates on Messianism as they intertwined between scholarly, religious, and political realms. As a polemical key concept that could be politically charged, Jewish messianism was handled with caution especially because it conveyed the idea of 'dual loyalty', referring to the restoration of a Jewish kingdom. Would the Jews be loyal citizens if they still waited for the restoration of the ancient kingdom?

In the nineteenth century, especially the Jews of Western Europe were eager to reformulate the notion of religious messianism in order to reconstruct a Jewish community within the borders of the hosting country which was their national home. In order to pursue such a political goal, it was necessary to revise prayer books and ritual practice. It was also indispensable, in order to reassure the host society, to demonstrate that the history of the 'messianic idea' was more compli-

cated than imagined. Philology and history would eventually prove it (Scholem 1971; Goldish 2004).

The conflict over the interpretation of the messianic idea took place, once again, between Jews who held different notions of religion, and between Jews and Christians. Yosef Klausner, whose portrait appears in Amoz Oz's novel titled *A Tale of Love and Darkness* (Oz 2005), was right when he remarked that none but one scholar before him had extensively analyzed the history of the notion of messianism (Klausner 1955). That scholar was the Italian David Castelli, whose work was published in 1873. Castelli's book reconstructed different trends of Jewish messianism, offering a nuanced and complex depiction of a very critical concept to a broader audience of Jews and Gentiles. It is no wonder that Klausner, who was a committed Zionist and a scholar of ancient Judaism and the historical Jesus, appreciated the scholarly achievements while expressing a strong criticism toward the 'cosmopolitan ideology' which, according to him, permeated the whole work (Facchini 2005). I cannot illustrate further the European debate over these issues,<sup>30</sup> but I wish to stress at least two elements. The first one refers to a more general European trend to de-politicize traditional religions. A similar pressure to redefine the relationship between the political and the spiritual was exerted towards the Catholic Church as well, against a background of the rise of the national state.<sup>31</sup> Commitment to patriotic values and love for the land seem to prefer religious communities whose religion would be *spiritual* and universal. The relationship between nationalism and religion proved to be much more complicated: on the one hand, secular patriotism kept incorporating religious and Christian symbolism, and on the other hand, religious groups attempted to regain political power.

The second element related to notions of messianism in the nineteenth century refers to its reconfiguration in terms of a redemptive language associated with the myth of progress that very soon was used for the political enterprise of Zionism, and also reinterpreted as a key idea of nationalism.

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<sup>30</sup> For the German context in the nineteenth century, see Kohler 2014.

<sup>31</sup> Literature on the conflict between Church and State is ample. The debate over the temporal power of the church was discussed among Liberal Catholics in the nineteenth century. For the Italian case, where the conflict was particularly strong, see Jemolo 1948.

## 5 Performing nostalgia and emotions

As I already mentioned, what characterizes the rich trove of representations of Judaism in the modern period is also the presence of negative depictions. Scholars of anti-Semitism have properly reconstructed that imagery.<sup>32</sup> I wish here to develop a more nuanced and complex picture. I will turn now to the notion of *orientalism* as it is linked to the image of the Semites.<sup>33</sup>

Although the notion of the 'Semites' may be tied to the idea of an 'Oriental tribe', found among late Enlightenment's discourse, it is more appropriate to analyze it as new concept that was produced by nineteenth century scholarship, in particular comparative philology. This notion was ambivalent as it classified religions and cultures through the marker of language, specifically Hebrew and Arabic (and of course other cognate ones).<sup>34</sup> It became loaded with negative meanings when the taxonomy became hierarchically compelling, following in the path of evolutionary biology. The concept entered the public arena at an early stage, indicating its allure, transforming Jews (whose labels varied quite a bit at the time – *Israélites*, *Israeliti*, *Ebrei*, *Juden*, *Juifs*) into 'Semites' and transforming Judaism accordingly, alongside with Islam, into a 'Semitic religion'.

But there is more. As Michele Amari, an Italian patriot who spent some time of his life in exiled in Paris and authored a book on 'the Muslim of Sicily', claimed in 1873, Orientalists were deemed the vanguard of modern science. The study of oriental languages was well established in many state universities around Europe by this time, and it contributed to disclosing the treasures of different cultures and religions. Although Orientalists are engaged with a very wide array of cultures, inheriting the task of the missionaries who had started to decipher other cultures in the early modern period, their goals in the nineteenth century were aimed towards the translation of religious literature from the East, to dub Friedrich Max Mueller's endeavors.<sup>35</sup>

It is interesting to observe that as Leopold Zunz, one of the most important German Jewish scholars of his time and an architect of Reform Judaism,<sup>36</sup> laid the ground for a program to study Judaism in all its different manifestations (law, poetry, legends, ethics, rabbinics and so forth), others, like Ernest

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<sup>32</sup> The literature on the history of anti-Semitism is vast. Recent debate was enhanced by the publication of Nirenberg 2013.

<sup>33</sup> The debate over orientalism was launched by the book of Edward Said, 1978.

<sup>34</sup> For a good reconstruction, see Masuzawa 2005.

<sup>35</sup> Masuzawa 1993; Stone 2002.

<sup>36</sup> Veltri 2000; Trautmann-Waller 1998; Zwiep 2010.

Renan, would have claimed that Jews/Semites had produced no culture, art, poetry, or science at all, with the exception of the idea of monotheism.

Two parallel processes were taking place. One revolved around the transformation of Judaism within the different national states based on projects of historical reconstruction, which were meant to dig out the Jewish past in order to unearth its rich cultural tradition and prove the social reliability of Judaism. The other process was rooted in the emerging classification of religions that challenged the notion that the same process of social integration and recognition on equal basis could be applied in the attempt to orientalize and essentialize the religion of the Jews (Davidson Kalmar, Penslar 2004).

It will suffice to mention that some of the works of Ernest Renan attracted criticism and approval at the same time, and were accordingly debated and discussed among scholars and intellectuals of his time.<sup>37</sup>

## 5.1 The orientalization of the Jews

The ‘orientalization’ of the Jews followed two directions, one in *time* and one in *space*. Although it stemmed from outside, especially from non-Jewish intellectuals who were not necessarily anti-Semites, it was then appropriated by Jews, at an early stage, as in the case of the book *Autoemanzipation* by Leon Pinsker (Pinsker 1883), or the Italian positive interpretation of ‘Semitism’ of the above mentioned David Levi. Pinsker, a physician from Odessa who was educated in Germany, claimed in 1883 that Jews were indeed Semites and deserved their own land and state: a claim he made after the violent pogrom that had erupted in 1881. Levi’s praise of Semitism is something of a lost and incomprehensible world. In his *Il semitismo nella civiltà dei popoli* (Levi 1884), Levi offered a counter narrative to the rise of anti-semitism, defining ‘Semitism’ as Judaism, infused by principles of justice and freedom. For these intellectuals, Semites often coincided with ancient Jews, and deployed certain religious features, as they were conceived as bearers of ethical monotheism (Sofia 2006; Sofia 2011).

At the same time, others were inclined to define Jews as a foreign race, unable to merge with European civilization. Semitic religion, whilst being the cradle of monotheism, was perceived as violent, and ultimately unable to create art, science, or complex civilizations (Said 1978; Olender 1989). Whilst modern civilization adulated science and technology, it showed ambivalence towards religion. It praised both its death and its preservation. Therefore ‘ethical monothe-

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<sup>37</sup> Recent books on Renan: Priest 2015; Van Deth 2012.

ism', whose source was still biblical, attracted public and scholarly debate and nurtured conflict among biblical religions. The 'scramble for ethical monotheism' engendered competition and in the end the winner was reformed Christianity, which outlawed its Semitic kin (Jews and Muslim).

Space-wise, 'orientalization' was addressed to the Holy Land, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe, where Hasidic Jews were a special target. Travel literature, drawings, and art provide ample evidence of the impact the Holy Land and North Africa had on the European imagination. Although they lived in different places, these Jews were slowly perceived as part of an immutable past that had survived among the moderns. Orientalization was also directed to the past, especially to Biblical Jews. The Holy Land as a place became a privileged point of departure for the understanding of the Bible, and in particular for the reconstruction of ancient Jewish religion and early Christianity. The improvement of travel infrastructures and the rise of tourism as a bourgeois practice went hand in hand with interest in the Orient. As intellectuals and missionaries traveled to the East, they gathered detailed information about indigenous peoples. Ethnographies (narratives) and objects were collected from different cultures and filled European museums and the collectible markets.

The Orient and the Holy Land were indeed places for religious experiences. Ethnographical reports, diaries and travelogues composed by Christians and Jews disclose not only scholarly endeavors but also religious feelings and emotional experiences. Feeling emotional ties from the place where a religion had originated, or from a religious place, was part of a modern religious experience. I shall provide a few examples, one by Ernest Renan and the other one by Isaac I. Goldziher, the Jewish founder of Islamic studies (*Islamwissenschaft*).

Renan traveled to Syria and Palestine in order to finalize his book on Jesus. Walking in Jesus' footsteps, and seeing and researching his places, provoked in Renan intense emotions: 'I could almost see and feel him as I saw his places', he confessed in his letters and notes (Priest 2015). A very similar reaction is detectable almost a century later in Pier Paolo Pasolini's documentary *Sopralluoghi in Palestina*, which was recorded before the preparation of his film *Gospel according to Matthew* which was eventually shot in South Italy instead (Pasolini 1963).

The great orientalist Ignaz Isaac Goldziher recorded in his *Tagebuch* a strong emotional experience that he experienced when entering a synagogue in Istanbul (Patai 1986). A reformer of Judaism, Goldziher had a complicated personality, and a critical attitude towards his fellow Jews, and Christian scholars. In 1876 he penned a book meant to criticize Renan's oversimplification of Jewish biblical religion, characterized by a lack of mythology (Goldziher 1876). His internal conflict with Orthodox Jewry derived from his conviction that Judaism was in need of reform, although his basis of comparison was not Christianity but Islam, a more

perfect form of monotheism. Goldziher traveled often to Cairo, but once, in Istanbul, he entered a synagogue during a sabbatical service and he burst into tears, overwhelmed by the religious atmosphere (Davidson Kalmar, Penslar 2005; Trautmann-Waller 2012). The story of Ignaz I. Goldziher is but just one of many about emotions and religious places.

Radical emotional experiences were eagerly sought after. They were often enhanced by places: synagogues, the Holy Land, or traveling among those Jews who were perceived as being archaic, and therefore more *authentic*. By the turn of the century, at the beginning of the twentieth century, the inner Orient of Judaism became a place to return to. Nostalgia for the past and for tradition, and sometimes the fear that this world would disappear as modern society advanced, fueled new interest in Hasidism. Their oral tradition was recorded and fictionalized. Ethnographic data were assembled, especially through the intense work of S. Ansky, a Jewish Russian ethnographer, and Martin Buber, the famous German Jewish philosopher (Buber 1928).

Jiří Langer (1894–1943) a Jewish author who befriended Franz Kafka in Prague and the son of a prosperous and assimilated Jewish family, recorded his religious experience among the Hasidic court of Belz in his book titled *Nine Gates to Hasidic Mysticism*. His escape into a radically different world, *das ganz Andere* as Rudolph Otto dubbed it in 1917, was not geographically far away from Prague. But the leap into the extreme ‘otherness’ of the Hasidic world was a leap into a mythical past, which eventually fueled personal metamorphosis. Langer never fully integrated in the world of Hasidism, and once he returned to his urban life, he embraced psychoanalysis and the exploration of Kabbalah and eros (Langer 1976; Otto 1917).

I shall conclude with a brief presentation of another author, who was a professional orientalist and who witnessed, in the words of Stefan Zweig, the end of ‘the world of yesterday’ (Zweig 1942).

Giorgio Levi della Vida was born into a prosperous Italian Jewish family that, as he underlined, had been secular for at least three generations (Levi della Vida 1966). As a young assimilated Jew, he was raised with ‘no religion’, to which he returned through science (Facchini 2014; Levi della Vida 1966). Levi became increasingly interested in religion while reading *La vie de Jesus* of Renan, which inspired him to become an orientalist. Although he was a professional scholar of Islam, he taught Hebrew for few years in Rome, and left some short, yet very dense, articles about ancient Judaism. In 1931 Levi left his Italian university after his refusal to swear an oath to the Fascist regime, and in 1938 he fled the country because of the anti-Semitic legislation implemented by Mussolini (Boatti 2001). On his way to America, where he would sojourn until the end of World War II, he stopped in Paris. Invited by Louis Massignon, he delivered a few lec-

tures at the *College de France*. His lectures followed in the footsteps of Renan's works on the Semites, which were delivered almost a century before (Facchini 2014). Without dismissing Renan's structure of reasoning, Levi della Vida praised the creativity of the Semites, Jews and Arabs. He not only highlighted the ethical religion the ancient Hebrews had given to humanity through the Prophets, but he also emphasized the God-idea that enhanced, among them, intense individual religious experiences and therefore the formation of the notion of *individual responsibility*. The dialectic between the collective and the individual is, according to him, the main feature of the religious creativity of the so-called 'Semites.' Levi della Vida was neither a poet nor an emotional scholar. Nevertheless his lectures bear some lyrical elements, as he confided that Semitic religions held a form of resilience, they owned an inner strength, which would enhance freedom. In 1938 that same message, although in a very different form, was delivered by Sigmund Freud, in his book *Der Mann Moses*, where among other things the Viennese psychologist highlighted the role of ethical monotheism as the great contribution Jews had made to Western civilization.<sup>38</sup>

## 6 Conclusion

In this paper I tried to demonstrate how representations of Judaism were interwoven into a social fabric that was dynamic and changed at a fast pace. While some Jews toiled to adapt Judaism to the modern world – opting for modern architecture, confronting social issues, opening membership to Gentiles, reforming liturgy, accepting women as religious leaders – images of archaism and tribalism were issued and circulated, given both the strength of prejudice and stereotypes, and the wide religious differences among diaspora Jews. Moreover, the search for a mythical past became increasingly embedded in the modern experience and took many forms, affecting especially younger generations who, at the beginning of the twentieth century, did not share the world they had inherited from their fathers.

Representations of religion were often the outcome on scholarly inquiry, but they were often transferred into the public arena, entering a process of cultural consumption. Religious narratives were therefore performed, and appropriated in order to fulfill religious and cultural needs. They traveled between continents, they were appropriated and misunderstood, they created communities, fueled hatred and nurtured hopes. The interactions of these elements contributed to mod-

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<sup>38</sup> Freud 1939; Yerushalmi 1993; Assmann 1998; Assmann 2009; Bori 1989.

ify lifestyles, including religious practices, and accordingly produced both a desire for modern life and *nostalgia* for a mythical past.

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# The President's Welcome Note to the 2015 Erfurt IAHR World Congress

Mr. Bodo Ramelow, Ministerpräsident,  
Professor Heike Grimm, Vice-president of the University of Erfurt,  
Honorary Consul of France,  
Congress directors,  
IAHR Past-Presidents,  
Congress participants and  
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

it gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the charming medieval city of Erfurt for the XXI IAHR Quinquennial World Congress.

Every five years scholars of religion come from all parts of the globe to share their research on all aspects of the phenomenon of religion. These efforts result in research projects, publications, enhanced teaching, academic collaboration. Sometimes I've been asked 'Why only every five years?' Ask that question to the local organizers and to the academic program committee, as well as all those who have saved up and prepared for months if not years to participate in this major international gathering. As I stated in my welcome remarks in the abstract book, this is rather like our Olympics or our World Cup (that's important for Germany), but the difference is that this is not a knockout competition. We hope to see most of you here by the end of the week.

This is actually a nostalgic moment for me as I step down from twenty years of service on the IAHR executive. As you may imagine I have experienced and travelled a lot in the course of my various leadership duties. I've especially appreciated being able to learn so much about the academic study of religion in diverse regions of the world. In that regard I'm very pleased to have been asked to reflect on those last two decades in a piece in the new publication to celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the journal *NVMEN* – Tim Jensen will be speaking about that. The progress we have made within the IAHR makes me optimistic about the future of the academic study of religion but clearly there is no room for complacency and in some quarters there's even cause for serious concern. I have become more aware of these challenges since I became vice-president last year of UNESCO's Humanities Council (CIPSH) and I hope that the knowledge and empowerment that I derive from that office will enable me to continue to support the IAHR in other capacities. But in that regard I'd also like to invite you to at-

tend the first ever World Conference on the Humanities that will take place in Liège, Belgium in August 2017.

Let me close with an expression of profound gratitude to our local hosts and congress directors Prof. Jörg Rüpke and Prof. Christoph Bochinger and to Dr. Elisabeth Begemann as the congress coordinator for their tireless efforts to lay on the finest congress for you.

I will also like to thank the members of the committees local and international as well as all the student volunteers who will work hard this week to point us in the right direction and to trouble-shoot our problems.

Now it just remains for me to wish you well for your deliberations this week and to declare the XXI IAHR World Congress in Erfurt officially open.

Rosalind Hackett, IAHR President

# The General Secretary's Welcome Note to the 2015 Erfurt IAHR World Congress

Members of the IAHR, Congress participants  
Congress directors Bochinger and Rüpke,  
Honorable Ministerpräsident Ramelow,  
Honorable Vice-President Grimm  
Honorary Consul of France Grönegres

Memories (at least mine) from the 2010 Toronto World Congress are still so vivid that I cannot understand that five years have passed. However, I am extremely pleased to be back, so to speak, with all of you for this 2015 XXI IAHR World Congress in Erfurt.

It is a privilege to have the opportunity to bid you welcome and, in line with my duties as IAHR General Secretary, to make a few announcements.

The first announcement regards the *IAHR Bulletin 40, Erfurt Congress Edition, August 2015*. Here you find the key documents (agendas, minutes, reports, statements of candidacy, proposal for a change of name, IAHR Rules of Procedure and more) needed for the meetings Wednesday and Saturday of the IAHR International Committee and General Assembly. While the International Committee is constituted by up to two appointed delegates, the General Assembly is constituted by *all* IAHR members, that is all the Congress participants who are members of an IAHR national or regional member association or affiliate. All paid up members also have voting rights.

It is my hope, though, that you'll read this *IAHR Bulletin 40* to be found and freely downloaded from the IAHR website (and you are welcome to approach me later for a print copy), not just with an eye to the business meetings, but because the documents enclosed speak of important developments and discussions within the IAHR; within its elected leadership, within its constituency and thus within the IAHR linked academic study of religions around the world.

The minutes as well as the reports enclosed, in my opinion, speak their own clear language of continuous developments and improvements within the IAHR: The IAHR has, also over the past five years, developed in positive ways in terms of e.g. membership, cultural diversity, and gender equality.

The IAHR has, so to speak, become even more 'global'. What's more: It has improved its finances significantly and can therefore put 'globalization' to work, not least by granting substantial funds to secure participation, by scholars from all over the world, in the IAHR business meetings and conferences.

This Congress, the first one by the way, held in a European country for 25 years, is a proof thereof. Even if the number of participants from out-of-Europe is not (almost) 50%, as first estimated by the German hosts, and even if efforts to secure an even higher number of non-European participants must be continued.

However: not all that has happened since Toronto has been positive. During these five years, the IAHR has suffered severe losses: IAHR honorary Life Members Jean Leclant, Julien Ries, Noriyoshi Tamaru, Jacques Waardenburg, and, most recently, R.J. Zwi Werblowsky have all passed away.

Allow me to propose that we take the opportunity of this Erfurt 2015 World Congress Opening Ceremony to honor the memory of these outstanding scholars, colleagues, friends and dedicated IAHR Honorary Life Members by way of a minute's silence.

\* \* \*

The outgoing Executive Committee has, as Executive Committees before it, done its best to expand the IAHR while, at the same time, trying to secure that the 'identity' of the IAHR continues to reflect what was arguably first formulated more explicitly by the now late Zwi Werblowsky, in his famous Marburg 1960 statement:

If the IAHR has any *raison d'être* it is by reason of a division of labor which makes the Organization the responsible organ and international meeting ground for those scholars who wish to serve the cause of Religionswissenschaft in its strict sense. (*NVMEN* 7, 220)

I quote these words to honor Werblowsky, former IAHR General Secretary and *NVMEN* editor. I also quote them because I agree, and because I, with many others, consider the Marburg 1960 Congress and Werblowsky's statement a cornerstone in the building of an institutional and lasting consensus as to the perspective and ethos of the IAHR.

Mentioning the IAHR flagship journal *NVMEN* brings me to this publication: *NVMEN, the Academic Study of Religion, and the IAHR – Past, Present and Prospects*, a volume edited by Armin Geertz and Tim Jensen on behalf of Brill and the IAHR Executive Committee, a volume meant to celebrate the 60th anniversary of *NVMEN*.

In 2000 in Durban, South Africa, Prof. Michael Pye, then IAHR President, in his Opening Address, named "Memories of the Future. Looking Back and Looking forward in the History of Religions" said, inter alia:

Memories of the IAHR are part of the history of our discipline, and so I conclude by expressing the hope that these memories, selected, contested, and always reflected, will turn out to be not only memories of the past but also constituents of the future. (Pye 2009, 297)

It is the hope that this publication, with reprints of seminal articles as well as freshly commissioned contributions by prominent past and present IAHR officers and scholars, will serve a similar purpose.

So, please pass by the Brill booth to pre-order this book (still a dummy, expected to be published this November) at the special IAHR Congress price of € 25. The volume, by the way, has been dedicated to the memory of Werblowsky who also served as *NVMEN* editor.

\* \* \*

As is clear from both this publication and the *IAHR Bulletin 40*, the IAHR, proudly, and I think, rightly, claims to be the “preeminent international forum for the critical, analytical, and cross-cultural study of religions, past and present”. And, as stated in the IAHR Constitution § 1: “The IAHR is not a forum for confessional, apologetical, or other similar concerns.”

Heartfelt thanks, consequently, are extended to Congress directors, Profs. Rüpke and Bochinger, to Congress Coordinator Dr. Begemann, to the members of the Organizing Committee, to each and every member of the Academic Program Committee, including, of course, the co-chairs, Profs. Bochinger and Marcos, for their meticulous and hard work to try their very best to align the academic program with the general aims of the IAHR and with the ongoing efforts of the IAHR leadership to improve, secure and tighten up the IAHR academic profile.

Thanks also to the IAHR Honorary Life Members for once again serving the IAHR as members of the Congress Advisory Committee, and thanks to all the officers of the IAHR member associations and affiliates. Thanks to the Deutsche Vereinigung für Religionswissenschaft, to Religionswissenschaft at the Max Weber Center, to the Research School “Religion”, and to the University of Erfurt.

Last but not least, thanks to all Congress participants and members of the IAHR, who have prepared and submitted proposals for panels and papers. Thanks to your dedication to the academic study of religion(s) and to the IAHR, the IAHR 2015 World Congress no doubt will prove to also be a “preeminent international forum for the critical, analytical, and cross-cultural study of religions, past and present”.

I look forward with enthusiasm to the academic program as well as to the IAHR business meetings. The outgoing IAHR Executive has already held its last meeting this morning, but still to come is the International Committee meeting Wednesday, the meeting of the incoming Executive Committee Thursday and the General Assembly, closing the Congress, on Saturday morning.

On the agenda of the International Committee is the election of the 2015–2020 Executive Committee, a proposal for a change of name, and recommenda-

tions for the adoption of new members and affiliates. The results, proposals and recommendations from this meeting will be put before the General Assembly.

Finally, before handing over to IAHR World Congress Co-Director and President of the Deutsche Vereinigung für Religionswissenschaft, Prof. Bochinger, for him to introduce the opening keynote lecturer, Prof. Hubert Seiwert, heartfelt thanks are extended to Dorothea Ditchfield who generously sponsored this lecture, also the 2015 Gary Lease IAHR Memorial Lecture.

Gary Lease, who passed away in 2008 while serving as IAHR Treasurer, was a staunch supporter of the IAHR and its aims. Having Prof. Seiwert deliver the opening keynote and the 2015 Gary Lease Memorial Lecture bodes well for this XXI IAHR World Congress and for the IAHR future.

Tim Jensen, IAHR General Secretary

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# The Academic Program

## Introduction

Topics and titles of the quinquennial World Congresses of the International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR) are as much inspirations as compromises. In order to enlist the interests of a national association and the local organizers, to win the approval of the Executive Committee for the nomination, and to elicit a sufficient number of speakers, proposals and participants, the theme has to take into account vested interests and ongoing research, national and regional agendas and international concerns, existing strengths and current debates. At the same time, World Congresses have to prove that they are more than just a market for young talents and a mirror image of research as it is being pursued in the hundreds of institutions of IAHR members worldwide – which would already be a worthy aim to promote! Despite their usual breadth – intended to enable as many researchers as possible to be part of the intense debates and encounters concentrated within one week – previous conference themes have highlighted crucial issues, focused on particular objects and methods in research and provoked new research. The self-reflection of the discipline as a whole, made up of quite different traditions of research and subjected to widely different regional political and cultural influences, but nevertheless striving for a recognizable identity, has been enormously promoted by these debates.<sup>1</sup>

The theme of the XXI IAHR Congress “Dynamics of Religion: Past and Present”, must be situated within different discursive and institutional contexts and related to recent developments. In what follows, we would like to outline our theme as an invitation to participate, to intervene, and to promote debates. Being a compromise in the sense described above, this is not so much an acknowledgment of specific schools of thought or declaration of theoretical allegiances, but a mapping of a field, a field divided into four plots of arable ground.

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<sup>1</sup> For the discussions at Mexico City in 1995, see e.g. International Association for the History of Religions 2000. The Congress topics of Rome 1990, Durban 2000, and Toronto 2010 in particular invited such reflections. For a full list of the Congress themes see [www.iahr.dk/pastcon.php](http://www.iahr.dk/pastcon.php).

## Congress theme

The chosen Congress theme “Dynamics of Religion” plays a vital part in a number of research projects in the field of German Religious Studies, such as the Käte-Hamburger-Kolleg’s “Dynamics in the History of Religions between Asia and Europe” at the Ruhr University in Bochum; the Collaborative Research Centre 619 “Ritual Dynamics” at the University of Heidelberg; the Research Training Group “Religious Nonconformism and Cultural Dynamics” at the University of Leipzig; or the Humanities Centre for Advanced Study 1013 “Religious Individualization in Historical Perspective” at the Max Weber Center, Erfurt University. The topic is also one of significant importance at other seminar for Religious Studies, at the universities of Bayreuth, Bremen, Frankfurt, Hannover, Marburg, Munich, Munster or Potsdam, for example.

Religion is a human, historical, social and cultural phenomenon. As such, religious ideas, practices, discourses, institutions, and social expressions are constantly in processes of change. The Congress addressed the processes of change, the dynamics of religions past, present, and future, on several interconnected levels of analysis and theory, namely that of the individual, community and society, practices and discourses, beliefs, and narrations.

These were addressed within four areas:

### **Religious communities in society: Adaptation and transformation**

Embedded within complex cultures, characterized by social change and intercultural exchange, religious communities constantly adapt to their changing environments, developing practices, discourses, and institutions conceptualized as “religion”. These concepts are subject to social and cultural influences. They also shape political and economic environments. Religious traditions are invented and re-invented, imperceptibly transformed, violently reformed or emphatically defended. How, then, do religious communities and institutions adapt to cultural change? How do they affect social change? Does interreligious contact and dialogue lead to religious change? How do religious communities react to the possibilities and threats of new media? Does globalization transform public religions? To what extent do states and public law affect religions?

## **Practices and discourses: Innovation and tradition**

Founding figures, schisms and revivals characterize the dynamics of religion in past and present. Institutions develop or are dissolved. This, again, poses questions: How are religious traditions established, standardized and canonized? What are the mechanisms and agents of religious innovation? How do religious traditions repel religious change? How is sacred time and space established? Does religious individualization lead to innovation? What are the mechanisms of transformation and innovation of rituals and other practices? Do rituals create and perpetuate religious traditions? Are new religious movements or esoteric currents innovative? Does fundamentalism protect religious traditions? Does the internet lead to religious innovation? What are the dynamics of gender traditions?

## **The individual: Religiosity, spiritualities and individualization**

Individuals, too, are agents of change. Privatization, patchwork religiosity and religious deviance are not restricted to the present. Can “religiosity” or “spirituality”, popular in many contemporary self-descriptions, be used as descriptive terms of our meta-language? Under what circumstances do individuals obey or deny religious traditions? How and why do individuals converse, or gradually change their religious convictions and affiliations? How can plural religious identities or patchwork religiosities be explained, what effects do they have on religious traditions? How important are religious experiences in religions? What are individual reasons for religious deviance? How do religions control the individual? Is the privatization of religion a modern phenomenon? Do biographic developments explain individual religiosity?

## **Methodology: Representations and interpretations**

Religious change is registered and narrated by outsiders and insiders. Emic representations influence academic interpretations. Scholarly paradigms and theories are therefore as dynamic as their object. Which master narratives about religious change need to be revised? Are all religious traditions invented? What is the current status of the secularization debate? Is there some scientific value in old paradigms of religious change (e.g. decline, fall, rise, axial age)? How can theories of cultural and religious evolution be applied in historical sciences?

How do new approaches in historiography conceptualize religious change (e. g. entangled or transcultural history, postcolonial history, discourse analysis)?

## Philosophy and structure of the program

The XXI IAHR Congress addressed these issues in various formats. Not only did we invite papers to be presented individually or in organized panels, we also included four daily keynote presentations which were to discuss one of the areas outlined above from a different angle and different field of religious studies. In this way, we hoped to not only draw the participants in the Congress together in various lectures, but to allow all participants to either explore the entire breadth of the Congress theme – religious communities in society, practices and discourses, the individual and methodology – or to focus on one of the topics and explore it from the various angles of the different sub-fields of religious studies.

The 2015 Congress was opened by the keynote and Gary Lease Memorial Lecture in the Theater Erfurt on August 23, 2015. The venue was opened especially for this occasion, which almost 650 participants attended. The opening keynote by Hubert Seiwert was followed by a reception for all participants.

The program was structured in such a way as to allow a maximum number of participants to participate in as many sessions as their field of research provided. The daily schedule therefore provided three time slots of 1.5 to 2 hours each with up to 38 parallel sessions, each consisting of three to five papers. The organizers' reckoned with twenty minutes plus ten minutes discussion per paper, a point which was stressed especially where individually submitted papers were put together in a common session, though a slightly different format may have been adapted in some organized sessions by the sessions, organizers and chairs. The panel/session part of the program was complemented by the so-called Open Session format, which deviated from the paper presentation format to include Round Table discussions, film and poster sessions and review sessions – a variety of formats submitted formlessly to the Program Committee as Open Sessions.

Additionally, the above mentioned four parallel keynotes were presented every day between 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to thematically ground the topic of the Congress (see more below).

Since the Congress was hosted by the University of Erfurt and all venues were on campus, the schedule included a lunch break of only one hour in which participants were free to visit the cafeteria or one of the cafés on campus or take the tram back to town for a quick lunch. An overview over convenient

restaurants, bars, bakeries and convenient stores was compiled beforehand and left for perusal at the Congress hotel desks and at the Congress secretariat.

The Academic Program concluded at 5:30 p.m. each day, planning in ample time for business meetings and receptions in the evening hours. We opted for an earlier beginning and earlier end of the Academic Program in order to allow for enough time after the Congress program concluded for dinner, either following the academic program or following further commitments in the evening hours. Receptions were hosted by the German Association for Religious Studies, the British and Irish Association for the Study of Religions (in honor of Brian Bocking), Equinox publishers (in honor of the NVMEN series launch) and the Women Scholars Network.

The traditional tour day on Wednesday offered various tours of Erfurt and Thuringia which highlighted the long and varied religious history of city and region. On offer were tours highlighting the Jewish history of Erfurt, Martin Luther, Johann Sebastian Bach and Weimar Classicism.

All participants were invited to the Congress barbeque on Wednesday evening, another opportunity for Congress attendees to meet and mingle. The barbeque was met with great enthusiasm and provided a nice break at “half-time” of the academic program.

On Saturday, August 29, the Congress concluded with a keynote lecture by Ingvild S. Gilhus, followed by the General Assembly of the IAHR at the Alte Heizkraftwerk Erfurt.

## Plenary Session Speakers

To thematically ground the Congress, the organizers invited a number of distinguished international scholars to address the four thematic Congress areas in the entire width and depth of the field of religious studies. The aim was to address all four areas every day, so that, including Opening and Closing Keynote Speakers, eighteen scholars were invited to address “Dynamics of Religion” at the 2015 Congress. These were:

- Peter Beyer – Forms of Religious Communities in Global Society: Tradition, Invention, and Transformation
- Vasudha Dalmia – Homogenizing Hinduism: A Watershed
- Cristiana Facchini – Representing Judaism: Narrating, Visualizing, Performing, and Feeling a Religion
- Ingvild S. Gilhus – Bodies, Texts and Otherness: Religious Change in Antiquity and Today

- Wouter Hanegraaff – Fantastic Religion: Esoteric Fictionality and the Invention of Tradition
- Jeppe Sinding Jensen – No Human is an Island: Natures, Norms and Narratives
- Kim Knott – Inside out? The (In)visibility of Religious Communities in Contemporary Societies
- Karénina Kollmar-Paulenz – Of Yellow Teaching and Black Faith: Entangled Knowledge Cultures and the Creation of Religious Traditions
- Suzanne Marchand – Herodotus, Historian of World Religions: How the Reception-History of the “Father of Lies” Can Help Move the Conversation beyond “Orientalism”
- Sylvia Marcos – Transformation and Revitalization: Mesoamerican Religious Traditions
- Martin Mulso – Global Intellectual History and the Dynamics of Religion
- Kalpana Ram – Religion, Human Agency and Change: The Importance of Intermediary Experiences
- Hubert Seiwert – Dynamics of Religion and Cultural Evolution
- Susumu Shimazono – Religion and Public Space in Contemporary Japan: The Reactivation of State Shinto and Buddhism as Public Religion
- Dianne Marie Stewart – From Syncretism to Social Belonging: Retheorizing Tradition and Innovation in African Heritage Religious Cultures of the Caribbean and the Americas
- Abdulkader Tayob – The Biographical Trajectories of Political Islam
- Gerald West – Religion Intersecting De-nationalisation and Re-nationalisation in Post-Apartheid South Africa
- Xiaoyun Zheng – On the Management Mode of Chinese Theravada Buddhism

Several of these papers of the Congress’ keynote speakers are published in this volume, “Dynamics of Religion: Past and Present” by de Gruyter, due in Fall 2016. They are also part of an Open Access publication (along with the abstracts of all papers included in the Congress program), also by de Gruyter.

## **Related academic sessions**

The XXI Quinquennial IAHR Congress was preceded by a pre-conference of the Society of Ancient Mediterranean Religions (SAMR) and an AESToR NET workshop.

The SAMR invited participants to a two-day pre-conference (August 22–23, 2015) titled “Religions on the Ground”. A major development in the study of ancient religion over the past few decades has been the growing emphasis on the social, material, and experiential realities of non-elites. This development has affected both the sorts of questions scholars are asking, and the sorts of data on which they draw to formulate their answers. Rather than focusing on the philosophical or theological concerns of elite texts, scholars have sought to bring a wider body of evidence to bear on understanding and interpreting the lived experience of religion.

In keeping with the society’s broad interests in religions of the Mediterranean basin over the great chronological expanse from prehistory to late antiquity, the Society issued a call for papers for contributions from scholars in the fields of Classics, Ancient History, Religious Studies, Archaeology, Near Eastern Studies, and Egyptology. While not excluding textual evidence, the organizers sought proposals that incorporated archaeology, history of art, ritual and/or liturgical studies, and other sub-fields that provide a window into the religious practices of the time. Particular preference was given to proposals that engage a question from a cross-disciplinary perspective or that highlight important theoretical or methodological issues. Especially welcome were transdisciplinary papers which synthesize a variety of textual, archaeological, and art historical and/or material culture sources to reach new insights into ancient Mediterranean religions. The Society explicitly invited scholars from all phases of their careers to submit proposals.

Papers at the SAMR pre-conference were delivered by:

- Amy Yandek, Philadelphia, PA: Domestic Religion and Elite Identity in the Terrace Houses of Roman Ephesos
- Sissel Undheim, Bergen: Securing Theusebius’ Salvation: The Motif of the “Virgin Crown” in a Late Antique Latin Epitaph
- Mattias Brand, Leiden: Beyond Religious Boundaries? The Everyday Interactions of Manichaeans
- Jörg Rüpke, Erfurt: Response
- Amelia Robertson Brown, Brisbane: Like Frogs Around a Pond: Maritime Religion in Ancient Greek Culture
- András Patay-Horváth, Budapest: The Cult of Artemis at Olympia and the Earliest History of the Sanctuary
- Georgia Petridou, Erfurt: Healing Visions: Eye-shaped Votives and the Mysteries
- Esther Eidinow, Nottingham: Response

The Aesthetics of Religion Research Network (AESToR NET) invited participants to their kick-off workshop August 22 to 23, titled “The Sensory Sacred – Aesthetic as a Connective Concept for the Study of Religion – Positions and Future Plans”.

After an introduction of the first network-funded publication “The Sensory Sacred: Aesthetics as a Connective Concept for the Study of Religion” by Katharina Wilkens and Anne Koch, papers were presented by Jay Johnston, Sydney and Fred Cummins, Dublin, which were then discussed under various aspects during the workshop.

The network is one of the DVRW-affiliated research groups (“Arbeitskreis”).

# Abstracts

## A Balancing Act: Minority Religious Communities and Processes of Transformation

### Panel Chair: Thorsten Wettich

In this panel we want to discuss different kinds of transformation processes in religious (migrant) communities in Switzerland, Germany and Austria with regard to their embedment in the host society. Minority religious communities are more involved in a constant series of “dialectic tensions” (Lincoln/Mamiya 1990, 10–16) than other religious institutions of host societies. The diversification of religious and social engagement turns out to be a balancing act between divergent tendencies of objectivation and alienation, elaboration and effectiveness (O’Dea/Yinger 1961). The gist of the hypothesis is that transformations of religious and social practices must be seen in an overall context including questions of transmission of religious knowledge, generational change, transnationalism, social tensions and discourses of the host society. Our papers deal with re-invention of traditions in Yezidi communities, networks of engaged (Neo-)Muslims, Korean-Christian ways of glocal engagement, and the formation of mosque communities as spaces of action.

**Sabrina Weiß:** Glocalization of Korean migrant churches in West Germany  
At the present time around 30,000 Koreans live in Germany. Since the 1970s, some of them established up to thirty immigrant churches in North-Rhine Westphalia alone. These immigrant churches changed over time into diaspora churches, which no longer serve as sanctuaries for the first generation of Korean migrants. One reason for processes of change was internal diversification due to further immigration of Korean students and businessmen and intergenerational conflicts. A “glocal perspective” is considering the Korean diaspora churches in their social field, stretched out between their place of residence, countries of origin and the globally connected communities as the starting point of analysis. The paper focuses upon three specific glocal religious activities: the exchange of guest preachers, passion for foreign mission and civic engagement, and donation behavior. It concludes by noting that globalization facilitates the growth of glocal networks of religious actors.

**Veronika Rückamp:** Creating community through action: Mosque associations in Switzerland and Austria

Since the 1970s immigrant Muslims have been establishing places for prayer in Switzerland and Austria. Being provisional in the beginning, these mosques

have mainly been frequented by a certain ethnic community not only as a place for prayer but also to create a “home away from home”. Since then some major changes have happened, two of which I want to analyze more closely: a toughening in the public discourse on Muslims, and the transmission from first to second generation immigrants. In this paper I want to ask how mosque associations are responding to these changes through action and what this means for the configuration and institutionalization of mosques in Switzerland and Austria. First insights from the analysis of my qualitative research point to a shift away from immigration related services towards religious services, the tendency to organize and take part in public events, the evolving of de-ethnicized mosques and forms of professionalization.

**Thorsten Wettich:** (Re-)Invention of tradition: Negotiating Yezidi theology in the German diaspora

In the 1990s, German historian of religion, Gernot Wießner, instrumental in the asylum seeking-process of thousands of Yezidis originating from the Eastern Anatolian provinces of the Turkish Republic, spoke of the “need of a consistent theology” that Yezidis would have to develop after their arrival in Germany. The emerging diaspora allowed for religious freedom for the first time in the Yezidi history and caused both a reformulation and a negotiation of the divergent strains of oral tradition that shaped religious knowledge production in the past. The paper investigates the reinvention of Yezidi tradition by focusing on four factors: (1) the ongoing literalization of Yezidi theology; (2) an increasing move towards the usage of new media; (3) new strains in religious pedagogy; and (4) the role of the newly founded religious associations and their specialists in Germany.

**Karin Mykytjuk-Hitz:** Networks of engaged (neo-)Muslims in Germany

In the past ten years the establishment of new forms of Muslim associations can be observed in Germany. The pioneers of these new networks, the Neo-Muslims, are active in social, civic and political fields as for example environmental protection and sustainability, social and charitable work, intercultural training programs, media representation and others. They aim to improve the life situation of not just other Muslims (as usually mosque associations do), but of society as a whole. Therefore they are involved in Muslim and non-Muslim structures and concerns at the same time. This balancing act of the engaged (neo-)Muslims is one aspect of the transformation process among young Muslims who are socialized in Germany. The (neo-)Muslims and their networks provide diverse civic potential for the whole society, which can be specified in the fields of public discourse, demographic change, social ethics and theology, migrant history, politics and organizational fields.

## A Study-of-Religions Approach to Textbook Research

### Panel Chair: Jenny Berglund

This panel presents different study-of-religions approaches to textbook research related to education about religion in Norway, Italy, England and Japan. The papers relate to the study of different aspects of textbooks for religious education, including the way that the representation of religions is influenced by the general framework for religious education or by religious concepts about the use of images. Furthermore, more general issues relating to textbook-research related methodology are raised.

**Satoko Fujiwara:** A critical reflection on the “communitarian turn” in Religious Education

It was in 2007 that the UK government issued a guidance which made it a duty for schools to promote “community cohesion.” Since then, RE in England has been directed to contribute to the new duty more explicitly, and teaching materials with reference to the term have started to be published. This shift can be called “communitarian” (à la Sandel and Taylor) or “post-secular” (à la Habermas). It has concurred with the “religion in the public sphere” discussions within the study of religion as well as with the development of citizenship education. This paper examines the benefits and dangers of this shift, which is not confessional but normative nonetheless. Examples will be taken from RE textbooks in England to show how the representations and applications of religion(s) have changed. They will be compared with Japanese textbooks, which have established a virtual “civil religion” (à la Bellah), as I have argued elsewhere.

**Sissel Undheim:** Aniconism and images in Norwegian RE-textbooks: representations and historical change

The paper will investigate representations and interpretations of aniconism in Norwegian RE-textbooks in the period from 1997 to 2014. By studying changes in visual representation of Islam and Judaism in two “generations” of textbooks, namely those published in connection with the Norwegian curriculum revisions of 1997 and 2008, the paper will discuss different interpretations of Islamic aniconism as it is expressed in textbooks from the four major Norwegian publishers. The analytical approach will rely on critical and cultural perspectives from the academic study of religion, in addition to theories on multimodality and media. Both the cartoon controversy of 2005 as well as the increasing religious plurality that is to be found in Norwegian society and classrooms will be among the factors considered in order to explain the palpable changes that are found in the material.

**Maria Chiara Giorda:** Religion and school textbooks: methodological assessment and empirical examples

Textbook controversies involving religion are part of a larger cultural debate; they reflect to a large extent the social, cultural and political imaginaries that are dominant in a particular national context in a given moment in time. This endeavor requires a sound theoretical and methodological reflection. Up until now, the different efforts to scrutinize the representation of religions in school textbooks have followed numerous, sometimes divergent, paths. The aim of this paper is to offer a critical tour d’horizon of the methods currently employed in this field in order to discuss their strengths and their weaknesses and foster a debate between different approaches. Despite the fact it’s often (unjustly) considered to be a quite boring subject, the focus on methodology should offer a thread permitting to bound and organize different texts of different subjects (not only RE, but also literature, philosophy, history...) and dealing with different religious traditions. The goal is to elaborate a schedule of analysis to collect data, based on qualitative analytical techniques, content and didactic analysis, aiming at a general model for Religious Studies-based analyses of textbooks.

## Academic Approaches to G. I. Gurdjieff and the “Work”

### Panel Chair: Carole Cusack

George Ivanovitch Gurdjieff (c. 1866–1949) is often spoken of as one of the three foundational figures of both new religious movements (NRMs) and modern “secularized” esotericism. His teachings have been accorded significant influence on the “New Age”, yet he is far less studied than the two other foundational figures, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831–1891), co-founder of Theosophy, and Rudolf Steiner (1851–1925), founder of Anthroposophy. Much of Gurdjieff’s biography is speculative, and his teaching (termed the “Fourth Way”, or the “Work”) is contested in terms of its sources (Christian, Sufi, original stand-alone system) and its proper scholarly classification (religion, spirituality, esotericism). The academic study of the Gurdjieff tradition has been slow to develop, and insider, sui generis accounts still dominate publications about Gurdjieff. This panel considers issues including Gurdjieff’s sources and teaching techniques, the proper scholarly placement of Gurdjieff in Religious Studies, and orthodox and heterodox continuations of the Gurdjieff teaching.

### **Carole Cusack:** Intentional communities in the Gurdjieff teaching

G. I. Gurdjieff (c. 1866–1949) claimed that individuals could not advance spiritually but that in a group progress was possible. He founded the Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man, first in Tiflis in 1919, and for a second

time at the Prieuré des Basses Loges in Fontainebleau-Avon, south of Paris, in 1922. At the Prieuré Gurdjieff's pupils pursued tasks as part of a program of spiritual exercises he devised to lead them from false personality to true self, from a multitude of "I"s to a "real I". These activities included Movements (the "sacred dances"), physical labor, ritualized eating, drinking, and bathing in the Turkish bath, and "inner exercises". Key pupils of Gurdjieff established similar live-in venues for pursuit of the "Work": P.D. Ouspensky at Lyne Place, Surrey; J. G. Bennett at Coombe Springs, Surrey; Sophia Ouspensky at Franklin Farms, Mendham, NJ; and others. The Work or the "Fourth Way" did not mandate retreat from everyday life, but was compatible with family and childrearing, and work. This paper uses examples of scholarly literature on intentional communities and social history of other groups attempting the same types of experiments in living contemporaneously, to illuminate a previously-unstudied aspect of the Gurdjieff tradition.

**Steven Sutcliffe:** Gurdjieff as bricoleur

Several titles have been given to the teaching of G. I. Gurdjieff ("esoteric Christianity", heralding the "new age movement", a stand-alone system called "the Work"). Scholars have qualified their accounts by noting Gurdjieff's exposure to Theosophy and/or to his background in a patriarchal folk culture. Nevertheless, Gurdjieffian practitioners have tended to stress a complex unity of ideas and structure effectively underpinning a "canon", the particular fascination and mystique of which is represented as derived from a "quest" for (never fully) fathoming its sources. Gurdjieff's teaching is thus presented as a largely sui generis "movement" evolving from a complex but self-contained dynamic. Adapting Levi-Strauss's structuralism, I argue that Gurdjieff is better understood not as launching a new "system", but as pulling together "a heterogenous repertoire which, even if extensive, is nevertheless limited" and which is based on "elements ... collected or retained on the principle that 'they may always come in handy'" (pp. 17–18). I argue that Gurdjieff's bricolage is typical of the "western guru", an authority figure from the mid-twentieth century formed by the intensified cultural hybridity of the modern period, and who is better examined within social and cultural history rather than within "new religions" or "esotericism".

**Michael Pittman:** Exploring Gurdjieff's roots in contemporary Anatolia and the Caucasus

G. I. Gurdjieff (1877?-1949) was born in Gyumri, Armenia and raised in the Caucasus and eastern Asia Minor. As a polyglot and liminal figure, between East and West, his work has had a decisive influence in contemporary culture in diverse areas (philosophy, religion, literature, psychology and ecology). In his semi-autobiographical work, *Meetings with Remarkable Men*, Gurdjieff cites the forma-

tive influence of traditions present in the Caucasus, including a variety of forms of Eastern Orthodox Christianity, Sufism, and the role of the ashok, or bard, in the region. This paper provides a renewed assessment of Gurdjieff's early explorations of Sufism and Early Christianity in Anatolia and the Caucasus by investigating contemporary contexts, teachers, and teachings. Gurdjieff's work is based on a range of disciplines, especially inner ones, which might be best described as contemplative. This inner, or contemplative, work continues to be pursued and practiced in contemporary Sufi and, to some extent, Christian settings. Based on interviews and site visits in Turkey and Armenia, this paper will explore the continuing significance of these practices and traditions and seek to understand the ways that these forms remain relevant in shaping the contemporary trends in spirituality, particularly in the U.S. and North America.

**Johanna Petsche:** Gurdjieffian overtones in Leon MacLaren's School of Economic Science

After Gurdjieff died in 1949, Gurdjieff-based groups emerged, including a colorful assortment of fringe groups. These groups were established by individuals who never met Gurdjieff but who, in some way or another, assimilated elements of his teaching into new religio-spiritual systems. One of the most noteworthy yet little understood of these groups is the School of Economic Science (SES), founded by Leon MacLaren (1910 – 1994) in London in 1937. The SES was initially inspired by the work of nineteenth-century American economist Henry George. However, in the early 1950s when MacLaren studied with Dr Francis Roles, who was P. D. Ouspensky's personal physician and one of his earliest pupils, he gradually integrated into SES teachings concepts and practices of Ouspensky and Gurdjieff. This paper will examine the substantial influence of the work of Gurdjieff and Ouspensky on the SES, particularly in regards to MacLaren's emphasis on residential living and working, the significance of the Laws of Three and Seven in his cosmology, and his use of the "natural octave" in his large-scale musical compositions. This paper draws on firsthand accounts, original materials and unpublished music manuscripts thanks to the generosity of a number of members and ex-members of the movement.

## The Academic Study of Religion in India Today: Its Particular Challenges

**Organizers:** Asha Mukherjee, Åke Sander

**Ibrahim Khan, Gregory D. Alles:** The academic study of religion in India today: its particular challenges

India, the area of origin for Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism, is generally considered a very religious country, with a vibrant religious landscape. There is, however, as Joseph O'Connell points out, a striking disparity between the richness of human phenomena in the region that may be deemed religious and the paucity of departments, centers or even programs for academic (as distinguished from confessional) study of religion in Indian universities. This session will discuss reasons for this absence and the challenges faced in contemporary India with respect to institutionalizing departments for the academic study of religion. Why is such study apparently weak? Is the epistemological distinction, made by the University Education Commission (also known as the Radhakrishnan Commission) (1948–1949) and the Kothari Commission (1964–1966), between teaching of religion and teaching about religion untenable institutionally given the socio-political imaginary defining India? Or is the relation between the sacred and secular conceived differently compared to that in the West, taking specific cases, representative thinkers and cultural icons, as exemplars?

**Ferdinando Sardella:** “Transcendence” in twentieth century continental philosophy and modern Vaishnavism in Bengal: similar or different?

The concept of “transcendence”, a key notion in Western philosophy, appears in literature on and about religion and is discussed in the academic study of religion. Over time, however, it has undergone a number of changes. This paper compares that notion from an epistemological perspective to understand three views offered by western and eastern intellectuals. In particular Kierkegaard's (Postscript) and Heidegger's writings on transcendence and metaphysics are compared with the thought of a prominent Bengali intellectual of the modern Gaudiya Vaisnava movement, i.e., Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati (1874–1937) (Vedānta: Morphology and Ontology). The comparison will shed light on whether the relation between the sacred and the secular and between the real and the personal are epistemologically conceived in similar or different ways. The paper will then discuss to what degree the study of “religion” in India has historically been regarded as a subset of Indian philosophy.

**Joseph Prabhu:** The relative absence of the academic study of religion in contemporary India: an investigation

This paper argues that the relative absence of the academic study of religion in contemporary India is an enigma, given the widespread religiosity and religious

diversity of Indians, and the historical precedents of public discussion about religion going back to the emperor Asoka and extending to Akbar. There are at least three sets of causes: historical, legal and constitutional. This paper will look at these causes and their interaction within the setting of the democratic secular state that India sees itself to be, spelling out some of the implications of the particular understandings of secularism at play. Some of the recent controversies over publications will also be examined in this context. Finally, we will look at some attempts to breach this absence in departments of religion set up in Patiala, Delhi and elsewhere.

**Asha Mukherjee:** Tagore's education program in secular India: a personalist philosophy or religious politics as part of the university curriculum in the humanities

Religious politics were practiced by Hindus as well as by Islamic thinkers in pre-independence India. Religious differences continue to play a crucial role in Indian society today. Some politically minded groups are using religion for political hegemony and possibly to create communal violence as a means to political power or gains. This paper advances Tagore's educational program at the university level as holding out the possibility of a mechanism in assisting. But in what way? Is his educational program a personalist philosophy or at bottom subtly a form of religious politics serving to dampen communal violence by holding together even incompatible religious differences, and thus a reason for having religion in the university curriculum?

## **Aesthetics of Civil Religion: On Brand Cults, Martyrs and National Media Production**

### **Panel Chair: Anne Koch**

This panel enquires into aesthetic ways of newly creating or re-shaping and re-presenting civil religion and its central characters, symbols or figures. Normally, civil religion addresses value-orientation and social integration. In addition to these features, the papers make the aesthetic performance of civil religion the subject of discussion. The reason to take this path are altered aesthetic circumstances of highly mediatized and consumerist societies. Before this backdrop, images, literary figurations, movie sequences, and brands in media, public and national discourse are examined in various case studies from Italy, Finland, and Switzerland. At the same time the negotiation and aesthetic plausibility of aesthetic styles, pragmatic power and particular (new) media logics are evaluated. The concept of civil religion deserves this closer re-defining also with respect to past and recent (post)secularization and non-religion discourses. Hopefully,

this multi-layered analysis of aesthetics and aesthetic pragmatics of civil religion will shed some light on the persistent appropriateness of the civil religion concept and its capacity to be introduced into various methodological contexts in combination with the aesthetic perspective.

**Baldassare Scolari:** Martyrs in public space: aesthetics and performativity of political violence

The paper analyzes medial representations of the assassination of the leader of the Christian Democratic Party in Italy, Aldo Moro, in 1978 by the Red Brigades, with the aim of highlighting a two-fold moment: the presentation of Moro as a martyr of the State and of the Church. In the past 35 years, Moro has been staged in different media both as a victim in the war of the sovereign State against terrorism and as a Christian victim in the war against unbelievers. This double meaning reveals an overlapping of profane and sacral representation. The investigation postulates a connection between procedures of legitimization of political authority and martyr figurations, considering martyr representations of Aldo Moro's death as performances through which the event acquires a metaphysical meaning. It is assumed that through the use of statements and images iterating the Christian semiotics of martyrdom, the death of Moro is constructed as an act of self-sacrifice for an ahistorical and absolute cause or principle.

**Jenny Ponzo:** The intersection of religious and national symbolism: the motif of the procession in Italian contemporary novels (1948–2011)

One of the five types of civil religion identified in modern Italy by Robert Bellah (1974) is a pre-Christian substrate called "basso continuo". To explain this system of beliefs and loyalties deeply rooted in the Italian mentality, Bellah cited a novel by Carlo Levi, *Cristo si è fermato ad Eboli*, and in particular the religious procession episode. As shown by a lively academic and media debate started in the 1990s, the notion of civil religion as applied to Italy remains controversial. However, the study of literary texts can help to reflect on its expression in Italian culture. This research focuses on the representations of some symbols and rituals in a corpus of Italian novels written between 1948 and 2011 and set during the national unification period (*Risorgimento*). The analyses of the recurring theme of the procession shows how sub-Christian, Catholic and civil motifs interact and overlap: the national symbolism often borrows religious rituals and symbols in order to solve revolutionary tensions and to foster people's identification with the institutions.

**Michael Ulrich:** The impact of religious symbolism on marketing: an enquiry into analogies between religious motivation and consumers' brand loyalty  
This research focuses on strategies driving some of the most successful recent marketing campaigns. Market shares of 20% and more, successfully built and defended by using religious symbolism, are exceptional and need an explana-

tion that goes beyond marketing-budgets and brand-identification. The project asks how some of these extremely successful marketing strategies operate within a framework of visual semiotics that charge a seemingly profane commodity with religious symbolic attributes. The theoretical frame is based on the ideas of Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum concerning capabilities for self-realization and common welfare, and on James M. Buchanan's club good theory, introducing the insider-outsider pattern as a prerequisite for any notion of doing "the right thing". Enquiring into the potential appropriation and high performativity of religious symbolism for the business community in a civil religion setting, this research also outlines the often-overlooked economic dimension within the study of religion.

**Jerre Kyyrö:** Aesthetic strategies of mediatized civil religion: the case of the Marshal of Finland

In the first decade of this century, the figure of Field Marshal Carl Gustav Emil Mannerheim (1867–1951) gained much attention, aesthetic transposition and visibility in Finnish art and media. One example is the cross-media production *The Marshal of Finland*, 2012, including a film of Mannerheim's life made by a Kenyan production crew. The paper examines different strategies adopted by media actors (authors of the project, representatives of the media) to relate audiences to the concentration of national symbols, of which Mannerheim is a central part, which are often presented in the media because of their ability to evoke emotional responses. The paper examines how in mediatized environments social and cultural fields are subsumed to media logics. It is hypothesized that aesthetics plays a prominent role in this process of mediatized civil religion, in which (ritualized or non-ritualized) practices are invented to represent national symbols. Part of this is also a meta-discourse about how symbols should be represented.

## Aesthetics of Religion: Images and Sounds

**Anastasia Serghidou:** The invention of religious monumentality and the challenge of thaumasiourgia within the ancient body-culture

R. Schuman introduces the concept of the "soma-aesthetic" in order to formulate his arguments on the ethico-political challenge and its image as a "site" of sensorial apprehension (aesthesia) reflecting a metaphor of architectural construction. This epistemological approach helps us to designate the function of the body as a "signifier" of aesthetic usages and a stylization of the self within a monumental world. This recalls M. Merleau-Ponty's concepts, notably in relation with the body as an epicenter of aesthetic combinations of gestures and a topos of the metaphorical expression of geomorphy. By taking these epistemological

approaches we examine the conceptualizations of physis, morphè, ousia and the way they interfere with place, monumentality and miraculous events. I first examine monuments or places that persisted as generators of thaumata (miracles). I mainly insist on the impact body movement presented through the formulation of what F. Barker calls “corporeal history”. In a second place I insist on the way some authors such as Theophrastus or Epictetus underline, through metaphorical symmetries, the image of the body-self and the strategies of monumentalization. I also insist on the way transgression of self-control resulting from hybriatic behavior puts in question religious and political monumentality. At this point we may refer to the way Epictetus treats the Akropolis as a continuum of the self (Epictetus, *Entretiens*, 1 V). To go further we take the example of the suffering body, the thaumaturgic issues and the toponymics related to the connection of disease, miraculous healings and local rituals.

**Hubert Mohr:** Religion and the nuclear waste dump: notes on the stability and perdurability of sacred signs and their aesthetics

Departing from the debate on the semiotics of nuclear waste disposal sites during the 1980s and 1990s (Thomas A. Sebeok; Roland Posner) the paper discusses the dynamics of signs (e. g. sign usage or significations processes) in which religions are involved to produce cultural and social stability and sustainability. Comparing different types of religion (complex Western religion as Christianity; Aborigine religion) the presentation will try to establish a model for communications into the future through materials, rituals, body relics or symbolizing oral and visual techniques. The approach will center on aesthetics of religion as an integrative theory of cultural semiotics, communication theory, social design and aesthetization.

**Marian Caulfield:** Rupturing epistemologies through aural explorations in the study of religions

Whilst there is no doubt that in Western academia important methodological foundations for the study of religions have been set, in this paper, I will highlight how recent research in the area of religion and sonic worldviews has been shaking up methodological mores within the discipline. I will state why development in and attention to this field of research should be regarded as essential to the future development of the discipline if it is to stay relevant, up to date and attractive to young and innovative scholars. I will highlight how modern scholars have been pushing the boundaries in this field and I will particularly focus on how research pertaining to the aural and sonic aspect of worldviews has been rupturing epistemologies in the study of religions with some suggestions as to a way forward through interdisciplinary endeavors.

## African Sacred Space? Establishing Sacred Places in Africa and Beyond

### Panel Chair: Magnus Echtler

The African religious landscape has certainly been dynamic as suggested by this conference. However, with sacred space often conceptualized as trans-human, as removed from the vagrancies of social change, we ask how sacred space is imagined, established and maintained. The panel is concerned with both the poetics and politics of sacred space, with the ways in which sacred space is constructed, shared or contested. We also invite reflection on sacred space beyond the religious realm. How are real places turned into heterotopias, how are they set apart to belong to another order of space that reflects, contests and inverts hegemonic spatial structures? Finally, based on the various papers discussing these questions in their specific contexts, we ask whether it is possible to discern something “African” in the construction of sacred space in Africa and the African Diaspora, something that would distinguish our panel from others on Asia or Europe.

**Ulrich Berner:** Naturalistic worldview and/or nature religion? National parks as sacred spaces

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, national parks were founded in various countries in order to conserve nature by protecting limited spaces against economic exploitation and destruction. The arguments for establishing national parks, however, often took up elements of religious language alongside concepts of the natural sciences. Thus the question arises about the distinction between and compatibility of a naturalistic worldview and a religion of nature. Examples will be taken from the writings of John Muir and Julian Huxley, influential conservationists or biologists who were involved in the foundation of national parks in America and Africa respectively.

**Kupakwashe Mtata:** Contiguous modes of sacredness in the Matobo Hills of Zimbabwe

Utilizing the notion “religion” beyond its conventional limits and using it rather as a heuristic tool this paper explores sacral practices of various actors in relation to their natural environment in and around the Matobo National Park in Zimbabwe. The colonial imposition of the idea of the national park as a space to be set apart from mundane human activity in the Matobo area, a region which is the core area of the Mwali oracular cult, led to the adjacency of varied sacralities of nature. The “religions” in question pertain to nature conservation practices in the Matobo National Park and rain-seeking practices in the greater Matobo Hills area. Classification and description of these neighboring “reli-

gions” of nature and description of their interaction will lead to an appreciation of land use disputes and opportunities for cooperation.

**Franz Kogelmann:** Soofie Saheb and the snake

The compound of the Riverside Mosque is probably the most sacred space for many Muslims of Durban. It is the place where the shrine of Soofie Saheb was erected. According to a local oral tradition this plot of land had been chosen by Soofie Saheb to construct his first mosque. At the end of the nineteenth century this area was already inhabited by Indian horticulturists but they were terrified by a huge python living next to them. Soofie Saheb convinced the owner to sell this plot of land to plant the flag of Islam. Fearlessly he approached the place and started to talk to the python. The snake showed up, finally headed towards the lagoon area of the Umgeni River and was never seen again. The paper explores and contextualizes the founding myth of the Riverside Mosque with its implications for the establishment of the Chishtiyya Sufi-brotherhood in Durban.

**Janice Desire Busingye:** Sacred space, urban development and the politics of siting Pentecostal worship places in Kampala, Uganda

Pentecostalism has had a profound effect on the understanding and practice of religion in Africa because of its contemporary nature and resonance with the modern lifestyle of urban dwellers. Because of rapid growth in numbers, the demand for worship spaces puts pressure on available urban spaces. Most ritual spaces are sited on reclaimed wetland, which by law, is supposed to be free of inhabitants. Cost of land informs the choice of wetlands for the construction of sacred sites. Pentecostal churches, which have noticeable leaders within city authorities, benefit the most from the reclamation of wetlands because of their claim to sacrality. Based on fieldwork on the spatial practices of the Synagogue Church in Kampala, this paper interrogates how sacred space, as spiritually untouchable but economically viable space, affects the livelihoods of poor urban dwellers.

**Magnus Ehtler:** African Covenant: producing sacred space in the Nazareth Baptist Church, South Africa

This paper is concerned with the production of sacred space in the Nazareth Baptist Church, one of the largest African Independent Churches in South Africa. I analyze the poetics and politics of the church’s most important sites: the holy mountain iNhlankakazi and the sacred city eKuphakameni/eBuhleni. In three steps, I consider how the sacredness of these places is imagined and conceptualized, what spatial order is established in practice during the large congregations in January and July, and, finally, how the access to the sites was contested in the church’s most recent split in 2011. In conclusion, I argue for an increasing “Africanization” in the production of sacred space in the NBC, which forms part of the traditionalization of the authority of the church leaders.

## After Deconstruction: Reassembling the Study of “Religion/s” and Other Dubious Categories

### Panel Chairs: Egil Asprem, Ann Taves

Many of the critical categories in Religious Studies – including “religion” itself – are problematic and unstable concepts that often mask normative, theological or ideological biases. They distort rather than aid critical scholarship, and an abundant literature since the early 1990s has aimed to deconstruct them. But after we have dismantled problematic categories, then what? This panel examines four categories, focusing on the means for, potentials of, and the problems involved with deconstructing them. Starting with an evaluation of the effects of dismantling “Gnosticism” within “Gnostic studies”, the panel examines the practical import of deconstructing categories that have constituted fields and subfields – including the new vistas of research afforded by such exercises and their less fortunate consequences. Individual papers on “religion”, “magic”, and “esotericism” take cues from the case of Gnosticism as they explore specific methods for de- and reconstructing research, and explore emerging alternatives.

#### **Dylan M. Burns:** Gnostic Studies without “Gnosticism”

In 1996, Michael Allen Williams published the influential monograph *Rethinking “Gnosticism”: Arguments for Dismantling a Dubious Category* (Princeton). Over the course of the next fifteen years, Anglophone scholarship largely abandoned “Gnosticism”, experimenting with the study of sources once dubbed “Gnostic” – particularly the Nag Hammadi Library – without recourse to the term. “Gnosticism” has survived, and for the better; many scholars define and use the term, but with greater care than before. Moreover, the post-Williams effort to describe Gnostic sources in terms of Early Christianity rightfully underscored their embeddedness in early Christian communities, rather than a hypothetical “Gnostic religion”. The experiment had unintended consequences, too: a “chilling effect” temporarily shrank the field, and the experts’ denial that there was any conversation about “Gnosticism” to be had led scholars in other fields, such as Judaic Studies, to neglect Gnostic sources entirely. Nearly twenty years after *Rethinking “Gnosticism”*, the conversation about it begins anew.

#### **Bernd-Christian Otto:** “Magic” research without “magic”?

Even though the category of “magic” has suffered severe criticism throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, we are witnessing an unprecedented boom in the study of “magic” in numerous disciplines. In fact, a thorough examination of the concept of “magic” may not lead to its mere “deconstruction” but rather to the (re-)construction of novel and promising domains of research: (1) the historicization of the concept may reveal important insights into processes of Othering and identity formation in Western history; (2) the identification of its

numerous semantic nuances may ultimately lead to its disentanglement as a second-order scholarly category, thereby arriving at a more differentiated and less fragile and ethnocentric conceptual apparatus (an approach recently dubbed “patterns of magicity”); (3) the growing research on “Western learned magic” reveals a fascinating and under-explored Western “tradition” of ritual texts and practices. This “tradition” used to belong to the domain of private, occultist historians, but has today (finally) made it into academia.

**Egil Asprem:** Overcoming strategic essentialism and category inflation in the study of “esotericism”: a building block approach

“Esotericism” presents conceptual problems that are parallel to, but more serious than, those encountered in the case of “Gnosticism”. Like the Messina definition of Gnosticism, “esotericism” has been problematically defined in both historical and typological terms. Unlike Gnosticism, however, its historical scope has never been clearly delimited, permitting an inflation of the category to cover highly diverse currents spanning millennia. One of the mechanisms which has permitted this “category inflation” to happen is an implicit form of “strategic essentialism”: understood as an “umbrella term” for “rejected” currents that have no definite home in the academy, “esotericism” has been strategically useful for mobilizing research efforts. This situation presents a delicate dilemma: the category is theoretically unsatisfactory, but dismantling it comes with the risk of impeding research on a practical level. This paper suggests a way out through a definitional pluralism based on a building block approach.

**Ann Taves:** Will a building block approach undermine the academic study of religion?

In discussing what a building block approach (BBA) might offer to the study of religion, scholars worry about its implications for departments devoted to studying religion. A BBA, however, is not merely deconstructive; it puts deconstruction in service of understanding how more basic elements are combined in various historical and cultural contexts to generate different formations, including schools of thought, traditions of practice, and academic disciplines. Recognizing that our departments – like religions – are formations need not destroy either “religion” or “the study of religion,” but allows us to view both as historically contingent formations structured and maintained by complex cultural concepts, such as religion. As insiders to the academic study of religion, we can ask if this historical formation needs to be reformed or reconstituted. I argue for reform based on a revitalization of the comparative enterprise that draws on the BBA to set up comparisons that include but are not limited to “religions”.

## After World Religions

### Panel Chair: Tomoko Masuzawa

The World Religions Paradigm (WRP) has been subjected to sustained and rigorous critique in the academic study of religion for many years. However, in spite of this critique becoming an established part of the Religious Studies (RS) corpus, one area in which the WRP has proven especially resilient is in pedagogy, and in particular in introductory courses on “religion”. This panel brings together the editors and three contributing authors of the forthcoming volume *After “World Religions”: Reconstructing Religious Studies* (Routledge 2015), to operationalize this critique and offer concrete, practical alternatives for use in pedagogical contexts. In addition to presenting viable approaches which avoid, problematize and subvert the WRP, these papers offer a broad range of innovative theoretical and methodological strategies, and directly address the pedagogical challenges presented in different departmental, institutional and geographical contexts.

**Jack Tsonis:** A different paradigm needs a different strategy of comparison: the fundamental challenge in historical perspective

The world religions paradigm has been discredited. Scholars are busy finding other ways to talk about social behavior and cultural history. But what logic of comparison is actually being advocated in this shift? If “world religions” and similar categories are unacceptable for describing variegated cultural traditions, what names, categories, and grouping strategies can be used in their place? Despite the variety of new critical work in religious studies, these broader taxonomic questions often remain out of view. While there is no simple answer, this paper puts the problem in perspective by juxtaposing the contemporary critical paradigm with the structure of three previous paradigms from the last 500 years (including most recently the WRP). By outlining things in this way, the hope is to focus researchers on key theoretical issues at stake in the critical study of human culture. The political dimensions of scholarship loom large in this challenge.

**David Robertson:** “Classify and conquer”: the World Religion Paradigm in Religious Studies pedagogy

I begin this introduction by outlining the colonial, theological and evolutionary assumptions inherent in the WRP, showing that it reinforces a model of religion centred on belief and evinced by texts and institutions, effectively privileging the accounts of elites, de-emphasizing variation and marginalizing constructions which do not fit into its typology. I shall then demonstrate the resilience of the WRP in pedagogy, particularly in introductory RS courses. Attempts to reconstruct these courses have either broadened the category so far as to attempt to

include everyone, or ostensibly rejected the category while continuing to use the same typology. These courses have a major impact upon public perception of the field, upon teaching throughout primary and secondary education, and upon wider policy and attitudes. Although some voices have started calling for a radical reformulation of introductory RS teaching, I conclude that there is a definite need for sustained scholarly attention toward this end.

**Teemu Taira:** A discursive approach in challenging the World Religions Paradigm in teaching

Despite the scholarly criticism presented against the so-called World Religions Paradigm (WRP), it has remained a persistent part of the teaching and disciplinary organization of Religious Studies departments. In order to find alternative approaches, this paper demonstrates how a discursive approach can be implemented in existing WR modules and undergraduate teaching more generally without assuming or maintaining the WRP. By providing theoretical and methodological framing for such an approach, this paper argues that the discursive approach to established “religious traditions” should start by exploring how they came to be classified as a “religion”, and that the approach should include an attempt to explain what has been “done” by the classification. The overall impact would mean that students are able to think critically about the kind of classificatory tools and socially negotiated constructs “religion” and “WR” have been, and continue to be, globally.

**Christopher Cotter:** Innovative pedagogies: methods and media for the introductory course

Now that we have critiqued the WRP, subverted it, and provided alternatives to it, how can we need to put these measures into practice? In this final paper, I embrace my position as co-editor of the volume, and co-founder of the influential Religious Studies Project, to present innovative pedagogical techniques which facilitate the twenty-first century introduction to “religion”, avoid and problematize the WRP, and potentially increase the transmission and internalization of this critique in the next generation of scholars. Drawing on a wide body of exemplary material – from “religious” food practices, to the archaeological data left by the Northern European Neolithic peoples – and approaches embracing “complex learning” and visual media, I argue that emergent pedagogical techniques can be utilized alongside the more tried and tested methodological approaches already explored to create new ways to introduce RS against a culturally intransigent WRP.

## The Anastasia Movement in Russia and Beyond: (Trans)formations, Adaptations and Manifestations

### Panel Chair: Rasa Pranskevičiūtė

The panel addresses alternative spiritualities of Russian origin, as well as their formation, spread and expressions in the context of social change. It also presents current socioreligious processes in post-Soviet and Western regions, discussing diverse manifestations and changes of religious phenomena concerning institutional and individual religiosities at (trans)national and (trans)regional levels. The panel is dedicated to one of the New Age environmentalist phenomena, the Anastasia movement, which originated around 1997 in the central part of Russia and has spread to the West. Currently, there are Anastasian groups emerging in post-Soviet regions and Western Europe, Scandinavia, North America, Australia, Africa, etc. The Anastasia movement, as an internationally widespread manifestation of nature-based spiritualities, appears as a phenomenon of a global (more precisely, Western-influenced and -formed) alternative religiosity and contemporary individualistic culture, to which local (post-Soviet/Western environmental and national) sociocultural features are characteristic.

**James R. Lewis, Rasa Pranskevičiūtė:** The Anastasia movement and its transformations internationally: worldviews, beliefs and attitudes

This paper focuses on the Anastasia movement, which emerged in Russia, and subsequently spread to East-Central Europe and beyond. Our research focuses on expressions of alternative spirituality in the movement. Anastasians adhere to the ideas presented in an anthology of books referred to as *The Ringing Cedars of Russia*. Humanity's relationship with nature, God and the Universe; the creation of the world, the power of thought, the ability to mold the future, the relationship between a man and a woman, the establishment of love spaces, etc. are discussed in the series. Based on data obtained from a questionnaire administered to Anastasians in Russia, Ukraine, the Baltics and Scandinavia, the paper's findings provide a demographic profile of Anastasian membership, an overview of their social and political attitudes, as well as their beliefs about select spiritual and paranormal phenomena. Our findings are compared with findings from parallel research on other alternative spiritual movements.

**Julia Andreeva:** The interpretations of ecovillages in the Russian New Age movement "Anastasia"

The Anastasia movement, based on the books of Vladimir Megre, which have been published since 1996, is concentrated on many different ideas including ecological lifestyle, spiritual transformation, revival of traditions, and alternative economic and healing practices. One of the key goals of the followers is moving out of the city to ecovillage communities. But here there are many points of dis-

cussion among the readers of Megre's books, for instance, how to distribute responsibilities among the participants, who can make decisions, and which rules they should have. Their ecovillages differ significantly from many other European ones and stress not so much ecological questions than kinship territory and ancient traditions. All details of co-existence need to be negotiated even though they do not have a communal life. My paper is devoted to the different versions of book-based ideas of living in harmony with nature and homeland.

**Leonard van't Hul:** From Russia with love: the appropriation of Anastasia's teachings in eco-based communities in the Netherlands

Inspired by the ideals presented in the books on Anastasia by the Russian author Vladimir Megre, various Dutch individuals and groups have attempted to initiate local self-sustaining, eco-based communities in the Netherlands. Unfortunately, given the country's modest size, dense population, strict construction prescription, and lack of a Taiga-like environment suitable locations are lacking, leaving only the eastern outskirts open as eligible options for the establishing of "Anastasia villages". These limitations exemplify a broader question of how spiritual communities negotiate and legitimize their position to "non-believers" and policy makers. Based on a series of in-depth interviews and written sources I assess how individuals adhering to the ideals of the Anastasia movement (discursively) shape and authenticate their ideas and beliefs: of special interest is the question how the "exotic," allegedly age-old Russian spiritual beliefs are transplanted and adopted by individuals and communities residing in different local contexts.

**Natalie Wahnsiedler:** Ringing Cedars movement in Germany: adaption and transformation

In this paper, I will discuss how ideas proposed within the Ringing Cedars movement are adapted and transformed amongst German spiritual seekers. Different from the post-Soviet space, where the works by Vladimir Megre have triggered a new movement of ecological settlements, there has been a long history of alternative ecological villages in Germany. The Ringing Cedars book series has not provided a new life philosophy, but offered instead a new direction in the existing spiritual milieu. Readers take up the ideas from the books, but blend them with more acquainted concepts such as anthroposophy. Couples or single persons who already have experience in living in existing ecological communes are looking for a more independent and individual variation and find it in the idea of family estates.

## The Archaeology of Religion and Religious Experience

### Panel Chairs: Rubina Raja, Jörg Rüpke

This session considers and reviews various approaches to the archaeology of religion and of religious experience. Through the last decade publications on religion and rituals as expressed through archaeological evidence have increasingly expanded. Central to the session is the question of how to approach religion through archaeological material, the main trends being “archaeology of religion” and “archaeology of religious experience” (among others represented by Raja and Rüpke). Today, archaeological data pertaining to religion and ritual actions are taken as seriously in Religious Studies and History of Religion as religion is taken seriously within Archaeology. In this field archaeological and religious historical research meet, even if they have two very different lines of ancestry in scholarship. For the ancient world, “archaeology of religion” has established itself as a field of interdisciplinary research that presupposes basic methodology on the part of the archaeologists and basic knowledge of the history of religion on the part of ancient historians and scholars of religion during the past decade. On the other hand “archaeology of religious experience” aims at grasping lived religion, a concept coined for modern religion, and therefore not without possible flaws when adapted to non-living societies. These sessions aim at bringing together in fruitful discussion approaches to the archaeology of religion and the archaeology of religious experience.

**Luther H. Martin:** Caves, rituals, and minds: the archaeology of (religious) experience and the Roman Cult of Mithras

Various species have always been drawn to caves for shelter, protection, refuge, or simply out of curiosity for what they might conceal. Homo sapiens is no exception, from the Paleolithic to the spelunkers of modernity. It is, consequently, unsurprising that religions, from their social origins, have exploited this attraction for their own purposes. In this presentation, I will exemplify this attraction with the Roman Cult of Mithras, who universally met in speleae, whether natural or constructed, for their ritual activities. I will argue that these ritual activities incorporated techniques and strategies (e. g. sensory deprivation, controlled environmental stimuli such as architectural designs, symbolic representations, and behavioral augmentations such as masks or ritual threats, etc.) that enhanced or suppressed everyday cognitive functions to deliberately induce altered (non-ordinary but predictable) states of consciousness. Such experiential responses were interpreted as “religious” from within the cult context.

**Gunnel Ekroth:** The terror of the text: why we need archaeology to understand the complexity of ancient Greek religion

The trust put in the written word in the exploration of ancient Greek religion tends to overshadow all other sources. Texts are seen as providing specific and accurate information, while archaeology is more imprecise due to its need for interpretation, as archaeology is “mute”. The use of archaeological evidence is often considered as requiring no particular skills or training and archaeology is seen as a vast resource to dip into for illustrating texts, often taking one particular passage and matching it with one particular archaeological situation or item. This “terror of the text” has led to some skewed perceptions of ancient Greek religion, especially ritual practices. A closer study of the archaeological evidence for a particular cult or religious element reveals that the ritual reality was vastly more complex than what our written sources tend to let us know. This paper will discuss some such examples concerning altars and sacrificial installations.

**Ditte Maria Damsgaard Hiort:** Lived Ancient Religion experienced through “A Companion to the Archaeology of Religion in the Ancient World”

This work is in many ways not only much needed and helpful, but also offers the reader a whole new offset, framework and perspective. “A Companion to the Archaeology of Religion in the Ancient World” enables scholars to be in the process of learning how to master their projects, to have a rare opportunity to frame the concepts of studying religious aspects of archaeology and history in a whole new mind and setting. The methodological approaches presented in this work open up for investigation both a narrow and a wider conceptualization of ancient religious practices, experiences, spaces and expressiveness. “Lived Ancient Religion” furthers and stimulates our research possibilities by not dematerializing or decontextualizing the material. My own dissertation revolves around altars from the region of the Decapolis in the Roman period. Though a thorough analysis of the typology and iconography is forming the basis of this study, it is concepts like “Lived Ancient Religion” that allow the (real) deep and full contextualization and understanding of their archaeology and history.

## **Artisans of Greek religion: (Re)Shaping the Gods in Poetry and Art of Ancient Greece**

**Panel Chair: Miguel Herrero De Jáuregui**

This panel will explore the dynamic role of poets and artists in the construction of classical Greek religion. Relatively stable representations of the gods in texts and images are a consequence of the traditional character of Greek religious dis-

courses. However, depictions of divine forms and powers were embedded in multiform and open accounts constantly revisited by poets and artists, who were free, almost compelled, to innovate within the conventional frame, to shift the meanings of traditional aspects of the gods, and to create new (yet recognizable) constructions of the divine. The papers will analyze several instances of the dialectic relationship of tradition and innovation in oral, textual, and iconographic accounts of divine forms and actions, considering the active role of the expected audience in the construal of specific meanings of each particular description or narrative.

**Gabriella Pironti:** Dynamics of representation of the divine in archaic Greek poetry

Herodotus' statement about the founding role of Homeric and Hesiodic poems in the representation of the divine in ancient Greece has greatly influenced, and justified, a reading in a dogmatic, almost static, sense of such a role. This paper, instead, aims for an exploration of the dynamics between tradition and innovation in religious matters which departs from these archaic components, through the analysis of some cases of narrative reconfiguration (e.g. in the *Iliad*, the *Diôs Apatê*, and the *Theomachia*). The poet not only dialogues with tradition, but also collaborates, on the basis of a shared knowledge, with an audience as an active agent in the (re)construction of meaning, which is the ultimate goal of poetic representation (e.g. "Hera's wrath" in the Homeric Hymn to Apollo). Such a poetic representation of the divine has its own autonomous potentiality which deserves to be wholly appreciated under a new light.

**Carminé Pisano:** Hermes' *klutà érga* in the workshop of Greek poets: for an "epidemiological" analysis of ancient narratives of divine actions

This paper intends to study the dialectic between tradition and innovation in the context of the Greek narratives of divine actions and in the light of the Sperberian model of "epidemiological" analysis, considering the different versions of a myth not as variants of a hypothetical original narrative, but as reformulations related to specific cultural frameworks, at the same time individual and social. I shall focus on the case study of the *klutà érga* of the newborn Hermes: theft of Apollo's cattle, invention of the lyre, reconciliation with his brother, mutual exchange of gifts. Within this traditional narrative frame, immediately recognizable by the Greek public, the single authors change the chronological order of the events or focus on a particular segment of the story in relation to specific cultural choices, influenced by the enunciative contexts of execution and by the horizon of expectation of the recipients.

**Adeline Grand-Clément:** Gods in color: the variegated facets of divine powers

Colors, due to their capacity to catch attention and to convey emotions, offer a good means of expressing the powers of the gods. Hence, they are useful for poets or craftsmen, as they contribute to the shaping of the invisible entities, in both literature and visual arts. Many of the divine epithets found in archaic poetry refer to chromatism, and we know that the statues of the gods were also colorful. Yet, the chromatic aspect of each god is not fixed and may vary over time. Even though the “traditional” epithets, inherited from Homer, are still used by the poets from the archaic period to the Hellenistic era, their meaning and the images they convey can change. This paper aims at exploring several examples of this shifting of meaning, by paying attention to the way the values attached to divine colors can vary according to some specific contexts.

**Vassiliki Zachari:** Eros at the altar: between innovation and tradition on Attic vase-painting

Gods at the altar is a favorite subject on black-figured and red-figured Attic vases. At the turning point of the late archaic period, when the new technique is enthusiastically adopted by the Keramikos’ artisans, a new divinity timidly enters the Attic imagery: Eros. Despite the lack of prominent sanctuaries and altars for the worship of this primordial divinity, according to Plato (*Symposium*, 189C 4–8) and the archaeological realia in Attica, the visual images of Eros abound in wide variety, mostly during the second half of the fifth century and the beginning of the fourth century BCE. This paper will examine and analyze the precise contexts of Eros’ presence by an altar in this series of vases in order to understand the meaning of these scenes.

**Corinne Bonnet:** Response

## Áskesis in the Axial Age from a Cultural Evolutionary Perspective

**Panel Chair: Anders Klostergaard Petersen**

In the wake of the renewed interest in cultural evolution – associated with Bellah and Eisenstadt – this panel focuses on cultural evolution in the context of axial age religion. To narrow the discussion further we highlight the phenomenon of áskesis. Following Sloterdijk, we define áskesis as programs of training. We shall scrutinize a variety of phenomena not traditionally discussed under this rubric. This admittedly more comprehensive scope of the concept enables us to include not only various forms of religiously motivated bodily self-renunciation and mortification but also ethical programs of divine imitation, philosophical

training programs, sports, etc. We shall highlight the specific forms *áskesis* takes on in the context of axial age culture with an eye on previous types in archaic and tribal cultures and with a keen eye on subsequent forms. Thereby, the panel covers all four of the central themes of the World Congress.

**Merlin Donald:** The theoretical background for talking about cultural evolution and the Axial Age

The aim of this presentation is to provide the panel with a theoretical basis for talking about the cultural evolutionary perspective and the axial age. The contribution concentrates on the relationship between biological and cultural evolution and discusses the major transitions in memory cognition from three to two million years ago unto today with a special focus on the axial age.

**Hans Jørgen Lundager Jensen:** *Áskesis* in the Hebrew Bible

Ancient Israelite religion – or more properly the religion(s) of the Hebrew Bible – is commonly not associated with asceticism at all. In many respects the “theologies” and religious attitudes may diverge within the Hebrew Bible. But on one issue there seems to be an almost total unanimity: earthly being is in principle conceived of as good, because that is all there is for humans, Israelites as well as all others, including animals. Hebrew Bible religion is a religion of blessing and fertility, and Yahweh is, first and foremost, a deity of fertility. Still, an “ascetic-oriented” approach may help in pointing out some important characteristics of the Hebrew Bible. It will probably also be beneficial in a discussion about what, if anything, an “axial age” or an axial breakthrough has to do with the theologies of the Hebrew Bible.

**Bernhard Lang:** Ascetic spirituality and personal piety: two types of individualized religiosity

Traditional Catholic theology distinguishes between the “spirituality” of religious virtuosi and the “personal piety” of ordinary believers. Whereas spirituality (understood in this traditional sense of the term) belongs to the religious elite and is based on ascetic practice that can be taught and learned, personal piety, typical of the masses, seems to arise spontaneously. The paper explores the two types of individualized religiosity with reference to examples. The institutional and formalized nature as well as the life-long commitment of spirituality is contrasted with the non-institutional, informal and episodic nature characteristic of personal piety. The latter is typically linked to the experience of social and personal crisis. By contrast, spirituality seeks to transcend the realm of the mundane, its challenges and crises, so as to free ascetic practice from practical concerns by focusing on the divine as an absolute value. Spirituality seeks perfection rather than the solution of pressing everyday problems.

**Einar Thomassen:** The question of Islam

How is the emergence and spread of Islam to be understood from the point of view of cultural evolution? This paper will attempt to apply to Islam the parameters characterizing the religious transformation associated with the axial age, with special attention to the ideology and practices of self-renunciation in their various forms: in ritual, social interaction and “mystical” exercises and training programs. How does the emergence of these features in the context of Islam relate to the timeline of religious evolution implied by the theory of the axial age?

## **Assuming the Supernatural: Cognitive Approaches to Greek Religion and Magic**

**Panel Chair: Esther Eidinow**

Following the discipline of anthropology, scholars have tended to ascribe the beliefs and practices of ancient Greek religion and magic to the workings of “culture”. However, as some anthropologists argue, these explanations may seem partial and unsatisfactory, tending to emphasize factors that promote the spread of ideas, rather than those that constrain them; to treat universal and local properties of culture as mutually exclusive; and to leave the specific processes involved opaque and mysterious. Scholarship in the cognitive science of religion offers some alternative perspectives on the organization of religious/magical ideas. Each paper in this panel examines a different aspect of religious/magical representation, including myth, text, ritual and doctrine. They explore how some recent cognitive theories may support and deepen our understanding of the ontological assumptions implicit in ancient Greek, including Christian, representations of gods and the supernatural, by analyzing processes of cognition universal to human beings.

**Sarah Hitch:** Cognitive approaches to anthropomorphism: the case of ancient Greece

In Greek myths, the traditions that broadly functioned in ancient Greek societies as religious discourse, gods are often portrayed as subject to many of the physical limitations of humans: in Homer, for instance, gods are unavailable or ignorant of human activities due to physical absence, sleep and other distractions. For many Classical scholars, this picture of divinity could only be reconciled with the extensive ritual performances attested throughout the Greek world by divorcing practice from myth, a segregation supported by the lack of explicit attention to gods as recipients of sacrifice in the majority of myths. In the cognitive science of religion, such a contrast between practice and text can be collapsed

through an understanding of the narrative factors that are mentally appealing and promote memory and transmission of texts. In cognitive terms, a paradoxical notion of omnipotent anthropomorphism is a typical, and very successful, feature of religions worldwide.

**Esther Eidinow:** Ritual competence, magical power

Scholarship on ancient magic, examining evidence over time and place and across different media, has focused on the role and identity of ritual specialists, investigating the nature and source of their perceived expertise. Less attention has been paid to those intended or identified as the targets of “magical” rituals, who tend to be described simply in terms of their role as passive victims. Focusing on an experience of occult aggression reported by the fourth-century CE orator Libanius, this paper examines how the perceived power of magic was not rooted simply in the exercise of a single ritual. Drawing on the cognitive theory of ritual form developed by Robert McCauley and E. Thomas Lawson, it examines not only the rituals of the practitioners of magic, but also those of their victims, and the ways in which, together, they created the perceived power of ancient Greek magic.

**Hugh Bowden:** Sensory approaches to divine epiphany

Research into the “cultural life of the senses” carried out by the Concordia Sensoria Research Team (CONSERT) in Montreal over the last 25 years has raised important questions about the “hierarchy” of the senses. Ancient accounts of encounters between mortals and gods in Greek texts often include descriptions of unusual sensory impacts. This paper uses these accounts to explore the role of the senses in Greek religious perceptions. To what extent can we see specific sensory experiences underlying the (obviously culturally constructed) accounts of “epiphanies” in our texts? How far do these accounts follow identifiable patterns? How far were certain actions aimed at invoking the actual presence of divinities, rather than pleasing them from a distance? Focusing on smell in particular it aims to bring insights into work on sensory cognition into the analysis of ancient religion, and to provide material for the broader study of the senses in history.

**Bella Sandwell:** Are ancient Christian doctrinal formulations cognitively costly?

Those working in the Cognitive Science of Religion usually classify Christianity as a “cognitively costly” religion because the complexity of its key concepts, as formulated in doctrinal statements, make it a poor fit with the structures of the evolved human mind and necessitate that it be transmitted and made memorable by regularly repeated, explicit modes of transmission (Boyer, *Religion Explained* and Whitehouse, *Modes of Religiosity*). This paper will focus on late antiquity, the period when Christianity gained the features that CSR sees as

distinctive of it (complex doctrine and routinized communication in the form of preaching), to argue that this might not be the best way to view the situation. It will suggest three ways in which the doctrinal formulations and the way they were transmitted by Christian preachers might actually have had some cognitively optimal features and that this explains the ultimate success of Christianity as a world religion.

## **Attempts at Adaptation in Contemporary Japanese Buddhism: Organizational and Discursive Transformation in the Pure Land Tradition**

### **Panel Chair: Michael Conway**

In the years since the close of WWII, Japanese society has transformed from a primarily agrarian one to a highly urbanized, post-industrial one. These demographic shifts have physically alienated the established religious institutions from their traditional support base, as temple members have moved en masse to urban centers. In this time period, the process of secularization has also advanced more rapidly than in much of the rest of the world, such that the majority of contemporary Japanese self-identify as “irreligious.” This intellectual alienation has become a major barrier to the attempts of religious institutions to maintain connections to their membership. This panel explores how the established religious institutions have attempted to adapt to this situation. We will show how the Shin Buddhist denomination has consciously attempted to transform both organizationally and discursively to meet the demands of a contemporary audience and inquire into the effectiveness of these attempts.

**Robert Rhodes:** Transforming and re-transforming Japanese Pure Land Buddhism: the Dōbōkai movement of the Shinshū Ōtani-ha and its contemporary criticism

The Dōbōkai (Religious Fellowship) Movement, started in the 1960s by the leadership of the Shinshū Ōtani-ha (Higashi Honganji), was a radical attempt to restructure the denomination’s activities by shifting its focus away from conducting funerals to fostering the faith of the individual believers. But especially after the disastrous tsunami of March 11, 2011, the movement’s downplaying of funerals has been questioned by those concerned with the issues of death and the afterlife. Similarly, its emphasis on the individual has been opposed by those who place greater importance on the communal aspects of religion. This paper will discuss these recent criticisms of the Dōbōkai movement and consider how they may impact the future of the Higashi Honganji.

**Yasushi Kigoshi:** The struggles of traditional Buddhist denominations in contemporary Japan: the case of the Shinshū Ōtani-ha

The fundamental problems facing Japanese society at present are the issues of declining birth rates and population concentration. Since birth rates dropped while the Japanese population also came to have the longest life expectancy in the world, the issue of an aging society, where the elderly outnumber the working population, has become a major source of anxiety regarding the country's future. Further, as the population has become more and more concentrated in prosperous, convenient, large cities, the number of marginal villages throughout the country that are in danger of complete depopulation has grown rapidly. Established religious organizations have been forced to attempt to transform themselves in order to survive within these new demographic conditions. This presentation will introduce the current state of these organizations and how they are attempting to adapt to this situation by focusing on efforts within the Shin school, the largest among traditional Japanese Buddhist denominations.

**Shin Fujieda:** Secularized statements by Japanese Buddhist denominations concerning brain death and organ transplants

Public statements concerning medical issues related to brain death and organ transplants have occasionally been issued by Japanese Buddhist denominations. Unfortunately, they have had little impact on the creation of legislation and the formation of popular opinion concerning medical issues. Presently, when the understanding of religion as a matter belonging solely to the private sphere is becoming ever more prevalent, it appears that established organized religions have had to accept that their influence in such matters is declining. To adapt to these circumstances, religious organizations sometimes have refrained from using religious vocabulary and employed secular language when issuing statements concerning medical issues. How are these secularized statements of Buddhist denominations related to the discussions concerning brain death and organ transplants in contemporary Japan? This is the issue I will take up in my paper.

**Tomomichi Nitta:** The incorporation of methods of contemporary psychology into Shin Buddhist ministry

In recent years, the number of Buddhist ministers (including ministers in the Shin school) who are attempting to contribute to society by offering psychological care has increased. The methodological foundation for their activities is laid upon contemporary psychological methods combined with a discourse of "spirituality." While these activities can be seen as attempts to adapt religious discourse to the needs of a contemporary audience, the issue of the continuity between these new approaches and traditional doctrinal systems is very much open to question. This paper will introduce the activities of these Shin Buddhist ministers, point out the differences between their approach and traditional Shin

doctrine, and consider the implications of the problems that arise from this dissonance.

**Michael Pye:** Response

## **Axial Age Research from the Perspectives of Indigenous Religions**

### **Panel Chair: Armin W. Geertz**

Most scholars in the humanities, including historians of religion, during most of the twentieth century explicitly rejected evolutionary theory. The highly speculative, colonial and racist evolutionary schemes in circulation at the end of the nineteenth century led to this rejection. Robert Bellah's book *Religion in Human Evolution* (2011) and the Axial Age debate that it represents was important because it persuaded historians of religions and other historians to opt more or less directly for evolutionary theory. But there are problems with the debate. One of these is that, once again, contemporary indigenous religions are the turning point of major theoretical schemes promoted by thinkers who are not qualified scholars of indigenous religions. This panel consists of friendly but critical responses to Axial Age theory from the perspective of indigenous religions research by scholars who are specialists in indigenous religions.

**Armin W. Geertz:** Critical reflections on Axial Age theory from the perspective of indigenous religions

Jan Assmann argued that the Axial Age is a creation of philosophers and sociologists, who are concerned with the roots of modernity. He calls this concern the quest for beginnings; in this sense it exhibits mythical qualities. I concur with this conclusion and draw attention to the often too confident generalizations about hunter-gatherers. Very seldom do scholars refer to detailed ethnographic studies of particular peoples. "Hunter-gatherers" may be a useful short-hand category, but variations within this category are not insignificant. The problem is that research on them was often carried out with an evolutionary scheme in mind. Furthermore, many authors simply assume a direct transition from hunter-gatherers to complex big god societies and forget about the many transitions to horticulture, small-scale agriculture, small chiefdoms, and so on. This paper will critically discuss hunter-gatherer examples in Axial Age and other evolutionary discourses.

**James L. Cox, Suzanne Owen:** Indigenous religions as a world religion: challenging the Axial Age theory

The theory of an Axial Age in the development of the history of religions, as interpreted recently by Robert Bellah, uses what Bellah calls "the largest possible

framework for [the] study of religion in human evolution". This framework appears to place indigenous religions at an early, primitive stage of human evolution, or construes them as "primal", as a foundation or base on which the great world religions are constructed. Some decades ago, the category "primal" religion served to bring indigenous religions into the mainstream in the academic study of religions; however, it brought with it the essentialisms and arbitrariness contained in such categorizations. This paper critiques primitivist notions of indigenous religions and challenges the Axial Age theory by suggesting that indigenous religions, when subjected to the same criteria for determining the shift in human cosmologies in a postulated Axial Age, can be interpreted as a "world" religion.

**Jan Platvoet:** De-centering the Axial Age: contextualizing history of religions

I will develop an outline of a long term morphological history of religions that de-centers the Axial Age approach by demonstrating that the morphology of the so-called Axial Age religions is as much shaped and constrained by the history of the societies that produced and practiced them, as are those of preliterate, folk, and post-1800 religions. Secondly, I propose that we term these post-1800 religions the religions of the Second Axial Age, the extra-religious onset of which I locate in the Age of Discovery; and that we term the so-called Axial Age religions the religions of the First Axial Age. The introduction of a second axial age de-centers also the Eurocentric, colonialist use of the Axial Age as the unique transition from "prehistoric" to "historic" and from "primitive" to "civilized," etc. that would explain our "modernity." And it links this macro-historic research to the study of modern non-religion and secularity.

**Jack Tsonis:** The marginalization of "non-axial" traditions in the Axial Age discourse: an embedded and on-going problem

This paper provides a critical intellectual history of the Axial Age narrative in order to critique the distinction between "axial" and "non-axial" cultures. Despite Jaspers' pluralistic emphasis, this division ultimately corresponds to the same qualitative hierarchy between "historical" and "non-historical" cultures, and thus to the classic division between *Kulturvölker* and *Naturvölker*. Given that modern indigenous peoples invariably fit into the category of non-axial, this surely presents a major problem. Yet this point has never been raised in the tradition of Axial Age research, meaning that the current resurgence of the paradigm has carried this baggage along with it. Although Robert Bellah provides a much more nuanced portrayal of "tribal" religions in his recent evolutionary epic (2011), categories such as "axial" and "axiality" retain unintended but pejorative implications about groups now designated as "indigenous reli-

gions”. I argue that the only way around this problem is to abandon the categories altogether.

## Back to the Future: Inscribing Change in a Remote Past

### Panel Chair: Philippe Swennen

In numerous religious systems, a change in practice needs to be justified if it reflects an evolution of the belief systems. A frequent strategy legitimates the mutation of the practices with an underlying justification which affirms the restoration of an original cult model. The newness is not claimed as such and the progress does not consist in assuming a change. The legitimizing of the innovation could be done in several forms: (1) by constructing a fiction – that of the returning to the initial states; (2) by referring to an ancestral past that would only reactivate its existence. The argument could be constructed over diverse methodologies that explain the complexity and ambivalence of the notion of origin itself. The present panel wishes to provide some examples of this diversity by taking as testimony related religious systems that could be perceived as completely alien to each another.

**Vinciane Pirenne:** The politics of Olympus at Olympia: the various “inventions” of games and cults

The traditional date of the foundation of the Olympic Games, 776 BCE, is an a posteriori result of the chronological compilation by Hippias of Elis in the fifth century BCE. The Elean writer certainly enhanced the role of Elis in this context and it remains very difficult to establish the “pre-Elean” situation in terms of cults and games. Rather than recovering absolute dates for a period where few are available, this paper aims at questioning the mythical narratives from the Classical to the Roman periods, adding up various founders at Olympia, both for the games and the cults performed there, in honour of Zeus himself, or of the whole “Olympic” pantheon around him. The intertwined identities involved at Olympia – local, regional, “panhellenic” – are at stake in each “reading” of the past in such a famous sanctuary.

**Philippe Swennen:** How can an embryo become a prophet?

Both Vedic and Avestan sacrifices show us how a sacrificer tries to make contact with his gods in the context of complex liturgical ceremonies implying the presence of priests who offer several kinds of gifts, for instance poems, libations or slaughtered cattle. In both cases the religious doctrine justifying the liturgical process explains that the sacrificial ground and space correspond to the beginning of time, but the definitions given to these beginnings are extremely divergent. This is surprising, because Indo-Iranian linguistics strongly suggest that

both religious systems should be genetically very close. In Vedic India, the sacrifice represents an embryo, which should have been a god, but begets the human race. In Iran, the sacrifice renews the first perfect ceremony achieved by Zarathushtra, the so-called prophet who chose to revere Ahura Mazda. How did one similar doctrine produce two such different products?

**Saskia Peels:** The vocabulary of tradition in Greek ritual norms  
 Inscriptions that presented cultic rules and guidelines regularly claim that things should be done *κατὰ τὰ πάτρια*, “according to ancestral norms”, that *ἀρχαίους νόμους* “ancient customs or laws” should be applied, or something similar (e.g. Chaniotis 1996). These phrases were sometimes used as authority statements, next to or instead of a norm’s presentation as the decision or advice of the people, a god, oracle or priest. This paper asks how the “vocabulary of tradition” functions in relation to other authority claims to legitimate cultic rules, building on the work of Parker 2005 on the normative character of *leges sacrae*. Moreover, although the semantic field of *ἀρχη* and cognates has been contrasted with notions of “origin”, such as *τὸν πρῶτον/τὰ πρῶτα, πάλαι/παλαιός* (e.g. Classen 1996), this paper proposes to study the notion of *τὰ πάτρια* in respect to these other notions.

**Céline Redard:** Innovation and tradition in the transmission of the Avestan manuscripts

The Avesta had been subjected to a long period of oral transmission before being written down in the fourth century CE. In the seventh century after the Muslim invasion a portion of the Zoroastrian community immigrated to Gujarat, India. As a result, the Avesta started to have two types of transmission: the Indian and the Iranian. These two schools of transmission seemed very close to one another, however each of them had innovations that are reflected in the manuscript. What do they consist of? Moreover, as long as we are faced with a ritual corpus which remains faithful to the archetype and cannot be modified without any well-established reasons, how could the changes take place?

## Between Body and Soul: Cultural Change and Religious Transformations during the Reformation

**Panel Chair: Alessandra Celati**

Aware of the osmosis between cultural historical frameworks and religious dynamics, we aim to put the Protestant Reformation in context. Renaissance culture reshaped the conception of science in a way which was to become ripe with the rise of the Scientific Revolution, and Italy was the torchbearer of this phenomenon, being also quite a peculiar context from the point of view of the

religious Reformation. Bearing this in mind and taking into account the sixteenth-century confessional entrenchment, our complementary papers will focus on Italy, highlighting the way a certain culture of the body intertwined with the religious discourse. Considering the strong interrelation between body and soul in early modern Christian culture, we aim to suggest original research perspectives: focusing on medicine as a pioneering field of analysis, we intend to examine the religious transformations that occurred during the age of the Reformation.

**Alessandra Celati:** Heretical physicians in the Italian Reformation: original perspectives on the matter of religious transformations

In sixteenth-century Italy, two cultural facts seemed interacting with one another: the aspiration for a religious Reformation and the relevance of Humanism, with its stress on philology and critical doubt. Considering the intersection between these phenomena, my paper looks at the reception of the Reformation in the medical context, examining why a great number of Italian physicians embraced heterodox ideas. Focusing on original archive sources and a sound sample of dissident doctors, I will explain what was specific to their religious experience. Moreover, body and soul being so interconnected, the medical profession became competitive to ecclesiastical authorities with regard to the provision of salvation. Bearing this in mind, the conflict which opposed physicians to clergymen illustrates the peculiar interrelation occurring between medicine and religion. Focusing on heretical doctors, my paper aims to present a fresh interpretation of sixteenth-century religious transformations, offering several perspectives on the complex dynamics underlying these changes.

**Domizia Weber:** Before and after the Council of Trent: transforming beliefs, transforming practices

Through the analysis of some case studies observed in sixteenth-century Modena, this contribution deals with the transformations that took place in Italy after the Council of Trent with respect to the popular imaginary. The stress the Council gave to the eradication of superstitious beliefs, and everything that seemed to be a deviance from orthodoxy, led to the disappearance of a certain kind of popular culture concerning religion, medicine and daily life. Trials against healers, often accused of witchcraft, highlight this phenomenon, as their contents evolved through the course of the sixteenth century. Early proceedings usually described evocative scenarios resounding to ancient pagan lore and magic medical practices, while late proceedings lacked these elements, revealing that such cultural substrate had faded away. My talk will examine inquisitorial records in order to comprehend these cultural transformations, bearing in mind the “social disciplining” promoted by the Council of Trent and executed by the Inquisition.

**Manuela Bragagnolo:** Physiognomy, medicine and religion in Late Renaissance Italy: the “Natural Physiognomy” (*Fisionomia Naturale*) by Giovanni Ingegneri († 1600)

This paper analyzes the links between physiognomy, medicine and religion in the late sixteenth century. It focuses on “Natural Physiognomy” (*Fisionomia Naturale*) by Giovanni Ingegneri, who was a jurist educated in medicine in Padua, and also the Bishop of Capodistria from 1576 to 1600. Ingegneri’s *Fisionomia* clearly links the study of the soul to the study of the body. Trying to legitimize an art considered as suspect by the Catholic Church, due to its connections to astrology, the Bishop moves it to medicine, giving a detailed explication, grounded on tempers and humors theory as well as on anatomy, of each physical thing related to inner moral and intellectual inclinations. In my paper I will look at the interest in physiognomy, within the ecclesiastical hierarchy, as an instrument to reach the human soul. I will also consider the religious implications of connecting moral and intellectual inclinations to tempers and anatomical structures.

**Cristiano Rocchio:** Medicine of the body, medicine of the soul: a contribution on Erasmus’ works

My paper deals with Erasmus’ idea of medicine and religion, expressed in the works *Encomium medicinae*; *Epistulae Beati Rhenani* and *Inquisitio*. In the first work, he praises medicine, acclaiming physicians’ tasks and social relevance. On the other hand, in the second, Erasmus illustrates medicine in its daily dimension, criticizing the ignorance of many contemporaneous doctors, who did not match his ideal image. In this text, he describes Jesus Christ as a medical doctor able to heal both the soul and the body. In the *Inquisitio*, Erasmus analyzes the grounds of Christian faith shared by Catholicism and Lutheranism. Targeting Italy and, in particular, Rome – the corrupted seat of the papacy – he criticizes superstitious practices and any exterior aspects of Catholic devotion, disparaging the rising religious conflict. Finally, just like a physician, he encourages interreligious dialogue as a healthy activity, lashing out against confessional tensions perceived as a disease.

## **Beyond Conceptual Dichotomies and Eurocentrism: Aesthetic Approaches to the Religious and the Secular in the “Non-West”**

**Panel Chair: Stefan Binder**

While the so-called “classical” secularization thesis has proven empirically untenable and a rigid religious–secular divide has been critically interrogated on methodological and historical grounds there is still a lack of sustained empirical

scholarship on contemporary negotiations and everyday realities of the secular in “non-Western” contexts. The four contributions to this panel explore different forms of negotiating religious–secular binaries and the resulting consequences in India, Haiti and DR Congo. By engaging with aesthetic and praxeological theories, the panel leads beyond the focus on conceptual dichotomizations and retraces concrete dynamics of religious pluralism (including the non-religious) in artistic practices, civic engagements, economic networks, and political and medical discourses. Hence, the geographically and thematically diverse case studies explore the potential of aesthetic approaches to the study of religion for retracing the globalizing diffusion of the religious-secular divide, by emphasizing specific historical trajectories, local transformations, socio-economic constraints, and lived experience.

**Stefan Binder:** Aesthetics of the secular: towards plural genealogies of the secular beyond a “Protestant origin”

Based on a case study of organized atheism and humanism in South India this paper explores aesthetic dimensions of “non-religion”. By raising the question of aesthetics of the secular it engages with the intersection of two trends in interdisciplinary scholarship of religion: (1) aesthetic approaches to the study of religion and (2) the interest in secularity beyond “classical” theories of secularization. The respective logics of these two trends call for an aesthetic approach to the secular and simultaneously produce obstacles for its realization. While the focus on religions’ aesthetic dimensions seeks to overcome an overemphasis of meaning and cognition, the conceptual and historical focus of current debates on the secular leads to narratives based on cognitive frames, public reasoning, or even anti-aesthetics. I argue that this problem can be resolved by questioning Eurocentric genealogies of the secular and by engaging more persistently with empirical case studies – especially from “non-Western” contexts.

**Anandita Bajpai:** “Speaking” the nation religiously secular: secularism in the rhetoric of India’s Prime Ministers

This presentation aims to unveil how the Prime Ministers of India (1991-present) have projected India as a “secular” nation, through the medium of their public speeches. In the face of religious riots between Hindus and Muslims (1992 in Ayodhya and 2002 in Gujarat), which intensified the urgency to re-weave the image of a secular India, the Prime Ministers’ public speeches have tried to rescue the ideal of India’s proclaimed secularity from a state of crisis. Secularism here is projected as a necessary basis for a religiously pluralist India. The paper presents a case study which will show (1) how the rigidity of the religious-secular divide is rendered questionable, if not irrelevant, whereby the “religious,” in practice, becomes a means to stage secularism and (2) how the spo-

ken words of a political elite, a cementing material which welds together the nation, offer a means to grasp the aesthetics of the secular.

**Oscar Figueroa-Castro:** The profane within the sacred: the representation of the origins of drama in Nāṭyaśāstra's first book

The sacred and the profane are ordering categories, whose province and meaning are usually thought of as something separate, sometimes even antagonistic. The culture of ancient India offers a rich repertory of cases suggesting a more complex mechanism of interaction between sacred and profane realities. Among those cases is Sanskrit dramatic art, whose principles, themes and conventions reached a canonical status in the Nāṭyaśāstra, the main treatise on the subject (c. second to fourth century CE). In this paper, I focus on the mythico-ritual and properly scenic representations of the very origins of drama, as articulated in Nāṭyaśāstra's first book. Although these have been studied separately – i.e., as providing elements for advocating either the text's religious origins or its literary aspirations – a satisfactory account of the complex dialectic between sacred and profane is still a desideratum. Thus, as I will argue, the representation of the origins of drama in Nāṭyaśāstra's first book rests upon a complex interchange of religious and purely literary presuppositions – it is inserted in a rhetoric that introduces innovation and secular values, and yet (or for that very reason), shows a deep awareness about the importance of preserving a sacred aura and upholding tradition.

## Bhakti in Context

**Kayla Kellerman:** Mirabai's asceticism: the use of the body as sacred space within Hindu bhakti narratives

I discuss how the rise of bhakti, or devotion, as a Hindu religious tradition impacted the movement from community ritual to individual and personal religious practice: or in other words, the movement from public to private space. I outline how the body is a place for sacred and religious experience within the Bhakti tradition. First, I look at how various scholars like John S. Hawley have described bhakti as a religious practice. Devotion evolves into a tradition in which a devotee interacts with the divine and obtains salvation through a loving relationship. The body then becomes the vehicle with which we understand how the sacredness of oneself supersedes a vibrant communal culture. I look at the work of the popular bhakti poet, Mirabai and outline how she uses her body to emphasize the act of surrendering, and thus, how she uses her body as a sacred place to practice devotion.

**Mohan Devraj Thontya:** Barmati Panth: the prototype of Meghwar Panths and beliefs in Pakistan and India

Barmati Panth is an about nine hundred year-old religious tradition that continues till today. Shrouded in mist for centuries, it has been introduced to the academic world as recently as two decade ago and western scholars have taken interest in the subject. The Panth is among the several other syncretistic sects of Hinduism that stood to reject all odds of the caste system. The founding gurus of Barmati Panth, previously revered as semi-mythical personalities, are figured out as historical personalities among their “immediate” and “distant” followers mostly drawn from the lowcaste untouchables’ substratum of the Indian Subcontinent. Meghwar Gurus’ shrines in Pakistan and India are centers of spiritual activities. The ritualistic traditions of Barmati Panth are unique in its kind with reference to the medieval history of Bhakti and Sufism. Its stunning canonical literature authored by Shree Mamai Dev profoundly imparts an intriguing way of life and includes prophecies.

**Ülo Valk:** Secrecy and creativity in vernacular Hinduism: on magical practices in rural Assam

Contemporary Assam is dominated by the neovaishnava bhakti movement, initiated by Shankaradeva (1449–1568), who established Assamese literature, challenged the caste system and confronted the Tantric goddess worship. Radical followers of this mainstream faith do not visit temples, they do not participate in pūjā rituals and they condemn magic. Based on fieldwork, the paper explores the magical practices (bejāli, tantra-mantra) in the region of Mayong in the Margigaon district of Assam, which has been known as a centre of magic all over North Eastern India. More than one hundred semi-professional healers and magicians (bej) in Mayong carry on their art as an alternative tradition to the public forms of neovaishnava religion. How are the two belief systems related? What kind of strategies do the magicians use in order to establish their authority in the seemingly unfavorable social setting where the public worship of deities who are evoked in magic, is banned?

## The Biographical Trajectories of Political Islam

**Abdulkader Tayob**

The study of political Islam, Islamism or Islamic fundamentalism remains a daunting challenge for scholars of religion in general, and scholars of Islam in particular. As religious movements that have dominated public life in local and global contexts for the last few decades, scholars of them have provided useful insights on how Islam has become an ideology or a discourse of resistance

and hegemony. There is also great awareness that political Islam takes many forms, and in fact continues to change. But there is relatively little on the life trajectories of ordinary individuals who participated and engaged in these movements over this long period: facing change and transformation within, reacting to changing politics and social transformation, and navigating personal choices and doubts. With a few notable exceptions, the literature presents a simplistic picture of conversion or indoctrination, delusion or manipulation. In this presentation, I put forward the thesis that political Islam may be illuminated from the perspective of the many journeys of activists in these movements over a long period of time. With a focus on South Africa, I offer a perspective on the biographical trajectories of Islamists over two or three decades. I follow their conversions, engagements, conflicts, high and low points. How do they convert to these movements and leave behind their earlier life choices? How do they navigate the variety of choices and road-blocks placed in their way? What do they find in the movements: deliverance or frustration? Where are they now, and how do they see the future?

With this biographical and personal perspective, I offer reflections on thinking about religion in post-colonial contexts, on religion as a changing and dynamic phenomenon in the lives of individuals, and on the long history of a religious tradition.

## **Blood Rituals: Animal Sacrifice on the Christian Periphery**

### **Panel Chair: Curtis Hutt**

In this panel, participants present their work – anthropological and historical – on animal sacrifice performed by Christians on the periphery of more well-known, dominant Christian cultures where such practices are unheard of and generally forbidden. This oftentimes includes adapting the rituals of the members of other religious communities and even performing them in markedly inter-religious contexts. These non-stereotypical Christian ritual practices will be understood as having been affected by diverse cultural influences – Jewish, Islamic, and polytheistic.

**Paul Williams:** Dancing on the edge of sacrifice: ritual practices among Congolese Christians in the twenty-first century

When Rev. Bonanga travels the southern half of the Equator Province in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), he navigates rivers and forests to visit church members; he also travels through a forest of ritual activity. More than fifty years after political independence and ecclesiastical autonomy, one of his challenges is to negotiate the relationship between ritual practice derived from

non-Christian Mongo rituals and his own understanding of Christian practice. Based on my travels in this region in recent years, this paper examines contemporary encounters between the organized institutional form of Protestant Christianity (the “church”) and its ritual practices, on the one hand, and the disparate ritual practices of peoples throughout the riverine forest of central Congo, including animal sacrifice (mbeka), offerings to ancestors (bankoko), and resistance to witchcraft (ndoki), on the other.

**Jens Kreinath:** Animal sacrifice among Christian and Muslim communities in Hatay, Turkey

Sacrifice rituals are performed across the religious communities in Hatay. Regardless of the location or occasion of the sacrifice, the practice of animal sacrifice is common among the different Christian and Muslim communities outlined above. Most often they include the distribution of sacrificed meat, which often transcends the confines of the respective religious communities. Even though the differences in the interpretation of ritual elements are certainly more explicit, this paper argues that features of sacrifice exist among almost all religious communities. Despite the different times and locations of sacrifice rituals, their similarities justify viewing them as part of the local interreligious culture. One of the most significant features is that Orthodox and Armenian Christian communities perform rituals of animal sacrifice and follow traditions of animal slaughter and distribution of the sacrificed meat that can be compared to the Muslim traditions of animal sacrifice.

**Curtis Hutt:** A threefold heresy: reassessing Jewish, Christian, and Islamic animal sacrifice in late antiquity

Until recently, the vast majority of historians studying Jewish, Christian, and Islamic tradition in late antiquity maintained the following: (1) the sacrifice of animals along with the priestly leadership in Jewish traditions disappeared in the immediate aftermath of the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in 70 CE; (2) Christians altogether rejected animal sacrifice, as the sacrifice of Jesus commemorated in the Eucharistic meal replaced for all time the need for these Temple linked ritual activities; (3) Islamic sacrifice during Eid al-Adha was primarily derived and adapted from the practices of polytheists in the Arabian peninsula as neither Jews nor Christians at this time carried out such rituals. In this paper, each of these venerable assumptions (two theological, one academic) is challenged on the basis of new research into obscured Jewish and Christian pasts.

## **Bodies, Texts and Otherness: Religious Change in Antiquity and Today**

**Ingvild Saelid Gilhus**

### **Closing Keynote Address**

This lecture is about the interaction between bodies and texts and how, in periods of religious change, superhuman and other non-human creatures are drawn into this interaction. Such creatures are carriers of otherness. Angels and animals are examples of non-human creatures, which are given agency, promote change and are themselves changed. While a text is a natural habitat for angels, demons and monsters, animals have their natural habitats elsewhere. Creatures of the imagination are different from living beings. However, we should not make too much of the difference between facts (animals) and fiction (angels, demons and monsters). Animals in texts are never “real”. They are constructed for some purpose and made into creatures of the human imagination. Animals as well as angels are given social agency both in the field of asceticism and in contemporary therapeutic religion where they conceptualize social boundaries, experiences, norms, thoughts and emotions. I have chosen two examples. Both have emblematic functions and are prototypes of religious change. One is Christian asceticism in Egypt in the fourth century, the century when Christianity became naturalized in the Roman Empire and the Mediterranean became “dotted with something quite new, sexually frustrated readers, stretching from Egypt to the coast of Scotland” (Lane Fox, “Literacy and Power” p. 148). The other example is the contemporary angel school of the Norwegian princess Märtha Louise. Participants in these stories are monks and New Agers, but also angels, demons, dead people and animals. Change involves place, time, relationship to others, status, body and sometimes religion. The two examples in this lecture are connected to globalization and to a substitution of one religious ideology and practice for another. How and when do carriers of otherness, in this case angels and animals, promote religious change? How are they changed? When animals are given religious agency, how does this agency reflect upon views of them?

## **Body Knowledge in Religions**

**Panel Chairs: Almut Barbara Renger, Bettina E. Schmidt**

Body knowledge – “knowledge about the body” and “knowledge of the body” – is an integral part of the history of knowledge, which examines the interweaving of cognitive processes, social values and cultural practices across disciplinary traditions and boundaries of cultures and societies beyond. This panel looks

at processes of adaptation and transformation involved in transfers of body knowledge in and between religious communities and institutions. The focus is on practices and techniques which are based on physical (including medical) skills. Do such transfers of body knowledge, both within and between European and non-European cultures, lead to religious change? How do these body techniques and practices adapt to social, political or cultural changes? And how does body knowledge adapt to a new social and cultural environment when transferred between societies? Referring to case studies the panel provides examples of forms of transfer, adaptation, and transformation of body knowledge.

**Katja Triplett:** Transfer of medical knowledge in Japanese Buddhism

The role of Indian ophthalmological knowledge in Japan is an interesting case for the study of the transfer of body knowledge: it dominated eye theory and therapy in combination with indigenous and Chinese medical ideas for over a millennium although its Indian heritage had been largely forgotten by the seventeenth century. East Asian Buddhist texts mention the use of a golden needle to conduct cataract surgery to restore eyesight. The motif of this originally Indian technique of cataract couching is frequently used in the Buddhist scriptures. These passages are not meant to be medically instructive, however. The question is whether Buddhist monastics in East Asia also transferred knowledge of this highly effective Indian medical technique. Overall, cataract couching seems to have been practiced widely in Japan. The paper addresses the role of transfer of medical knowledge in Japan in its religious-secular and social settings.

**Lidia Guzy:** Boil trance-medium: the embodied feminine divine, examples from Western Odisha, India

The paper which is based on extensive ethnography, discusses the multi-sensual boil trance-medium tradition of Bora Sambar region of western Odisha as a crucial cultural idiom of local goddess worship. Boil tradition represents a local knowledge and belief system based upon the idea that the conceptualized feminine divine – a local or regional goddess – manifests herself in a particular system of sounds and through ritual embodiment. A sonic, sensual and intersensorial approach to sacrality thus shapes cultural ideas of the divine and mediates them through music, the human body and body movements. The conceptualized sacred is on the one hand intangible as manifested in the sounds of ganda baja, the village orchestra; on the other hand it is embodied in the trance-medium boil – a living human who during the ritual transforms into a divine entity transgressing and mediating the world of humans and non-human entities.

**Tetsuro Tanojiri:** The concept of vital energy: global transfer process of body knowledge in Noguchi-Seitai (野口整体), Japanese Mind Cure

In early twentieth century Japan, Japanese Mind Cure (JMC), which is psychosomatic and private sector medicine, became popular. JMC healers had a meta-

physical and unique worldview and offered psychosomatic healing techniques. They offered religious faiths, political ideals, ethical models and physical health. Until now, the study of JMC has continued sporadically in Japan. By contrast, the study of the mind and body techniques beyond the boundaries of medicine and religion has begun proceeding gradually in the West recently. In 1928, Haruchica Noguchi established Noguchi-Seitai, the most powerful school of JMC. His body knowledge had two kinds of origins: Western spiritualism, theology, alternative medicines and literatures; and Japanese ascetic practices and methods. However, those were interpreted and contextualized in modern Japan, especially the concept of vital energy (“Ki”, “le magnétisme animal”, etc.). By analyzing this transfer process of body knowledge in Noguchi-Seitai, this presentation shows the uniqueness of this phenomenon.

**Alison Robertson:** Playing with body knowledge: creating transcendence through BDSM

My work uses the concept of lived religion focusing on personal forms of practice outside institutions or recognized religious groups. I am exploring the lived experiences of individuals engaging in the physical practice of Bondage, Domination, Submission and Masochism (BDSM), considering the ways in which profound BDSM experiences are used and understood. BDSM may be engaged in with overt spiritual aims, but even when this is absent the practice can still result in profound or transformative experiences. A successful BDSM encounter combines well-practiced physical skills with knowledge both about the body in general and of the specific bodies to create extremes of emotion and/or sensation. Participants work together to construct, challenge and transgress boundaries, creating intense experiences of “the edge” between order and chaos, form and formlessness. Moments of transcendence are created through shared body knowledge, which is itself changed and extended by the experience.

## **Buddha in Modern Turkey: Discovering and (Re)Inventing Buddhist History, Aesthetics, and Religion in the Turkish Republic**

**Panel Chairs: Laurent Mignon, Alexandre Toumarkine**

Although Buddhism has been of interest to Turkish intellectuals and scholars and to a certain degree the Turkish public throughout the history of the Republic, the encounter of Turkey with Buddhism has not yet been subject to research. These two panels will focus on exemplary authors, periods, academic disciplines, and topics that shall represent the breadth of engagement with Buddhism in modern Turkey, ranging from literary and philosophical encounters to aca-

ademic research, to the adoption of religious ideas and practices. The panels shall help draw a historical narrative of the changes this encounter underwent and draw attention to the mediation of interest in and knowledge of Buddhism by Western literature and local actors and institutions. They shall highlight conflicts about the nature of the nation, religion, secularization, and multiculturalism inherent in Turkish society and show how the engagement with a religious “Other” could be employed to criticize or reconstruct identities.

**Alexandre Toumarkine:** The many faces of Buddha in the context of the Turkish secularization process (1920s-1940s)

A succinct academic knowledge of Buddhism was developed in the late decades of the Ottoman Empire. It was transmitted mainly by the History of Religions. This newly founded discipline, based exclusively on Western academic Orientalism, was presenting the “world religions” except for the Abrahamic religions. During the early republican era (1920s-1940s), it continued to inform the Turkish audience about Buddhism, as did the newly founded Indology from the 1930s on. Besides, in a local context of increasing interest for Buddha, henceforth considered as a Turk by Turkish nationalism, new kinds of writings emerged that discussed the religious nature of Buddhism and influenced its perception. This presentation will delineate, analyze and link them with the ongoing national debate on religion during the continuing process of secularization.

**Dilek Sarmış:** Buddha in the writings of the Turkish thinker Cemil Sena Ongun (1894–1981): philosophical thoughts on the divine

The growing interest in Hinduism and Buddhism in Republican Turkey was rooted in the context of mysticist writings from the end of the Ottoman Empire onward. Cemil Sena Ongun was a Turkish intellectual and philosopher active from the 1930s to the 1970s. One of his main lines of thought consists in reflections on contemporary pragmatic ethics and on divine figures, focusing particularly on philosophical incarnations of the divine. Besides his study of the “philosophy” of the Prophet Muhammad, throughout his career Cemil Sena repeatedly dealt with the figure of the Buddha. This presentation will be based on some of his writings from the years 1940–1941, which centered on Buddha. The analysis of these works shall elucidate the constructions of a favorable intellectual context for a philosophical and distanced use of religious history and a non-spiritualist approach to Buddhism.

**Till Luge:** Buddhist religion in Turkey? From the publications of Yol Yayınları to contemporary Buddhist practice

Buddhism played a central role in the encounter of intellectuals with Eastern and South Asian religions during the early decades of the Turkish Republic and was of primary importance for the establishment of Yol Yayınları, the first successful New Age publishing house in Turkey, a few decades later. Nonethe-

less, Buddhism has been remarkably unsuccessful as an alternative religion and Buddhist-derived practices have a relatively small share within the New Age market in contemporary Turkey. Based on an analysis of the literary field of alternative religiosities as well as interviews with practitioners of Buddhist meditation, this presentation shall delineate the history of the interest in and practice of Buddhism in Turkey during the past four decades and explore the reasons for its limited uptake and the low degree of its institutionalization.

**Laurent Mignon:** Asaf Halet Çelebi: Buddhism and resistance

The Turkish poet and scholar Asaf Halet Çelebi (1907–1958) showed interest for belief-systems outside the flexible boundaries of Islam. Merging French surrealist techniques and neo-mystical themes, his exploration of non-Islamic religiosities and Sufism could be interpreted as a form of protest against nationalism and religious orthodoxies. Among non-Abrahamic religions, Buddhism has particularly attracted Çelebi's attention, as can be witnessed in his poetry, his articles on Indian religions and his 1946 monograph and anthology *Pali Metinlerine Göre Gotama Buddha (Gautama Buddha According to Pali Texts)*. This paper aims at contextualizing and analyzing Asaf Halet Çelebi's engagement with Buddhism during a historical period when homogenizing discourses of nationalism and secularism were being imposed by the Turkish state. While attempting to define Çelebi's understanding of Buddhism, it will also outline how his reading of Buddhism contributed to his critique of fundamentalism and nationalism.

**Katja Triplett:** Turkish Haikus: Japanese Buddhistic poetry in modern Turkey

Since the early twentieth century, there has been a continuous interest for Japanese literature and culture in Ottoman and then republican Turkey. Yet, the Turkish engagement with Japanese literary and cultural products was mediated via translations in Western languages, mainly English and French. During this transfer process, Western interpretations of Japanese culture and particular images of Japan entered Turkish intellectual and literary life, including a discourse which overemphasized the (Zen) Buddhist nature of much of Japanese literature. The aim of this paper will be to explore the transfer of Buddhistic culture through the medium of literary translations and original works in Turkish by focusing on the works of selected poets from the twentieth century.

**Arzu Kaygusuz:** Geschichte der buddhistischen Studien in der Türkei

Nach den vier deutschen Turfan-Expeditionen, die zwischen 1902 und 1914 in der Turfanose an der Seidenstraße in Ostturkestan (heutiges Xinjiang) unternommen wurden, haben auch die Forschungen zum zentralasiatisch-türkischen Buddhismus in der Türkei ihren Anfang genommen. Es wurden ja bekanntlich sehr viele buddhistisch-alttürkische Textfragmente entdeckt, die den Wissenschaftlern nun zur Verfügung standen. In der Türkei wurden die ersten Studien über

die alttürkischen buddhistischen Texte von Reşid Rahmeti Arat, Ahmet Caferoğlu und Saadet Çağatay durchgeführt. Es sind fast 90 Jahre seit den Veröffentlichungen dieser ersten Studien vergangen, und es haben sich noch zahlreiche weitere Forscher damit beschäftigt. Ich möchte im Rahmen meines Berichts auf diese buddhistischen Studien, die von 1928 bis heute gemacht wurden, eingehen und über die interessante und wechselvolle Forschungsgeschichte des Buddhismus in der Türkei berichten.

## **The Buddha, the Dharma and Me: The Rise of the Individual in Modern Buddhism**

### **Panel Chair: John S. Harding, Victor Sōgen Hori**

Since the mid-nineteenth century Buddhism has been reshaped as a result of its encounter with Western imperialism, Christian missionaries, and the globalization of Enlightenment ideas such as the development of the idea of “religions”. Among the effects of this encounter, Buddhism has been rephrased as a religion of the individual with a primacy placed on experience (e. g. D.T. Suzuki). The accompanying secularization of Buddhism casts it as a practice or spirituality compatible with other religions. Claims elevate this invention of the Buddhist tradition as more faithful to the Buddha’s intent, accompanied by an imperative to untangle Buddhism from superstitious “folk practices/beliefs”. The World’s Parliament of Religions in 1893 showcased Buddhism as scientific, and therefore uniquely modern. This panel will address the question of how the re-phrasing of Buddhism as a religion of the individual has transformed the tradition and how it is being globalized.

### **Donald Lopez: The two Buddhas of 1844**

In November 1839, Eugène Burnouf, holder of the chair of Sanskrit at the Collège de France, completed his translation of the Lotus Sutra. He had the translation printed but did not have it published, because, as he wrote, “I would like to give an introduction to this bizarre work.” This would become *Introduction à l’histoire du Bouddhisme indien*, the most influential work on Buddhism of the nineteenth century. In 1843, he published in a journal a translation of one chapter of the sutra, the famous “Medicinal Herbs” chapter. Burnouf’s piece was translated into English and published by Thoreau in *The Dial: A Magazine of Literature, Philosophy, and Religion* in January 1844, opening with Burnouf’s description of the Buddha. Yet the Buddha described by Burnouf sounded very different from the Buddha of the Lotus Sutra. This paper will explore the dissonance.

**Victor Sōgen Hori:** Authentic Buddhism: Personal experience vs. academic objectivity

From the mid-1800s on, it was widely agreed in the Western world that Buddhism as practiced in Asian countries was a degeneration. Scholars like Rhys Davids and Max Müller assumed the Buddhism that they found in Pāli texts was authentic Buddhism and declared all of Mahāyāna Buddhism decadent. In the twentieth century, D.T. Suzuki expounded the primacy of personal experience: only one who had personally experienced satori or awakening knew what authentic Buddhism was. Contemporary scholars now consider D.T. Suzuki's invoking of personal experience to be an ideological ploy. It allows insiders, the practitioners of Zen Buddhism, to defend themselves from outsiders, the academic scholars who critique Buddhism from an objective point of view. This paper asks what the criterion of authentic Buddhism is for scholars who claim to assess Buddhism from the stance of academic objectivity. It finds that "authentic Buddhism" is itself an ideologically defined term.

**Shin'ichi Yoshinaga:** How the "experience" was experienced: the debate over "religious experience" during Meiji 20s

In the latter half of Meiji 20s (1892–1896), there appeared some heated discussions among young Buddhist intellectuals about religious matters in periodicals. Furukawa Rōsen, one of the leading young Buddhists (*Bukkyō seinen*) published an essay "Kaigi jidai ni ireri" (Entering the age of doubt) in 1894. He admitted the critical research of Buddhism as a necessary step of its development, which meant the birth of the individual independent of the sect and the loss of faith. A year before that, Kitamura Tōkoku, a literary critic, published a monumental essay "Naibu seimei ron" (Theory on the inner life), in which he stressed the importance of the inner experience as the ethical guide. Though Kitamura was a Christian, both men relied on the inner experience for conquering doubt. This paper will deal with the discussion about "experience" and its relationship to the selfhood of modern Japan.

**Micah Auerback:** The Buddha in torment on the pre-war Japanese stage  
Beginning early in the twentieth century, the Buddha appeared in modern Japanese writings for the theater, many of which were actually staged. These works included the opera *Śākyamuni* (1912); its adaptation for the popular musical theater (1920); *Śākyamuni in Despair on the Earth* (1922), by a reformist Buddhist cleric; *Śākyamuni in Anguish* (1922), by the scholar of Indian Buddhism Tejima Fumikura; *The Light of the Four Oceans* (1935), by the silent-film star Hayakawa Sesshū; and *Tathāgata Śākyamuni* (1936), by onetime expatriate Okina Kyūin. These dramas projected onto the figure of the Buddha new interests in religious faith and individual commitment, so characteristic of "modern Buddhism" across Asia. No longer a wonderworker or even a great philosopher, the

human image of the suffering Buddha, as developed in this body of art for the stage, remains in circulation to this day.

**John S. Harding:** Meiji individualism: modern means and ambivalent aims  
Meiji Buddhists' strategies and representations of their tradition are illustrative of a broader intensification in the connections between the modern, the global, and the individual. This paper builds on Raphaël Liogier's innovative theories of "individuo-globalism" and religion as well as David McMahan's insights about secularism and spirituality as related modes that offer modern universals in opposition to pre-modern superstitions. Meiji case studies reveal individualistic, modern ways Buddhism was defended, promoted, and represented by a diverse cast shaped by shared influences. Meiji appeals, both to secular science and to spirituality, frame Buddhism as a live option for modern times unencumbered by superstition. However, an exploration of individual cases – Buddhists who traveled the world and figures, including Kiyozawa Manshi, who were shaped by global discourses while remaining in Japan – reveal tensions and oscillations. Some appeals to science, philosophy, and spirituality posited all embracing universals; others fueled religious polemics.

**Jessica L. Main:** Which one of you is socially engaged? Imagining rational Buddhist institutions and volunteer Buddhists in prewar Japan  
A socially engaged Buddhist is a specific kind of modern Buddhist individual. Yet, the socially engaged "mode" exists in tension with other trends in Buddhist modernism, namely the trend towards a privatized spirituality which, in some iterations, is "thoroughly accommodated to the consumerist, materialist, capitalist culture" (McMahan 2009, 253). Buddhist social workers (*shakai jigyo-sha*) and "Society Departments" (*Shakaika*) from Interwar Japan (1918–1939), articulated a modern Buddhist individual that rejected private spirituality and accommodation to the status quo. Examining the publications of these early socially engaged Buddhists and administrative units, we see that the ideal individual favors a vocation of social work and volunteers to perform this work as a "generic" Buddhist, recognizing no difference in moral value between the sympathizer, lay follower, or priest. Moreover, this individual acts in the secular sphere in order to benefit society as a whole, and prefers scientific activities and institutions while denouncing superstitious ritual.

**Alexander Soucy:** Buddhism for youth: Zen and the modern individual in Vietnam

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, interest in Zen has drastically increased in Vietnam. This re-invented Zen places strong emphasis on individual experience and a secularized practice, mirroring many of the understandings of Zen that were developed by Japanese reformers and were popularized in the West by figures like D.T. Suzuki. Vietnamese proponents in the 1960s, like

Thích Nhất Hạnh and Thích Thiên Ân, then re-introduced it to the West as traditional Vietnamese Zen. This new Zen is now attracting followers in Vietnam from constituencies that had previously shown no interest in Buddhism. In particular, young people are starting to practice Zen because they see it as distinct from the devotionism of their grandmothers. This paper will trace the roots of this new movement and examine the role that the modern pairing of Zen and the individual has had in attracting young people to Buddhism in contemporary Hanoi.

**André van der Braak:** Buddhism and individualization: Charles Taylor and Buddhism in the West

In his work, the Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor describes a steadily increasing emphasis on a religion of personal commitment and devotion, over against forms centered on collective ritual. The three developments in contemporary religion that he describes (universalization, individualization and psychologization) have also influenced the Western engagement with Buddhism in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. This paper will argue that the reception of Buddhism in the West has been subjected to what Taylor calls “cross pressures within the immanent frame”. Western-style Buddhism has become a participant in the three-cornered battle that Taylor describes between exclusive humanists, anti-humanists, and believers in transcendence, leading to the tendencies of ex-carnation and therapeutization of religion, and a neglect of ordinary life. This paper analyzes this process, and investigates to what extent a more inclusive Buddhist spirituality is also possible that could counterbalance these trends.

## **Buddhism, Science, and Ideology in Modern Japan**

**Panel Chair: Masahiko Okada**

This panel session aims at considering the relationship between Buddhism, science, and ideology in modern Japan (1868–1945). The modernization of Japan was triggered by the Western impact in East Asia, which also had a great influence on Buddhism. From the mid-nineteenth century onwards, Japanese Buddhists tried to modernize by reconsidering themselves within the framework of modern science, academic disciplines, and political ideologies from the West. However, the attitudes of Buddhists towards these “modern” forms of knowledge remained complex, alternating between resistance and acceptance. We will clarify the process of the formation of modern Buddhism in Japan by exploring how Japanese Buddhists were affected by knowledge about astronomy, evolutionary theory, religious studies, and socialism. From these analyses we will formulate larger questions about the process of the modernization of Buddhism.

**Masahiko Okada:** The development of Buddhist science in nineteenth-century Japan

In 1810, a Japanese Buddhist monk, Fumon Entsū, published his main work and established his unique theory of Buddhist astronomy. Entsū calculated the movement of heavenly bodies and predicted solar and lunar eclipses, while he still maintained a flat worldview of Buddhism. He arranged the statements on astronomy and worldview in Buddhist scriptures and visualized an image of a flat world system. Then he invented a mechanical model of Buddhist worldview and organized a unique calendar system based on the descriptions in Buddhist scriptures. The intellectual movement developed by Entsū and his followers became highly popular at the turning point of Japanese history. Their activities were not limited to the field of astronomy, but actually included works in other areas of science. In this paper, I would like to introduce this unique intellectual movement in nineteenth-century Japan and consider the impact of modernity on Japanese religious tradition.

**G. Clinton Godart:** Buddhist receptions of evolutionary theory in modern Japan

The history of the complex relations between evolution and religion has generated a wealth of studies. However, it is no exaggeration to say that research is still very much limited to Christianity and the problem of creationism. How did Buddhist thinkers in Japan respond to the transmission of evolutionary theory? I will provide a broad overview, taking into account a variety of responses to evolution from Buddhist thinkers, from the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century. I will argue that overall Japanese Buddhist intellectuals not only responded positively to evolutionary theory, but also became active interpreters and transmitters of evolutionary thought. Evolutionary theory also stimulated the development of new interpretations of Buddhism. On the other hand, while Buddhist intellectuals tended to accept the fact of evolution, they strongly opposed materialist and reductionist interpretations of evolutionary theory, and tried to embed evolution within an idealist and pantheist worldview.

**Yulia Burenina:** The reception of evolutionary theory and religious studies in modern Japanese Buddhism: the case of Nichirenism

Evolutionary theory and religious studies were introduced into Japan in the late nineteenth century. Japanese intellectuals readily accepted these new scientific methodologies and Buddhist thinkers were no exception. In this paper, I would like to focus on the reception of evolutionism and religious studies as modern scientific methodologies used by Nichiren Buddhists, Tanaka Chigaku (1861–1939) and Honda Nisshō (1867–1931). Chigaku offered an evolutionary interpretation of Buddhist eschatology based on the principle of progress, and positioned Nichirenism at the apex of a unilinear temporal evolution. For his

part, Nisshō sought to uncover the superiority of Nichirenism based on the Religionphilosophie of K.R.E von Hartmann and the evolutionary religious morphology of C.P. Tiele. Hence, evolutionism and religious studies became the scientific foundation for Chigaku and Nisshō to stress the superiority and scientific validity of Nichirenism as a religion in keeping with modernity.

**Eiichi Otani:** The crossroads of modern Buddhism and socialism

The purpose of my presentation is to examine the relation between Buddhism and socialism in modern Japan. The encounter of religion and socialism in Japan started with the Christians in the second half of the nineteenth century. Although the relations between Christianity and socialism in Japan are well known, the relations between Buddhism and socialism are not. The encounter between Buddhism and socialism happened in the same period. Takagi Kenmyō, a Jōdo Shinshū (True Pure Land School) priest, wrote his essay “My Socialism” in 1901. After that, Toyoda Kenryō promoted “Buddhist Socialism” in his works *Buddhism and Socialism* (1924) and *The Theory for Reforming Buddhism* (1925), and his ideas were put into practice by Seno’o Girō and the Youth League for Revitalizing Buddhism in the 1930s. I will analyze the development of Buddhist socialism from the 1900s to the 1930s.

**Orion Klautau:** Response

## **Buddhist Identities: Method, Theory and Case Studies of Buddhist Diversities**

**Panel Chairs:** Jørn Borup, Stefania Travagnin, Cameron David Warner

What does it mean to be a Buddhist? How does it relate to other identity markers such as gender, caste, social position, ethnicity, and nationality? As a missionary religion, Buddhists aim to convert others to their way of life, but how is that done? How do you become a Buddhist at an ontological/epistemological level? How do you become a Buddhist from an etic point of view vs. an emic Buddhadharma viewpoint? The panels propose a critical analysis of textual sources and regional contexts of Buddhism and Buddhists, and debate methodological and theoretical approaches for the study of the topic.

**Henk Blezer:** Foundational reflections on the issue of “Buddhist identities”  
For my contribution to this panel, I should like to develop ideas and engage methodological reflection on the main concern of this panel proposal: Buddhist identities, from the wider perspectives of the rise of Global Buddhism and the so-called “spread” of Buddhism to or in Tibet and China, and explore how we can usefully reflect on these issues by theorizing on models for regional and global development of Buddhism. I should first and foremost like to offer some pre-

emptive methodological reflections and general observations. If we wonder, as we obviously do in this panel: “What does it mean to be a Buddhist?”, we have already taken on board several assumptions. In the prelude to my paper, I should like to articulate these systematically.

**Jørn Borup:** “I am Buddhist, not (really) religious”: negotiating Buddhist identity in a Western context

Being “a Buddhist” is a subjective identity marker to designate institutional belonging or personal affiliation with certain ideas of practices grounded in “Buddhism”. In an (East) Asian context, where religious diversity is the norm, such affiliation is often part of a syncretic religious reality, where diversity of religions is seldom a challenge for individual practitioners. In the West, Buddhism is a minority religion brought by immigrants and converted to or included as part of an individualized “lifestyle”, and thus often being “something else” that one has to actively choose or (re-)negotiate. This paper discusses Buddhist identity in a Western context. It is argued that, despite fragmentation, hybridization and increased individualization, it is possible to include different kinds of Buddhists (“culture Buddhists”, “spiritual Buddhists”, “Buddhist atheists”, “convert Buddhists” etc.) in a meaningful category of Buddhist identity by means of self-identification and analytical conceptualization. It is furthermore argued that institutional belonging and personal identification are only partly related to a much larger – and less tangible – cultural influence of Buddhism in the West.

**Fabio Rambelli:** Variety and limits of Buddhist identities in premodern Japan

The paper explores different modalities of Buddhist identity in premodern Japan, ranging from medieval monks’ self-identification as “sons of the Buddha” (*bushi*), to ideas of Japan as a unique Buddhist country (*bukoku*) – ideas which however did not affect the individual or collective identity of contemporaneous Japanese – to the forceful attempt to create a state-sanctioned Buddhist identity through temple registration and participation in temple activities during the Edo period (seventeenth to twentieth centuries). In particular, the paper discusses the impact of Tokugawa religious policies on the formation and characterization of Buddhist identities as well as their limits, especially in light of the coexistence, also within the Edo period Buddhist discourse itself, of a number of different and competing religious and intellectual discourses (in addition to Buddhism, Confucianism, Shinto, and others).

**Mark Teeuwen:** Religious identity and the Christian heresy in late Edo Japan

In Edo-period Japan, all Japanese were obliged by law to “be Buddhists.” Those who did not feature in the “religious enquiry census registers” were assumed to belong to “the Christian heresy” and thereby became subject to arrest and, in

some cases, execution. What does “religious identity” mean in such a context? This paper will focus on an incident that occurred in Osaka and Kyoto in 1827, when the shogunal authorities arrested a large group of alleged Christians. The focus of the investigation was on the question who among the tens of suspects were the true Christians, and who were simply misguided victims of those Christians’ guile and sorcery. This presentation will use the large body of documents produced by the investigators to analyze notions of religious (or, rather, heretical) identity in the last decades of the Edo period.

**Stefania Travagnin:** Identity network: concepts and contexts of “being Buddhist” in China and Taiwan

How do Chinese scriptures explain the principles at the basis of “being Buddhist”? And how, in response, have Chinese identified their affiliation to Buddhism in the pre-modern and modern time? Do textual prescriptions and ritual performances of the Buddhist identity coincide or differ? And how, in the last century, have Chinese negotiated the experience of “being Buddhist” with other labels such as “being Chinese” and “being Taiwanese”? The paper will address these questions diachronically and synchronically, and contextualize Buddhist identity within a multi-faceted net of identification labels. My study aims to make sense of the dynamics that constitute the Chinese Buddhist identity network, and thus understand religious identity in the tension between national/macro realities and local/micro stories.

**Cameron David Warner:** Making a space to be Buddhist: context and articulations of Buddhist identity in Nepal (2011–2014)

This paper will present recent changes to Buddhist identity in Nepal (2011–2014) based on fieldwork conducted among two groups of Buddhists: (1) Tamangs, ethnic minorities in Nepal who define their ethnicity in part on changing, globalized notions of Tibetan Buddhism, and (2) Hindu converts to Tibetan Buddhism. When put together, these two groups become contrasting images of the relationship between ethnicity and religious identity. Due to the emphasis on lineage in Tibetan Buddhism, both groups must triangulate their identity in relation to the Tibetan archetypes of their particular lineage, the socio-historical context of Nepal, and increasingly globalized discourses about ideal Buddhist practice.

## Cases of Islamic History

**Abdulla Galadari:** The appointed time: unraveling the concept of “waqt” in Muslim prayer and Ḥajj

In Islam, the notion of time (waqt) is important; Ibn ‘Arabī also discusses the concept of time in his works. There are specific times for prayers and pilgrimage,

as there are also sacred months. From the root of time, “waqt,” comes the term “miqāt,” which is the location where a pilgrim enters the state of sacredness (iḥrām). According to Muslim tradition, there are five times (mawāqit) for prayers and there are five locations (mawāqit) established for pilgrims. The Qur’an uses the root term “waqt” and its morphological permutation (miqāt) in various passages, including the concept of the Day of Resurrection, which is sometimes called the Hour. It is argued that Islamic tradition attempts to symbolize in the rituals of prayers and pilgrimage the Qur’anic concept of time “waqt” and its relation to the Day of Resurrection. It shows how the Qur’an attempts to interpret these rituals.

**Ismail Acar:** The journey of jihad from the classical to modern era  
 Nowadays, when the term jihad is heard, the first thing that comes to the minds of ordinary people is fighting, war, and even violence. Is this the case for the doctrine of jihad in Islam? Does it mean only fighting fiercely for religious purposes? What do the Qur’an and Prophetic narratives say about the subject? Is the doctrine of jihad always the same through Islamic history in all circumstances? Or is there a shift in the teaching of the sacred texts because of external affects? Our aim is to find answers to these questions via examining classical and modern texts on jihad. From the Prophet’s war up until WWI, Muslim leaders have not used the term “jihad” to refer to their wars in general. Rules of war and fighting could be derived from the sacred texts without referring to verses and narratives related to jihad.

**Sami Helewa:** Lament for the sacred: Islamic perspective  
 Medieval Islamic writing includes narrative commentaries of the Biblical figures that serve as proto-types of heroic Muslim leadership. The hero motif in these accounts is not void of challenges that drove some of these Biblical figures into the abyss of shame. In the narrative context of shame also emerges a narrative of lament, and the two narratives blend into a deep quest for the sacred that was once forsaken. The intricate balance of shame and lament in the Islamic accounts of Adam, David and/or even Job suggests an underlying narrative voice searching for the sacred as part of a heroic life. This paper addresses the function of lament in Islamic narratives of the lives of prophets. Stories of the aforementioned Biblical figures from medieval writers like al-Kisā’ī, al-Tha’labī and even al-Ṭabarī will be considered.

## Caste in Stone? Representing the Relation between Religion and Social Structure

### Panel Chair: Jakob De Roover

For centuries, the caste system in India has been represented as an instance of how religion gives shape to social structures. This representation views Hinduism and its priesthood as causal factors behind the creation of a social hierarchy that perpetuates discrimination, injustice, and poverty. However, the empirical and theoretical evidence for such a view is scanty. This panel will examine this representation of caste and religion as an indirect reflection upon the role that Christianity played in the shaping of Western social structures. We look at its different components as expressions of background ideas deriving from internal Western-Christian debates: (1) the general connection between religion and the hierarchical ordering of society; (2) the explanatory role attributed to caste and Hinduism to account for discrimination, poverty, and other social evils; and (3) the place given to the Brahmin priesthood and its relation to the role of the priest in Christianity.

**Jakob De Roover:** From church to caste: on the religious ordering of social hierarchy

European representations of caste in India have given great importance to the following question: is caste a religious institution or merely a set of civil observances? Over the centuries, scholars proposed different answers. This paper presents the hypothesis that these actually mirrored insights into the role Christianity played in giving shape to the social hierarchy of modern Europe. Medieval European society consisted of a variety of orders, estates, and ethnic groupings, without any fixed relation to each other. From the eleventh century, however, theologians suggested these formed one hierarchically ordered community consisting of different classes. Society had to be transformed along the lines of this normative model. Eighteenth-century critiques then vehemently rejected this “feudal” model and its religious foundations. In turn, these critiques generated the dominant European images of the caste system, which tell us more about the relation between Christian religion and social structure than about Indian society.

**Martin Farek:** Corrupt priest or noble Brahmin? European and Indian understandings of the caste system

The standard story about religion in India talks about its decay in the hands of priests: Indian history witnessed the repeated rise of “reformation movements” against a corrupt priesthood. Shramana and Bhakti movements have been depicted as part of an on-going struggle against the rule of the Brahmins over society. The aim of this paper will be twofold: first, it will be shown how originally

Christian theological questions shaped the interpretations of the British Orientalists. William Jones, H. H. Wilson, and others spread the standard understanding of Brahmins as priesthood while they searched for answers to theologically formulated questions. Second, it is necessary to look at the domestic Indian understanding of the category Brahmin. Examples of early Buddhist and Jain discussions, as well as the later Vaishnava debates will be analyzed in order to bring about better understanding of caste issues.

**Prakash Shah:** The epistemic strength of Orientalism: the case of caste debates in the United Kingdom

In his *Orientalism*, Said refers time and again to the idea of the “strength” of Orientalism as a way of understanding the Orient. This paper explores how the idea of a caste system exemplifies the “epistemic strength” of European ideas of India. The paper draws upon the research program Comparative Science of Cultures developed by S.N. Balagangadhara in order to understand the deeper roots of the “caste system” idea in theological reflections of Indian society and culture. Secularized theological ideas about the caste system serve as an “explanation” for the character of Indian society and culture: it is viewed as the cause of discrimination and poverty among Indians. The paper provides an illustration of how this occurs today in British parliamentary debates, which draw upon age-old ideas of the caste system to justify particular types of legislative action, poverty alleviation programs, and proselytizing activity.

## Categorizing and Conceptualizing Religion Education

### Panel Chair: Tim Jensen

The papers in this panel critically analyze different categorizations and conceptualizations of religion education (RE), using material related to both confessional religious education (for example, Islamic RE in Sweden) and non-confessional education about various religions and worldviews in different European countries. The panel, furthermore, tries to trace characteristics of a distinctive study-of-religions approach to education about religions and worldviews, be it with respect to general principles, competences or other recurrent issues in RE debates.

### Jenny Berglund: Moving between religious and religion education

In this paper I discuss the relation between the Swedish non-confessional integrative school subject Religionskunskap [Knowledge about religion], the academic discipline Study of Religions and the academic discipline Didactics of Religion (or Didactics of the Study of Religions). The school subject is, according to the national curriculum, to foster certain values within the school, values that

are considered necessary to create good democratic citizens. This differs from the academic study of religions, which has as its aim the understanding and explanation of religion and religious people in past and present and to teach this to university students. Although strongly related, the school subject can never be understood as a condensed form of the Study of Religions. The difference between these, the subject and the academic discipline, also reveals the necessity and focus of Didactics of Religions and its role in, for example, teacher education. Although Sweden's non-confessional school subject differs from many other forms of Religious Education school subjects in Europe, I would argue that the role of Didactics of Religions can still be the same.

**Katharina Frank:** A study-of-religions-based model of competence  
 During the last few years, many countries established Religion Education for all pupils. As far as the classes are compulsory, the teaching has to respect freedom of religion, which is especially crucial in regard to its negative aspects. Usually, the respective programs (e.g. Guidelines of the OSCE 2007, Guidelines of the AAR 2010) are highly speculative and they do not sufficiently keep apart secular and religious (theological) principles of education. On the empirical basis of classroom research on a compulsory form of Religion Education (e.g. Frank 2014a; b), this paper develops a competence-based learning model (cf. Lersch 2010) in a study-of-religions-perspective. Examples from educational practice will illustrate how these competences are conveyed and how pupils adopt them.

**Karna Kjeldsen:** "Didactics of the Study of Religions" for RE in public schools: a new approach

This paper is based upon an analysis of normative reflections or principles on "Didactics of the Study of Religion" for RE in public schools. It is argued that a common set of principles, although always in critical development, can be found in writings of some of the members of the EASR working group (e.g. Alberts 2007; Andreassen 2012; Frank 2013 and Jensen 2011) and that the principles, as regards some key issues, differ from some of the most influential international and national positions. Thus, they make up a new position. The principles will be presented and systematized as: (1) general frames for RE in public schools; (2) objectives and contents; and (3) approaches to representations of religion and religions. The paper is based on a theoretical framework developed for my PhD dissertation about the status, function and representation of Christianity in RE.

**Wanda Alberts:** Conceptualizations and contextualizations of education about religions and worldviews

This paper attempts to analyze some central and recurrent issues in the scholarly and public debate about religion education (RE) from a study-of-religions perspective, based on discussions of the EASR working group on religions in secular

education. The paper starts with a critical analysis of the use of key terms used in the discourse about RE (for example, different categorizations of RE, different names for the subject in different countries, the debates about “religious literacy”, concepts such as “intercultural”, “interreligious”, “multireligious” and “pluralistic” in relation to RE) and proceeds to wider issues such as the question of how the learning area “different religions and worldviews” is contextualized in curricula in different countries and in transnational recommendations. The concluding part deals with the question of how distinctive study-of-religions approaches to this topic differ from other approaches.

## **The Category of “Religion” in Public Life: Empirical Cases and Theoretical Considerations**

### **Panel Chair: Teemu Taira**

James Beckford has suggested that “disputes about what counts as religion, and attempts to devise new ways of controlling what is permitted under the label of religion have all increased.” If the analysis is correct, more attention needs to be paid to recent negotiations and demarcations over what counts as religious or faith-based in various public institutions and see how, where and why the disputes take place. This panel examines empirical cases in which “religiosity” of groups or practices has been negotiated and demarcated. Empirical cases from England, Scotland and Finland focusing on legal processes, the media, parliament rituals and scholarly involvement provide material for theoretical considerations regarding the ways in which the category of “religion” functions in public life. Papers address what are the implications for the dynamics of various groups and the roles of scholars in reproducing and challenging discourses on “religion”.

**Suzanne Owen:** Druids and the category of religion: the debate continues. In 2010, The Druid Network successfully registered as a charity in England and Wales for the advancement of religion after much negotiation over the definition of religion in charity law and whether “nature” could be viewed as a “supreme being”. A few years later, The Druid Network applied to become a member of The Inter Faith Network for the UK but were rejected by some representatives of Christian groups, opening up the debate about the category of religion once again. This paper will examine the rhetorical strategies taken by The Druid Network to be accepted as a “religion” and objections to these in public debates.

**Teemu Taira:** The art of becoming a religion: law, media and scholars of religion

In early 2013, the application of the Finnish group *Karhun kansa* – whose aim is to rehabilitate pre-Christian Finnish folk beliefs and practices – to become a registered religious community was initially rejected. Their second application was successful and they became a registered religious community almost a year later. This paper focuses on what happened between the two applying rounds and how the group that was first not considered a religious one was later regarded as religious by the same expert committee. Attention will be paid to how scholars of religion were involved in the case and in the media before the final decision. This raises questions on the public role scholars of religion have in how society organizes itself by negotiating the boundaries of the category of “religion”.

**Steven Sutcliffe:** Managing “faith” in a modern state assembly: the ritual of “Time for Reflection” in the Scottish parliament

This paper analyzes the representation of the category “faith” in a ritualized address called “Time for Reflection” in the Scottish Parliament. TFR is a four-minute public address given by an individual to the weekly plenary session of parliament since devolution in 1999. I provide a brief ethnography of the event, a history of its formation, an indicative content analysis of its early deliveries, and a discussion of the ways in which this modest yet symbolically powerful ritual can be seen to “manage” an item of public behavior on behalf of post-devolution civil society in Scotland. I will argue that the ritual can be understood as a classic liberal solution to the problem of representing religious plurality in a modern state assembly, yet at the same time an expression of both power and anxiety in respect of defining and “managing” an apparently liminal category of behavior in modern western civil society.

**Tuomas Äystö:** Religion crimes and the category of religion: the case of the unregistered Islamic community in Finland

In 2006 a man spilled blood over a mosque in the city of Kajaani, Finland. He was found guilty of criminal damage and breach of the sanctity of religion by the District Court of Kainuu. However, the Court of Appeal of Eastern Finland overruled the religion crime verdict on the basis that the Islamic community, which used the mosque, was not a registered religious association at the time. Formally, the breach of the sanctity of religion-section pertains only to Finnish national churches and registered religious associations. This paper examines the arguments in the court’s rulings and the ways in which the categories of religion and Islam were understood. It also briefly examines the Finnish penalization of blasphemy and defamation of religion, as religion crime convictions have become more prevalent in the twenty-first century.

## Challenges in Contemporary Religion

**Ann Af Burén:** Multiplicity of religious self-descriptions among semi-secular Swedes

In my study of “semi-secular” Swedes I have found that when given the option they choose to describe themselves in terms of several religious categories simultaneously. In this paper I describe these religious self-descriptions as fluctuating and palimpsest. However, this volatility does not necessarily describe a change of attitude, beliefs, behaviors, aspirations and affiliations. It is a fluidity that is discursively allowed within the frames of a culture that offers a multiplicity of subject positions in terms of religious identities. It takes place in a context in which the boundaries between the secular and the religious are, in practice, fuzzy and permeable, allowing for signifiers to float between the different discourses on religion that the respondents are enmeshed in. However, this does not mean that “anything goes”— these religious self-descriptions have boundaries that need to be considered as related to the local discourses on religion available to the respondents.

**Pauline Lere:** A decade of ethno-religious crises on the Jos Plateau: a socio-political analysis

While religion has contributed to human civilization, it has been manipulated and used to cause strife and wars. Religiously motivated conflicts have proliferated around the world and the case of Nigeria is not different. Religion, perceived as personal, in recent years has been remote-controlled by man. The current heightened religious crises in Nigeria are traced back to the early 60s. Jos, the capital of Plateau State Nigeria, once peaceful, with a temperate climate has endeared many ethnic groups. The city, known as “the home of peace and tourism”, has in the past decade witnessed intense crisis situations, resulting in wanton destruction of lives and properties. This localized conflict graduated into a global dimension attracting the international community. This paper explores the causes of the violence and the role of the media in the crises. The paper relies on oral interviews and documented research on the decade long crisis in Jos.

**Valdemar Kallunki:** The changing welfare role of the Church in Finland  
The crisis of the welfare system and welfare reforms have created an opportunity window for the Churches as welfare providers in European societies. In Finland, the ongoing restructuring of welfare services and parishes means differentiation between secular and religious structures. Responding to changes, the Lutheran Church of Finland has launched a project called “The Church and welfare services”, in which it tries to revise its role in the welfare sector. The objective is to decide what kind of role the Church is aiming at in outsourced welfare services. In this paper, I will scrutinize the changing welfare role of the Church in Finland.

Theoretical perspectives for the examination are the welfare crisis, individual level secularization and the differentiation of secular and religious structures. The data includes 25 interviews of parish and municipal employees and quantitative data gathered from all the parishes.

## Challenging Traditional Sociology of Religions

**Frederik Elwert:** From Content and Structure to Structure of Content: Text Network Analysis in the Study of Religions

Research in the study of religions moves between the poles of social structure (e.g. religious institutions, social settings) and religious content (e.g. scriptures, teachings). The sociology of religion often has to defend against the claim that it favors the study of social structures over the analysis of religious content or, as Weber put it, interests over ideas. Philological approaches in contrast have been accused of overemphasizing scriptures at the expense of social context and lived religion. Recent approaches in text-based network analysis promise to bridge this divide, at least partially. They allow us to visualize and study structures internal and external to texts, in conjunction with their content. On the methodological level, they can be discussed with regard to their implications and limitations. The paper will present findings from the completed project SeNeReKo as well as an outlook for future directions in this field of study.

**Naomi Goldenberg:** Theorizing religions as vestigial states in the context of contemporary governance and jurisdiction over violence

I will argue that it is useful and productive to understand religions as vestigial states in order to clarify how religions are functioning in current technologies of statecraft. Both words in the composite term “vestigial state” will be discussed. “State” will be defined with reference to its usage in international law although the specific linkage of the state and violence by Max Weber will also be cited. “Vestigial” will be presented as an evocative metaphor that hearkens back to history both actual or imagined. Conceptions of past sovereignty will be hypothesized as grounding ambitions for the possibility of future powers. Examples of the succession of sovereignties and the gradual evolution of the term “religion” to apply to such histories will be employed. “Religion” will be shown to be used as category in which governments place displaced or marginalized groups and grant them limited autonomy. In general, physical force is forbidden to vestigial states that tend to lose the classification as religions if they authorize violence in almost any form. Exceptions to this policy as it applies to disciplining women and children will be highlighted.

**Nikolas Broy:** Bourdieu, Weber, and religious diversity: the religious field of China

French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's interpretation of Weber's sociology of religion is a well-known and much lauded attempt to analyze religious change both in the "religious field" of a given society and within a religious tradition itself. Although scholars have presented various refinements of his theories, we are still missing proper attempts to apply Bourdieu's approach to religious landscapes that differ from the European and Western experiences. Therefore, this paper will employ the example of the religiously diverse setting of late imperial and modern China in order to discuss three crucial concerns: (1) the religious field of a religiously pluralistic society without just one monopolistic religion; (2) the role of the state and nonreligious agents within the arena of religious contestation; (3) the application of Bourdieu's approach to a modern society whose religious field has been fundamentally altered in the course of modernization and politically asserted secularization.

**Willem Hofstee:** Fields and figurations

Pierre Bourdieu and Norbert Elias launched key notions which might be relevant for the study of religion: "field" (Bourdieu) and "figuration" (Elias). Bourdieu's field concept refers to a social universe with a language and logic of its own. It consists of networks in which games are played with bets and capital. Inequality of power and power struggles are an inherent aspect of every game that is being played. The concept of figuration (Elias) refers to the network of direct and indirect interdependencies which a plurality of individuals form with each other during their sustained interaction. Every actor has a certain autonomy of decision, but finds himself dependent on other actors due to control over resources. Are both concepts useful in understanding conflicts between and cohesion within religious groups? Are they useful in determining how ideas, acts and institutions sustain or inhibit religious ideas and motivations?

## **Change of Religious Consciousness under the Roman Empire: Animal Sacrifice and its Substitutions**

**Panel Chair: Hiroshi Ichikawa**

In the history of religion, there was a period when religious consciousness changed, and we witness the formation of self-identified religions under the Roman Empire. For example, in the second temple period, Judaism consisted of two basic elements of religion, i.e., sacrifice and law. However, after the destruction of the Second Temple of Jerusalem, Judaism began to identify itself as a religion of the divine law. Christianity had the same tenet of new religious

consciousness, which gave rise to conflicts with the traditional Roman state religion. The panel will focus on the change in the significance of animal sacrifice in respective religious communities in the late Roman Republic and the Roman Empire. The emphasis will be on the development of new ideas concerning the reflection and adaptation of the sense of sacrifice in various spheres of life.

**Hiroshi Ichikawa:** From sacrifice to divine law: the formation of the Halakhic religion of Jews under the Roman Empire

In terms of the perspective of religion, Judaism ceased to be a religion of sacrifice after the two destructive wars against the Roman Empire, and Jews have established the identification of Judaism as a religion of the divine law, whose historical significance is to be a forerunner of the Islamic religion of Sharia. However, this did not mean that Judaism denounced sacrifice as superstitious or obsolete. On the contrary, the sages endeavored to give theological interpretations of the lack of temple sacrifice. Some theories will be analyzed including the theory of substitution by the deed of loving-kindness and the theory of prayer as the sacrifice of the heart. In this context will be considered the reasons for the attitude of the Romans of showing mercy to the Jews and thus helping them to survive and preserve their own way of life after the wars.

**Keiko Kobori:** Roman sacrifice in the late Republic and under the Empire  
Animal sacrifice is said to have been “the heart of most acts of cult worship” in modern Roman studies of the last half century. In fact, Church Fathers denounce the Romans based on the act of animal killings at sacrificial rituals. However, was animal sacrifice central in Roman cult worship? Firstly, the Latin word *sacrificare* does not mean animal killing, but just “to make it belong to the deities.” Another Latin word for the sacrificial ritual, *immolare*, means “to sprinkle meal.” Secondly, did distribution of sacrificial meat have a great significance in Roman urban life as described in 1 Corinthians? Recent osteological evidence shows that the quantity of meat produced by sacrificial rituals fed far fewer people than the population of a city or even a large group. Finally, despite the Church Fathers’ denunciation, the Romans had gradually come to avoid bloodshedding and animal killing at rituals throughout the imperial period.

**Yumi Doi:** How early Christianity reacted to sacrifice in Judaism and Roman sacrificial rituals

This presentation will focus on sacrifice in the early Christian community in the first century CE of the Roman Empire. In the earliest Christian community in Jerusalem there were already both Jews (who spoke Hebrew) and gentiles (who spoke Greek). In addition, in the course of his missionary journeys, Paul encountered various gentiles who were pagans within/outside Judea, as Acts says. Both Jews and gentiles had sacrifice rituals. In contrast, early Christianity had no longer sacrificial rituals, but the Eucharist could be interpreted as a substitution.

This change process will be analyzed minutely. Firstly, how did the people who had converted from Judaism to early Christianity react to the Roman sacrificial rituals including animal sacrifices? Secondly, did the gentile Christians carry out sacrificial rituals in the Jewish Jerusalem temple? How did they begin to put the “sacrifice” of the Eucharist into the Temple?

**Iskra Gencheva-Mikami:** Religio nova: sacrifice, state and the self in late antiquity

This presentation will reconsider the modifications in the practice of religious sacrifice in the Mediterranean world of late antiquity as a result of Roman state policy before and after the triumph of Christianity under Constantine the Great. The presentation will argue that the changes in the official attitudes to animal sacrifice have to be analyzed in the context of a growing fascination with human sacrifice represented by the ascetic and the martyrdom traditions of late antiquity. In conclusion, it will be suggested that the official prohibition of animal sacrifice and the reverence for asceticism and martyrdom appeared as two aspects of a new phenomenon: the birth of the religious self in late antiquity.

## Changes and Continuities in Contemporary Zoroastrianism

### Panel Chair: Rafael Walthert

Our panel asks about the changes and continuities in contemporary Zoroastrianism. Nowadays, this religious tradition is mainly based in ethno-religious communities situated in Iran and India but also dispersed further over the globe by migratory movements of Parsi and Irani Zoroastrians. Demographic change, migration, urbanization and individual mobility lead to ongoing challenges for the established ritual practice and the ethnic boundary-making of this particular religion. The goal of the panel is to characterize the influence of such wider societal and cultural transformations on the social form and religious tradition of Zoroastrianism. How can changes as well as continuities be explained in the context of a changing environment? The papers in the panel discuss this question by developing and using the categories of community, ritual, practice and space. The perspectives focus on Mumbai with historical and contemporary cases.

**Håkon Naasen Tandberg:** “Some Parsi homes ... it’s like a whole diversity of culture on their altar”: on the impact of Mumbai’s multireligious context on contemporary Zoroastrianism

The title of this paper is a statement by a head priest of a fire temple in Mumbai. On the basis of analyzed material from interviews with over 50 respondents, I

discuss the impact of Mumbai's multi-religious scene on contemporary Zoroastrianism. This impact is thematized in many different ways in my material, but in this paper I will limit myself by presenting three instances, the last constituting the main focus of the theoretical discussion: first, respondents use comparisons to point toward similarities and differences between Zoroastrianism and other religions; second, certain beliefs or practices are deemed to be the outcome of influence from other religions; third, relating to when respondents engage in practices, visit places, or celebrate festivals that are typically described or identified as non-Zoroastrian (both by scholars and the respondents themselves). I relate this phenomenon to the larger discussion over changes and continuities in contemporary Zoroastrianism by connecting it to Michael Carrither's (2000) concept of polytrophy (the "eclecticism and fluidity of South Asian religious life" (834)), instead of other concepts such as syncretism. I will end the paper with a critical discussion of the vocabulary scholars employ when discussing the relation between religions in multireligious contexts.

**Leilah Vevaina:** In death an endowment is born: Parsi Zoroastrian cremation and the new Prayer Hall Trust

Sacred space for Parsis (Indian Zoroastrians) in Mumbai is managed by their governing body, the Bombay Parsi Panchayet, a public charitable trust. Customarily, charitable giving was often performed as part of death and remembrance rituals known as *muktads*, and donations were channeled through the BPP. While the traditional funerary rite of *dokhmenashini*, sky burial, has been practiced for centuries and managed by the Panchayet, many Parsis view the process as non-functioning. Today more and more Parsis are opting for cremation, a practice that was historically considered doctrinally abhorrent. In 2014, a former trustee of the BPP formed the Prayer Hall Trust, a small charitable organization that collected funds to operate a prayer hall within an existing public crematorium. This paper will explore how those who opt for cremation are adapting their ancient funerary rituals to this new form, by attending to the shifts in charitable giving now associated with cremation.

**Dorothea Lüddeckens:** The stability of death: continuity of tradition in a changing world

This paper focuses on the continuity of death rituals despite two developments: firstly, within the Zoroastrian community in Mumbai the traditional funeral practice of sky burial (*dokhmenashini*) has been the subject of criticism and conflict in recent decades. For example, doubts are raised concerning the functioning of the system because of a lack of vultures. Besides, the exclusion of non-Zoroastrians from the main parts of the funeral ritual is controversial. Secondly, and more generally, many Parsis have changed the way they practice their religion. For example, many do not obey purity rules, daily prayer rituals, or wear religious

clothes any more, i.e., they are very liberal-minded or even indifferent towards the Zoroastrian religion. Despite these developments, an overwhelming percentage (over 90%) still opts for a sky funeral at the traditional funeral ground, accompanied by the four-day-death ceremonies. The paper seeks to explain this seemingly paradoxical persistence of a ritual practice.

**Jenny Rose:** Tea and toddy: early nineteenth century Parsi-Yankee encounters in Mumbai

As a “middleman minority”, the Parsi community was confronted with modern Western influences early on. The mid-nineteenth century was a particularly challenging period for the Parsis in Bombay (Mumbai) in terms of social transition and transformation, and many of the changes effected during this period resonate into the modern period, not the least of which is a familiarity with English language and custom. This paper will begin with an exploration of several original documents describing historical encounters between Parsis and American visitors to Bombay, which inform us of both the elevated material and social standing of the Parsis, alongside the aspects of their tradition that they sought to sustain against all change. These two facets of Parsi identity – an ability to assimilate to a majority language and mores, while at the same time asserting difference according to tradition – will be discussed in terms of their impact on contemporary expressions of the Zoroastrian religion.

## **Changing Landscapes of Saiva Siddhanta: Transforming Tradition through Innovation: Historical Perspectives**

**Panel Chair: Ulrike Schröder**

India’s religious traditions are subject to processes of constant innovation and transformation. Saiva Siddhanta, one of the traditional philosophical systems in Saivism which is especially popular among Tamils in South India, has undergone significant changes from the nineteenth century onwards. The panel focuses on the analysis of the modern transformation of Tamil Saiva Siddhanta and its religious practice as a consequence of global discourses on religion. It discusses the standardization of Tamil Saiva Siddhanta and the significant modifications that its teachings and religious practices have been undergoing vis-a-vis the unifying forces of modern Hinduism in India and the spread of South Asians as a global diaspora. This encompasses the entanglement of traditional Saiva institutions with modern lay organizations as well as the re-reading of Saiva Siddhanta as the original religion of all Tamils. Thus, Tamil Saiva Siddhanta provides a paradigmatic case for the discursive dynamics of religion past and present.

**Srilata Raman:** The evasive guru and the errant wife: anti-hagiography, Śaivism and anxiety in colonial South India

The genre of polemical literature (*khaṇḍanas*) has a long history in both Sanskrit and Tamil literature. Nevertheless, polemical positions long rehearsed and anticipated were crafted anew with the emergence of Christianity in the Tamil literary scene, both in Jaffna and Southern India, from the seventeenth century. In this paper I discuss one such work I label an anti-hagiography, repudiating, through savage polemics, the genre of hagiography as practiced in the Tamil religious context. The text by Ārumuka Nāvalar of Jaffna (1822–1879) is an indictment of his contemporary and popular Śaivite religious poet Ramalinga Swamiḡal (1823–1874). Examining this text will also address issues of Śaivite religious authority and canonicity, the nature of scandal and the anxiety of authorship, issues which begin to emerge in the context of the printing of religious literature in colonial South India.

**Eric Steinschneider:** True religion in an uncertain age: Comacuntara Nayakar and nineteenth-century Saiva hermeneutics

The dominant vernacular theology in South India, known as Saiva Siddhanta, was reconfigured at the turn of the twentieth century in response to the new demands posed by colonial modernity. Recent scholarship has explored the role of Orientalist discourse in prompting the colonial reevaluation of Saiva Siddhanta as “Tamil religion.” Yet the internal vernacular dynamics of Saiva reform in this period have received significantly less attention. My paper addresses this issue by examining the writings of Comacuntara Nayakar (1846–1901), a highly influential Saiva Siddhanta polemicist. I consider how Nayakar’s attempt to distinguish his tradition from the rival school of Advaita Vedanta was mediated by his reception of precolonial Saiva literature. I argue that Nayakar’s concern to establish the sectarian affiliation of this literature signals a new hermeneutics of the Saiva text. My paper thus seeks to locate Nayakar’s religious innovation within a much longer conversation about Saivism in South India.

**Rafael Klöber:** What is Saiva Siddhanta? Contemporary conceptions of a universal, yet Tamil religion

The philosophy of Tamil Saiva Siddhanta was struggling for pan-Indian recognition as an eminent school of Hindu thought at the turn of twentieth century. Despite the efforts of Tamil reformers Saiva Siddhanta hardly gained trans-regional importance, due to the global appropriation of hegemonic Neo-Hinduism. It almost disappeared from public and scholarly attention in the twentieth century. In the last two decades, however, several renowned religious institutions (i. e., Maths and Adhinams) as well as private initiatives started to revive Tamil Saiva Siddhanta in the public sphere and forged novel ways to propagate the philosophy/religion among Tamils. My paper focuses on the recent Saiva Sid-

dhanta discourse in Tamil Nadu and will elaborate on crucial concerns in current discussions in the Saiva Siddhanta spectrum. This encompasses issues of language, lineage, canon and practice which are debated among “traditional” monastic orders and “popular” propagators alike, circling around the question: what is Saiva Siddhanta?

**Ulrike Schröder:** Being Saivite the South African way: the reshaping of Tamil Saiva Siddhanta in South Africa between local traditions and global Saivism

The paper analyzes questions of cultural and religious identity among Tamil people in South Africa by looking at Saivite revivalist movements which emerged in Durban in the twentieth century. The revival led to the formation of a broad network of Saivite organizations in South Africa. The groups focus on practicing Saivism and its philosophy and strongly advocate a distinct Tamil cultural identity which can be traced back to the renewal of Tamil cultural and religious expression in South India earlier in the twentieth century. After the end of apartheid, various religious leaders even seek to reestablish links with traditional South Indian authorities of Saivism. Thus, I will argue that the Saivite movement in South Africa has not only led to the emergence of new “diasporic” forms of Saivite religion but also mirrors the close but hybrid connection between local and global forms of Tamil religious identity.

## Changing Women’s Roles in Contemporary Japanese Religions

### Panel Chairs: Monika Schrimpf, Mira Sonntag

This panel focuses on women in contemporary religions in Japan as agents of religious change. In the Study of Religions, religious roles are usually defined by clear-cut borders based on status, gender, education etc. However, women in contemporary religions often cross or dissolve these borders by integrating multiple roles or re-defining the praxis and meanings of particular roles. The panel explores a variety of changes in role definitions and performances as initiated by contemporary women in Japanese Buddhism, Shugendō, Shintō, and Christianity, addressing the following questions: Which kinds of status and which roles are ascribed to or are accessible for women in contemporary religions in Japan? How do women (re-)define their own roles, and how do they construct their religious identity by integrating various roles? How far does the distinction between laity and clergy actually affect women’s role performance and self-understanding? And where do they draw boundaries?

**Naoko Kobayashi:** The entrance of women into “sacred mountains”: The case of Ōmine Okugake Shugyō (ascetic pilgrimage at Mt. Ōmine)

Although Mt. Ōmine is one of the most important and fundamental holy places for mountaineering ascetics, women, even skilled female ascetics, were excluded from it for over 1200 years. It was said that if women were to climb it, the sanctity of the mountain would be violated, and its role as a site of ascetic pilgrimage would be ruined. However, since the 1970s, the demographic of excluded women at Mt. Ōmine has changed. Female ascetics have gradually come to participate in ascetic pilgrimage at Mt. Ōmine (Ōmine Okugake Shugyō). After female ascetics joined, it changed from an activity that was combined with sight-seeing to a practice that focused on ascetic practices without pleasure. This paper will clarify the change that the entrance of women into “sacred mountains” has brought for the religious activities of mountaineering ascetics.

**Monika Schimpf:** Self-perceptions of Buddhist nuns in contemporary Japan

This paper explores the diversity of Buddhist nuns’ lives and self-perceptions in contemporary Japan. Buddhist nuns shape their lives and negotiate their identities between the legal permission to get married and wear “secular” clothes, and Buddhist precepts reflecting the ideal of world renunciation; between a hereditary system of temple succession for men and women, and insufficient opportunities for a monastic life within each Buddhist school. Whether they head a temple, are married to a temple priest, or live “secular” lives outside a temple, Buddhist nuns cross borders between roles and constantly re-negotiate what it means to be a nun, depending on their social context. Based on interview data, the paper takes a closer look at these self-perceptions and negotiations. How do Buddhist nuns define the purpose of this role, draw boundaries, conceive their position within their Buddhist school, and integrate other roles such as mother or wife?

**Mira Sonntag:** Christian feminism and the relevance of interreligious dialogue in Japan

This paper explores contemporary approaches of Christian women to theology and practical faith, focusing on proponents of “Christian feminism” in the broadest sense. Although Japanese Protestant churches started women’s ordination as early as 1933, women’s means of influence on church administration and political decisions are still very limited. While some women established independent research and/or mission institutions, others received support from international initiatives (UN or WCC campaigns) pushing gender-balanced action inside the churches. Active women from Catholic, Anglican and Protestant (UCCJ) backgrounds and their notions of a “feminist/women’s perspective” will be introduced and analyzed. Struggling to make a difference as a sub-minority of the re-

ligious minority of Christians in Japan, they came to realize the importance of interreligious dialogue with other Japanese women as well as in the broader Asian community. At the same time engagement in dialogue seems to pose a threat to their theological self-assertion.

**Rosemarie Bernard:** Shinto priest(ess): contemporary implications of women in Shinto practice

This paper examines the careers of women Shinto priests, with a focus on their professional activities and achievements in the last twenty years. The Shinto community, with its administrative center at the Jinja Honchô (Association of Shinto Shrines) in Tokyo, generally offers relatively few full-fledged positions as Shinto priests for women beyond the traditional roles of administrative secretary, miko (ceremonial dancers and assistants), or a variety of educational roles. I will focus here on women who, despite this, have been active as priests or otherwise as Shinto practitioners since the 1990s, and whose careers span an era in which there have been seen some improvements in the status and professional opportunities granted to women in the broader society. I will explore the role of the Association of Women Shinto Priests, as well as the achievements of women locally active in their communities.

**Birgit Staemmler:** Female healers' online strategies for demonstrating competency and reliability

Contemporary Japan is a society dominated by bio-medical healing techniques and sceptical about possibly charlatanic faith healers. Non-institutionalized faith healers, many of them women, wishing to present themselves and their services on the Internet in order to attract new, totally unknown customers, thus face the difficulty of having to demonstrate their authority as simultaneously competent and reliable healers. This is no easy task given that competency as a faith healer is best established via authentic religious experiences and associated with other-worldliness and a certain degree of extra-ordinariness. Reliability is, on the contrary, based on characteristics such as empathy, down-to-earthness and normality. The question to be addressed and answered in this paper is whether and why websites and weblogs by female faith healers use different means and emphases – biographic elements, conversion stories, terms and conditions and so on – than their male counterparts to demonstrate their competency and reliability.

**Morny Joy, Noriko Kawahashi:** Responses

## Charisma, Conversion, Atmosphere: Social Dynamics

**Leon Van Gulik:** “You could cut the sacred with a knife”: towards a theory of atmospheres in the context of religious change

Atmospheres are the implicitly experienced background qualities that co-occur with our encounters with people, objects, and situations. Our level of conscious perception of these atmospheres depends on our frame of mind. The notion of atmospheres is beginning to attract attention in areas as diverse as psychology, cultural anthropology and the cognitive sciences. The time has come to also put it on the map of religious studies. In fact, in the domain of the sacred, atmospheres surface most poignantly, since appropriate actions, objects, spaces, words, and music literally deal with ultimate endings, so that our associations, proclivities, and intentions will come under scrutiny. In this paper I will advance thoughts on what these affective entities we call atmospheres are, how they become embodied by religious objects, and why conflicting practices may simultaneously serve to create, mystify, disperse, confront, embrace or dispel them or their material carriers.

**Marco Lazzarotti:** “Because the Shaman told me”: experiences of conversion in Taiwan

Many disciplines – Religion, History, Psychology, Anthropology, Sociology, and Theology – are involved in studying the phenomenon called conversion. Usually the models proposed by Social Sciences are focused on three dimensions of conversion: the converted individual, the religious group to which the individual converts, and society, as a “silent” or indirect partner of the conversion process. It seems to me necessary to take the previous system of belief of the converted individuals into account. In this paper I describe some cases of conversion from Chinese Folk Religion to Catholicism in Taiwan. These cases should be considered within the Chinese Folk Religion system of belief in order to give them a social value and to better understand the individual choice of conversion. The converted individuals were not “faith-searchers” and they did not receive any particular pressure from the social and familiar context. We can only understand their conversion using their previous religion parameters.

**Martin Ackermann:** Charisma-networks around gurus  
Charisma, defined as the attribution of the “extraordinary”, is a purely relational construct. In the paper I will discuss the terminology and concept around charisma by implementing the perspective of social network analysis (SNA). Instead of speaking of charismatic actors, I suggest to reserve the term charismatic for relationships and networks only. When speaking about actors, however, the terms charismatizing and charismatized will be suggested. By using the example of the guru Amma (Mata Amritanandamayi) and her following, further light will

be shed on the constitution of charisma-networks. I will present key processes of network diffusion and network consolidation by analyzing the practice of charismatization and the negotiation of the (above mentioned) extraordinary. These processes arguably guarantee the guru's centrality in her following.

**Ofelia Perez:** New Religious Movements in Cuba: innovation or tradition? A reality for debate

A new face has invaded the Cuban religious scenario. It came about in response to backward and out of context discourses and religious practices in Cuba, mainly in groups that broke away from existing ones, while unknown but charismatic leaders appeared suddenly and established themselves with great appeal for followers, in ever increasing scenarios. Small structures multiply at high speed horizontally through our society, while larger ones which attract more followers unite the smaller ones in an interesting combination of community action and verticality. More attractive and innovative mechanisms, mainly for young people, often cover up more orthodox fundamentalist discourses and practices than the allegedly criticized ones, a call for an intimate relationship with God.

## Children in New and Minority Religions: Questions and Cases

### Panel Chair: Liselotte Frisk

Growing up in a minority or new religion is a subject which has been much discussed during the last few years. Fears have been expressed about potential harm to children of parents who are members in different religious groups. Naturally, the conditions for children in minority religions vary a lot depending on the religious group in question and also depending on the parents' kind of engagement. This panel investigates some of the questions and special conditions for children growing up in some minority religions.

**Susan Palmer:** Children in New Religions: the question of harm  
The presence of children in the so-called "cults" is a controversial issue. They are often portrayed in the media and anticult literature as underprivileged and uneducated captives, or victims of medical neglect, forced labor and psychological, physical or sexual abuse. Questions of religious indoctrination/conversion and "individual choice" are often raised. Drawing on data collected through fieldwork in contemporary NRMs and from reading memoirs by second generation members of utopian communes, this study focuses on examples from Ecoovie, the Anthill Kids, the Solar Temple, the Oneida Community, the Gurdjieff movement and other spiritual communities. This paper addresses the question of whether, and under what doctrinal, ritual and social conditions, children grow-

ing up in new, unconventional religions might be exposed to various dangers or disadvantages.

**Liselotte Frisk:** Growing up in controversial minority religions: constructions of childhoods

This paper discusses patterns and structures in different constructions of childhoods in some controversial minority and new religions. The study is based on life story interviews with young adults who grew up in religious groups such as the Church of Scientology, The Unification Church, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Knutby Filadelfia in Sweden. The sample consists of interviewees who decided to join the religious groups of their parents, as well as those who decided not to. The method used is that of narrative analysis.

**Sanja Nilsson:** "She sees the smallest ones ...": children's construction of love and longing for the charismatic leader in Knutby Filadelfia, Sweden

Knutby Filadelfia is a Christian congregation of approximately 85 members residing outside Uppsala, Sweden. The group became publicly known in January 2004 when a pastor allegedly persuaded a young female member to shoot two other members, one of whom died. The perpetrator of the crime was under the impression that she acted according to God's will. The murdered member's sister, pastor Åsa M Waldau, called "the bride of Christ" by the media, has a unique position as the group's charismatic leader. Since 2008 Waldau has gone into seclusion, leaving her post as a pastor as an effect of the media coverage. Her role in the congregation is still, however, of great importance. This presentation aims at describing the children in the congregation with special focus on how they perceive their relation to Waldau, and argues that her role as a charismatic leader was enhanced by her withdrawal from the group.

**Peter Åkerbäck:** Children without original sin: the perception of children in the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification

The Family Federation is a firmly established and internationally well-known new religious movement. Since its start in the mid-1950s the group has developed into a denomination that stresses the importance of the nuclear family and children. Even though the group has been studied from a number of interesting points there are few studies of the upbringing and socialization of the groups' children. Internationally, it has been difficult to find any substantial material produced by the movement that addresses child rearing. However, the Swedish movement has produced extensive material for use in the teaching of children. This paper aims to present this material in order to investigate how the group is socializing its children into its teachings and how to be a good citizen. The material has also been complemented with interviews with young adults growing up within the movement who have had firsthand experience of these teachings.

## Christian Transformations: A Variety of Processes

**Claudio Ferlan:** The religious revelation of Wovoka between syncretism and cultural adaptation (1889–1890)

Single events, ideas, individuals do not determine per se big religious changes in history. Yet, we can say that individuals can assume a role of catalyst. In the history of Christian missions in the New World in the modern era, what is the role of individual conscience in the construction of the religious identity? The dynamics of evangelization imply individual conscience, both for the missionary and for the indigenous. Only two possibilities exist for the former: conversion or refusal. History shows us that the most frequent response is syncretism or patchwork religiosity. The question for the missionaries is: how much of cultural adaptation and accommodation is permissible without falling into an illegitimate syncretism? This paper aims to answer this question through the analysis of the religious aspects involved in the Ghost Dance as it has been developed after Paiute Messiah Wovoka's preaching (1889–1890), and as Christians have interpreted it.

**Myung-Sahm Suh:** Generational rift among socially concerned Evangelicals in contemporary South Korea

This paper examines the contested legacy of the First Lausanne Congress in both global and South Korean Evangelical communities. In response to theological and practical innovations in the Catholic and Ecumenical Churches from the 1960s onward, thousands of Evangelical leaders from more than 150 countries gathered at Lausanne, Switzerland in 1974 to discuss the proper relationship between evangelism and social action. The meeting culminated with the production of the Lausanne Covenant, which delineated the scope and methods of mission practices from an Evangelical perspective. Nevertheless, the absence of a practical guideline in, as well as built-in ambiguity of, the Covenant has left a door open for evangelical social activism of all sorts, whether it is of the Christian Right or the Evangelical Left, for decades to come. Taking a cue from such diverse ramifications of the Congress at the global level, this case study explores the ways in which the idea of Evangelical social action has been differently interpreted and implemented by two distinct generations of Evangelical social activists in contemporary South Korea in relation to their respective socio-historical experiences of the Korean War and the '80s Democratization Movement.

**Shin Ahn:** When repentance is impossible: a study on three branches of Guwonpa, "Salvation Sect" in Korea

On April 16, 2014, the Korean ferry Sewol [semo world or Moses world] sank in the southwestern sea of Korea. 304 victims died, mainly secondary students traveling from the Incheon port to Jeju Island. Prosecutors investigated the causes of this horrendous accident, and the owner of this ferry was disclosed in public: Yu

Byeong-eon (1941–2014). He was the religious leader of Guwonpa, “Salvation sect.” He was born in Kyoto, Japan in 1941, and moved to Daegu in Korea after liberation from Japanese colonialism. He attended the Seongkwang [sacred light] School, a Christian mission school and studied the Bible at the missionary school named “Shield of Faith Mission” with American missionary Dick York (USA) and Dutch missionary Kays Glass (WEC). In 1962, his father-in-law Kweon Cheol-sin (1923–1996) and Yu founded the Evangelical Baptist Church of Korea (EBCK), so-called Guwonpa [salvation sect], which conservative Korean Christians identified as a heresy because they taught their believers the new doctrine of exact forgiveness of sin that righteous believers do no longer need repentance and forgiveness after being saved. There are three major branches of Guwonpa: (1) Kwon Cheol-sin’s EBCK (former Korean Evangelical Layman’s Church), (2) Park Ok-su’s Good New Mission (since 1976), and (3) Lee John’s Good Word Mission (since 1982). This paper deals with their missionary activities and characteristics as religious phenomena.

**Sophie Bønding:** Methodological reflections on the study of continuity in relation to the Christianization of the North: a discursive approach

I propose the notion of discourse as a central methodological concept when attempting to identify religious continuity in relation to the Christianization of the North. The notion of discourse has recently been applied in the reconstruction of pre-Christian Scandinavian worldviews by Jens Peter Schjødt, understanding a discourse as constituting the sum of meaningful expressions that can be produced within it. In line with this approach, I explicate the theoretical foundation, pointing to the production of meaning inevitably taking place within and therefore being constrained by the discourse(s) that one is embedded in. Hence, the introduction of Christian ideas to the North must necessarily be constrained by the existing pre-Christian discourse(s), i.e., the existing semantic framework(s). I conclude with a case study, showing that the conceptualization of Christ in kennings of early Christian skaldic poetry indicates continuity in relation to the discursive representation of gods as non-transcendental beings in pre-Christian Scandinavia.

## Christian Zionism, Europe, and Israel

### Panel Chair: Göran Gunner

For many scholars around the world, Christian Zionism is understood to be a paradigmatically American phenomenon associated with the United States that is typically described as dispensationalist and oftentimes connected to charismatic and/or extreme Jewish nationalist movements. In this panel, we will ex-

plore different forms of Christian Zionism that have emerged from non-U.S. contexts where these characteristics may or may not be the most prominent. Our international panelists examine a significantly understudied though fast-growing global phenomenon. Of special interest are European Christian Zionist approaches to Israel, Islam, and the search for peace in the Middle East.

**Kristian Steiner:** The hope for peace in Christian Zionism: a comparative analysis of German and Swedish Christian Zionist movements

According to previous research on Christian Zionist literature, Christian Zionism demonstrates very little hope for peace in the Middle East. Humanity is flawed. Islam, Muslims, and Arabs are depicted as an obstacle to peace, and inferior. Jews and Israel are given appreciative attributes but also seen as God's tool in history, and thus instrumentalized. Human history is predestined; violence will peak before the return of Christ. The readership of this literature is required to pray for Israel, but dissuaded from supporting peace initiatives, and from saving Jews from Armageddon. In this paper I will present current research assessing the ongoing status of these notions.

**Curtis Hutt:** The battle for Jerusalem: Marcel Dubois' challenge to Roman Catholics, Israeli Jews, and Christian Zionists

For several decades, the face of Christian Zionism in Jerusalem was not the International Christian Embassy or John Hagee's Christians United for Israel but a French/Israeli Professor of Philosophy at the Hebrew University – the Dominican priest, Fr. Marcel-Jacques Dubois. In this paper, Dubois' once influential form of Christian Zionism is discussed. While few today outside of Israel and Rome are familiar with his brand of non-premillennial dispensationalist Christian Zionism, I will lay out the persuasive relevance and challenge of his work for those making claims on Jerusalem today.

**Aron Engberg:** Ambassadors for the kingdom: narrative sense making among Evangelical volunteers in Jerusalem

In the study of contemporary Protestant affinity with the state of Israel, or "Christian Zionism", the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem provides a particularly interesting case. Not only is it special in its European origin and its close historical ties to South Africa and Europe, but also in its very global constituency today. Drawing upon field work among evangelical volunteer workers of European, African, Latin & North American origin I argue that the volunteers represent themselves as less motivated by dispensationalism, or various end time scenarios, than as ambassadors for the kingdom of heaven. As such they negotiate the boundaries between the future and the here and now, the private and the public as well as between the "political" and the "religious". They are "ambassadors" for a non-state of divine origin, not yet, but hopefully soon in existence.

## Christianity and Society

**Carlos Caldas:** Mainline Protestants, Evangelicals, Charismatics, Pentecostals and Neopentecostals and their participation in the public arena in Brazil: a critical assessment

Brazil, the fifth largest population on Earth and the sixth wealthiest country in the world (in 2014), is a society where religion still has great influence. The growth of non-Catholic Christianity in recent decades (Mainline Protestants, Evangelicals, Charismatics, Pentecostals and Neopentecostals) has been observed by many who study religious phenomena worldwide, e.g. Philip Jenkins. With such a tremendous numeric growth the participation of those groups in the public arena in Brazil is unavoidable. This paper intends to explore the characteristics of such involvement: what are the major concerns of the aforementioned religious groups, as far as social-political questions are concerned? How did their main leaders work during the period of the last Presidential elections? The main hypothesis is that the theological “credenda” of the group will guide its social and political “agenda” in Brazilian society.

**Christopher Driscoll, Monica Miller:** K(no)w where to go: diasporic transatlantic commuters, African-American religious studies, and escaping the “permanence” of American racism

The Atlantic Ocean has, for both the study of African-American Religion and those it studies, served as a sacred/profane distinction. Whether framed as the profanization and objectification of black bodies via the Middle Passage, or as means of resacralization through diasporic travel to Europe or Africa via the “black Atlantic,” travel – through space and time – has worked to construct the tradition we call African-American religion. Examining figures like writer James Baldwin and rapper Kanye West and their use of literary and technological modes of omnipresence as contemporary expressions of this tradition, this paper travels the borderlands between theory and data to suggest that categorization of religious traditions as well as the methods used in their study follows a logic of K(no)wing Where to Go: that is, knowing that “travel” requires escape from sacred/profane binary thinking, but recognizing that there is seemingly (no)where to go for escape.

**Orivaldo Lopes Jr.:** Presence of Christian theology in contemporary academic thought: an historical change

The occidental and modern scientific state has as a fundamental article a clear demarcation between the peculiarity of rational thought and other ways of thinking. We try to demonstrate through this paper an opposite tendency in advanced modernity: the construction of a two-way road between academic thought and religion in the public square. We intend to focus here on the academic realm

as being much more open to religious thought. In post-doctoral research presently developed at the University of Padua, we concentrate on two Italian thinkers, Gianni Vattimo and Giorgio Agamben, in order to demonstrate that this interaction became possible as the result of the exposition of itself in the public square practiced by Christianity, especially by their theologians. We intend to present how it happened, and what were the epistemological bases that permitted this kind of interaction. The relationship with the religious universe here practiced, shows some intellectual possibilities and caveats.

## **Colonization and Religious Dynamics in Antiquity: Contact, Continuity and Change**

### **Panel Chair: Marion Bolder-Boos**

In the context of colonization people migrated across the ancient Mediterranean, bringing the cults of their hometowns to foreign regions, where they encountered people with different sets of beliefs. Cultural contacts certainly took different shapes and courses depending on whether the colonial encounters were friendly or hostile, but while in the past it has often been assumed that supposedly “superior” cultures would imprint their cults on their “barbarian” neighbors, it is now widely accepted that the religious dynamics in colonial situations were much more complex. Indigenous populations reacted in different ways to the cults of the newcomers. In return, colonists could be affected by the religious traditions of the local inhabitants. Even a religious “middle ground” could develop where cultural contact and intercultural exchange resulted in the emergence of new forms of religious practices.

### **Marion Bolder-Boos: Tutelary deities and Roman colonization**

In the course of their territorial expansion, the Romans founded colonies in numerous indigenous settlements, which caused serious changes not only in the political but also in the social and religious makeup of those communities. Especially the cults of the tutelary deities were affected. On the one hand, one must ask whether – and, if yes, in what form – the old protective divinities of the pre-Roman population were able to continue in existence, how they were transformed and what role they assumed within the colonial pantheon. On the other, it is important to look at the cults the Romans brought with them into the newly founded settlements. In the light of recent discussions about the validity of the concept of “religious Romanization” a re-evaluation of the role of Jupiter and the Capitoline Triad is of particular significance.

**Frank Daubner:** Macedonian colonization and the gods

From its very beginnings, the kingdom of the Argeads was an expansionist and colonizing power. The Macedonians occupied districts formerly settled and ruled by Paeonians, Thracians and Chalcidians even before they emerged in the colonizing history caused by the deeds of their kings Philip II and Alexander III. The better-known colonizing movements under those rulers brought Macedonians to Asia and to the East. This movement went on under their successors. The religious dynamic of Macedonian colonization in Classical and Hellenistic times has never been sufficiently stressed, so I try to trace the hints of “Macedonian religion” in the areas of Northern Greece, Asia Minor and the Near East which were affected by Macedonian settlers and settlements in order to come closer to a comprehensive understanding of the role the gods played in the nearly 500 years of Macedonian colonization.

**Christopher Cornthwaite:** The Letter of James and Egyptian patronage

The publication of Paul Veyne’s book, *Le Pain et le Cirque*, brought the study of Greek benefaction (euergetism) and Roman patronage into the discourse of antiquities scholars and, especially in the last decade, into Christian origins. Unfortunately, these categories of benefaction and patronage have also become somewhat ossified as the two possible options for understanding patron/benefactor relations in the Graeco-Roman world. This has led to the neglect of a third option, the Ptolemaic and Egyptian system of *skepē* patronage, on which the only thorough study is Marta Piatkowska’s *La Skepe dans l’Égypte Ptolémaïque*. This paper examines how *skepē* patronage can elucidate elements in early Christian literature, using the following issues in the Epistle of James as a case study: *proedria*, the faith and works discussion, and the prohibition of oaths.

**Michael Affleck:** The identity of the founding author of Christianity

The history of the dynamics of the rise of Christianity has been written and understood without ever knowing who the author was of the most widely read book in Western civilization, the Gospel according to Mark. Authorship is everything yet the search for Mark has been all but abandoned. Modern analysis has created new approaches to finding the revolutionary author who wrote some good news in response to the destruction of Jerusalem. Knowing the author reveals the purpose for which he wrote his gospel that was empowering in form and substance. This paper will establish the historical criteria for identifying the person who used the pen name, Mark. Socio-economic, political, religious, linguistic and motivational criteria will be examined and applied. The author who hid in history, a founder of the Christian movement, the author upon whom the other three canonical gospels rely, will be identified by name.

## Combinatory Practices of Buddhist and Kami Worship on Mt. Hiei

### Panel Chair: Meri Arichi

In addition to being the center of an esteemed Buddhist institution, Mt. Hiei is also known for its unique tradition of kami worship. The tutelary kami of Mt. Hiei, Sanno Gongen, is an avatar of Buddha Shakyamuni. He was regarded as the highest god in all Japan, and was the focus of devotion for his power to grant worldly benefits. This panel engages with different ways in which we may approach and explain the relationship between kami and buddhas that was nurtured on Mt. Hiei, paying particular attention to aspects relating to religious culture and understandings of kami. The first panelist will focus on aspects of cultic devotion in historical context while the remaining two panelists focus on aspects of art, examining the images of kami and buddhas and the cultural influence of Mt. Hiei.

### Satoshi Sonehara: The lineage of the Sanno deity

This presentation examines traditions relating to the protector kami of Mt. Hiei, Sanno Gongen, taking particular account of the influence of the Daishu scholar monks of Mt. Hiei. It is said that Sanno was a protector deity of Mt. Tiantai in China who now defended the dharma in Japan. Another tradition states that Oonamuchi-no-kami, who bequeathed the land to Amaterasu-Oomikami, became the Miwa deity, then shifted location again to become Sanno. We may understand this presentation of the origins of the Sanno deity as involving an attempt to establish Mt. Hiei as a separate, independent religious authority and rival to the secular rule which had passed from Amaterasu to the Imperial House. The respectful regard in which the Imperial Court of the middle ages held Mt. Hiei was due to a sense of awe felt for a rival, yet complementary institution.

### Meri Arichi: Iconography of Hie-Sanno Mandara in the British Museum Collection

The belief in kami Sanno of the Hie (Hiyoshi) Shrine flourished within the Tendai theoretical framework in the climate of Shinbutsu Shūgō on Mt. Hiei from the medieval period. The extant examples of Hie-Sanno mandara indicate that the iconography of the twenty-one Sanno deities was well established by the Muro-machi period. The Edo period example of Sanno Mandara, now in the British Museum, conforms to the established iconography and follows the typical format that depicts the deities in hierarchical rows, but the unique feature of this example is the addition of an extra figure in the prominent position in the lower center. This figure can be identified as Goin from his distinctive physiognomy of karasu tengu, the mythical creature with a beak. This paper will trace the

origin of the iconography, and considers the significance of this figure in the historical and ritual contexts.

**Eriko Saeki:** The faith and pictorial images of Sanju-ban Shin

This paper introduces the influence of Tendai Buddhism on religious traditions concerning deities indigenous to Japan, with a focus on the Sanju-ban Shin (the thirty protective deities). The thirty deities were each allocated a certain day of the month during which they were to protect the Lotus Sutra or the emperor and the country. This faith was systematized at the Enryakuji temple on Mt. Hiei during the Heian period, and spread widely afterwards. The Nichiren sect of Buddhism adopted the thirty protective deities as the tutelary deities of the Lotus Sutra. They were to support the promulgation of the Nichiren sect teachings in Kyoto. Moreover, Nichiren's disciples were greatly influenced by the art of the Tendai sect, including works such as the Hie-Sanno Mandara. This paper will trace the influence of the aspects of Tendai Buddhism described above by comparing pictorial images of the Sanju-ban Shin with the Hie-Sanno Mandara.

## Commodified Spirituality: Marketing Pilgrimages in Japan

**Panel Chair: Mark MacWilliams**

Ian Reader has recently pointed out the “problematic assumption” made in academic studies of pilgrimage distinguishing its “sacred” or “authentic” nature that is “despoiled and undermined by modern commercialism” (p. 11). This panel takes its inspiration from Reader's important new comparative study, *Pilgrimage in the Marketplace* (2014). The panel's goal is to apply, challenge, question, and extend Reader's argument by focusing on mass marketed pilgrimages in contemporary Japan. All panel participants begin with Reader's assumption that the “dynamics of the marketplace” are essential for pilgrimages' “successful functioning, development, appeal, and nature” (p. 15). Each panelist looks at this by drawing from the rich examples of Japanese pilgrimage today: Yamanaka looks at religious tourism in Nagasaki; Imai looks at otaku pilgrims and their new use of votive tablets (ema) at Washinomiya-shrine; Shultz looks at asceticism and “brand building” for individuals who write about their journeys on the Shikoku henro. MacWilliams looks at the character-centered sacred narratives of *Ano hana*, key to the anime pilgrimage now popular in Chichibu Japan.

**Hiroshi Yamanaka:** Commodification of contemporary pilgrimage in Nagasaki, Japan

Many scholars in religious studies seem to take for granted that religion has nothing to do with tourism, which is considered a symbol of secularism. Howev-

er, as the current popularity of the less religiously motivated pilgrims of Santiago de Compostela shows us, the boundary between religion and tourism seems to be blurring in Western Europe. Even in Japan it is said that the number of young travelers who do not have any explicit religious motivations has been increasing at popular Buddhist pilgrimage sites. In Japan, the designation of particularly famous places as World Heritage Sites plays an important role in blurring the lines between religion and tourism. In Nagasaki, Catholic churches and other sites associated with the city's rich Christian-related heritage will be designated as World Heritage sites next year. The Nagasaki Pilgrimage Center has already developed a new pilgrimage package called the "Nagasaki pilgrimage" in cooperation with tourist agencies. Nagasaki's case provides an interesting example for examining religious tourism in Japan.

**Nobuharu Imai:** Anime fans and votive tablets: reinscribing sacred landscapes in Japanese Otaku pilgrimage

The aim of this paper is to discuss the fans who visit Japanese sites associated with anime or "animated films". Japanese anime are hugely popular in Japan, and there are many real-life locales that form the backdrop of the stories in these films and TV shows. The fans, called otaku (anime fans) in Japanese, often visit these places and describe them religiously. They call their journeys "sacred pilgrimages" (seichi junrei). But what do they mean when they describe their journeys this way? Why call it a "pilgrimage" and what makes these sites appearing in anime stories "sacred"? To answer these two questions, I will analyze the votive tablets (ema) that otaku have left at one of these anime seichi, Washinomiya-shrine in Saitama prefecture, which appears in the popular anime and comic book (manga) series Lucky Star. Ema are typically used by pilgrims and parishioners at Japanese shrines and temples to post prayers and wishes for this world benefits to the kami or Buddhist divinity enshrined there. Interestingly, otaku have continued this practice, often hanging up their own ema, but have transformed this practice by using their own hand made illustrations of anime characters. Moreover, rather than serve as a means of linking otaku pilgrims to the divine, otaku ema are used as if they are communicating on Facebook, Mixi, and other electronic bulletin boards on the Internet. Although initially criticized by the mass media, the new forms of ema have gradually become normal at shrines and temples, and otaku pilgrimage has gained acceptance as a new form of young people's spiritual journey. In other words, ancient shrines have gained a new relevance as "sacred places" for otaku whose initial connection with them comes from animated films and TV shows. In this paper, I will argue that ema serve as a new mode for reinscribing a mass mediascape at traditional religious centers in Japan.

**John Shultz:** Gyō-ing somewhere: pilgrimage ascetic practice to finance human capital

The notion of individuals representing their own commercial brand has become ubiquitous in contemporary society, and brand building can be enabled through many types of media. In this research, I concentrate specifically on pilgrimage asceticism as an avenue for the development and marketing of personal human capital. In particular, I consider examples of several prominent individuals in the Heisei era (1989-present), who have published first-person pilgrimage narratives of their experiences on the Shikoku henro, a 1,200 km journey that has become Japan's most famous pilgrimage. These cases include religious professionals, authors, and characters who have become famous personalities in the wider social sphere of the pilgrimage itself. In all of these instances, pilgrimage asceticism provides very unique – even unrivaled – opportunities for both personal development and career advancement.

**Mark MacWilliams:** Rethinking the sacred in Japanese pilgrimage: Ano hana, anime pilgrimage, and the Chichibu thirty-four temple circuit

In this paper, I show how commercialism and pilgrimage are one and the same by looking at the well-known anime pilgrimage devoted to “Ano hana,” a popular 2011 TV show set in Chichibu, which is also the site of an ancient sacred pilgrimage route devoted to Kannon bodhisattva. I will argue two key points. First, both pilgrimages offer radically different discourses about what Eliade calls “hierophanies,” or manifestations of the sacred. By using Eliade's model, however, I make no claim that the sacred is somehow intrinsic or innate to Chichibu pilgrimage sites. Rather I argue, following John Eade and Michael Sallnow's critique of Turner's concept of *communitas*, that Eliade is not describing something innate but rather types of discourse. Temple traditions, commercial interests, and the mass media generate very different fields of sacred discourse for Chichibu pilgrims: There is the more temple- and icon-centered discourse of Kannon “reijō” (sacred places) of traditional Chichibu pilgrims, and the 2011 anime character-centered discourse of Ano hana for fan-based pilgrims (otaku) who visit what they call Chichibu's “seichi” (holy land). Second, I will also show that while Eade and Sallnow are correct that pilgrimages offer a field of multiple discourses, these need not be contested. The Chichibu pilgrimages generate coterminous discourses – sharing the same boundaries of Chichibu while intersecting spatially only once – at temple 14. But even there reijō and seichi inscribe the space in radically different sacred ways.

**Ian Reader:** Response

## Comparative Spirituality East and West

### Panel Chair: Jørn Borup

“Spirituality” is often used among religious people or in “holistic milieus” and has become a concept increasingly discussed in academic research within the study of religion. The concept is being used in a very heterodox way, and its “fuzziness” and often implicitly religious agenda has led some scholars to reject the very notion. When the concept is investigated as an analytical concept it is often understood as a non-institutionalized, individual search for inner experiences and personal transformation, and the “new spirituality” is often contextualized within a frame of post-modernity in which a subjective turn de-traditionalizes religion in a neo-liberal market reality. Spirituality is thus often used (positively) within psychology and (more critically) within sociology, most often in a Western context based on Christian history and traditions. The aim of this panel is to explore “spirituality” comparatively across two cultural spheres, namely Japan and the West. The concept of spirituality (in Japanese *supirichuaritei*) will thus be investigated critically as phenomenologically, historically and sociologically particularized and yet parallel fields. The papers will address the relevance of the concept in concrete cases, and discuss global and transnational transformations and circulations of ideas, practices and traditions within spiritual fields.

**Jørn Borup:** Transnational spiritualities: post-modern Self religiosity in a global world or cross-cultural empty signifiers?

“Spirituality” for users in both Japan and the West points to authentic experiences of Self transformation, but also to a diversity of ideas and practices with little semantic coherence. The history and significance of the concept differs accordingly, but yet seems to legitimize a common field of comparison, not least when seen in a contemporary perspective as an expression of individualization in a neo-liberal world. This paper will introduce characteristics of the concept of “spirituality” in typical Western and Japanese contexts. It will ask theoretical questions of its legitimacy as an analytical concept, and discuss methodological challenges related to studying spirituality, not least in a comparative perspective.

**Norichika Horie:** Wicca today in Japan: aspects of culture, gender, and the media

Recently, those who identify themselves as wiccans are increasing in the social media in Japan. This paper is based on an interview research on three wiccans. Their stories will enable us to search for the meaning of learning wicca (which originated in the West) and practicing it in contemporary Japan. The findings are as follow: (1) they criticize the patriarchal elements in Japanese religious culture; (2) thus they are attracted to wicca as a foreign culture and are practicing it individualistically; (3) at the same time, they are trying to be rooted again to

what they regard as “Japanese,” and that is easier in today’s new conditions of changing formations of gender and of emerging social networks on the internet. Those findings help us understand the globalization of spiritual resources, its relation to the local religious tradition, and the role of gender formations in both of them.

**Michiyaki Okuyama:** Interpretations of spirituality comparing cases of Shinnyo-en followers in Japan and the West

The Japanese Buddhist community Shinnyo-en has about one million members, mainly in Japan but also in other countries. Shinnyo-en’s practices derive from the Shingon esoteric tradition and the Mahayana Nirvana Sutra. Shinnyo-en practices a form of meditation known as “sesshin,” a name that also describes a meditative practice in Zen traditions. During sesshin in Shinnyo-en, a practitioner meditates in front of a spiritual guide, who enters an altered state of consciousness and offers insightful guidance. Shinnyo-en has established branch temples in Asia, Oceania, Europe, and the Americas. This paper uses pilot interviews to learn how international practitioners have understood the Shinnyo-en worldview, and especially the spiritual insights, that originated in a Japanese context. The paper presents their interpretations of spiritual matters and compares the different approaches to Shinnyo-en taken in Japan and the West.

**Erica Baffelli:** Response

## Comparing Paradigms in the Study of Ancient Religions

### Panel Chair: Richard Gordon

Based on a comparison between Egypt and (Classical) Greece, this panel proposes to examine how ancient Mediterranean religions were studied from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries – in many ways a formative period for scholarship in the field, with a lasting impact on current approaches. In particular we propose to compare the ways in which the collective and individual dimensions of these religious traditions were represented. The panel consists of two case-studies, each focused on a particular religious tradition, concentrating on the ideologies that shaped scholarly conceptions of these religious traditions. Egypt: the two major focuses will be on the Amarna period and its role in the history of Egyptian religion, and the place of personal piety versus temple practice. Regarding Greece, the dominant approaches can be roughly correlated with a (Hegelian) model that prioritized the State and a neo-Romantic elevation of *das Volk*.

**Janne Arp-Neumann:** Monotheism, orthodoxy and heresy as paradigms in the history of the study of Egyptian religion

For decades Ancient Egypt was viewed as the cradle of Christian monotheism first attested in the sun cult of the so-called Amarna period, and hence construed as part of Western culture. Simultaneously, Amarna became equated with heresy: as a sudden, severe, or sometimes even revolutionary, rupture in tradition. Against this foil, the subsequent Ramesside period could be construed as a time of restoration of traditional cults and, indeed, return to orthodoxy, and at the same time as the “age of personal piety” and “dawn of conscience”. Although some scholars arrived at a completely different interpretation (viewing the Amarna period as a failed attempt to return to the pure/original Egyptian religion), such readings of the ancient evidence were apparently not persuasive. Our paper will scrutinize the structure and transmission of these narratives and discuss the question of why some dominated the Egyptological discourse and beyond, whereas others were forgotten or neglected.

**Richard Gordon:** Constructing Greek religion: from K.F. Herrmann to M.P. Nilsson

Since J.G. Lakemacher’s *Antiquitates Graecorum sacrae* (1734), the study of Greek religion in Germany – a particularly Protestant pre-occupation – was based on a model derived from the study of Judaism, conceived as a population coterminous with its religion. From the 1840s, we find attempts both to insist on the complete congruity of State and religion on the one hand, and on the wide-ranging diversity of belief and practice on the other. The study of Greek religion became a recognized special topic within a specific genre, *Griechische Antiquitäten*, focused on Classical Greece. The major figure of twentieth century study, M.P. Nilsson, attempted to reconcile these divergent trends by insisting on the primacy of a diachronic approach.

**Corinne Bonnet:** Post-mortem ideas and symbolic language: Franz Cumont between texts and images

Already in his famous corpus, *Textes et monuments figurés relatifs aux mystères de Mithra*, which appeared in fascicules between 1894 and 1899, Franz Cumont tried to stage a dialogue between texts and images. He thought that the section of his great work devoted to assembling the sources would be its “most enduring” achievement, precisely because it was the “most impersonal” – as though he wanted to suggest that the source-materials, the ancient texts and monuments, spoke for themselves. Yet by virtue of his differential weighting of texts, whether literary or epigraphic, pagan or Christian, poetic or philosophical, and likewise in his interpretation of the “hieroglyphs” (i.e., the iconography), the historian inevitably leaves his personal imprint on the way the pieces of the puzzle are fitted together. Starting from Cumont’s *Recherches sur le symbol-*

isme funéraire des Romains, published in 1942, and republished with a scholarly introduction in 2015, this paper will try to clarify Cumont's views on the relation between text and image, between formal ideas and symbols relating to death, in what we may call the Graeco-Roman Empire. Cumont tried, behind the texts, behind the images, and beyond their partial imbrication, to reconstruct a "theology" where others see only an aesthetic without religious implications. Such an approach, already then contentious, has since evoked numerous interventions. As a key figure in the historiography of the religion of the Graeco-Roman Empire throughout the first half of the twentieth century, but whose formation belonged essentially to the late nineteenth, Cumont's views provide important insights into the debate over the relation between individual and collective representations during this period.

## Comparing the Dynamics of Pilgrim Experience of English Cathedrals Past and Present

### Panel Chair: Marion Bowman

Adopting an interdisciplinary approach, the three-year-project Pilgrimage and England's Cathedrals, Past and Present is researching pilgrimage and engagement with sacred sites in England from the eleventh to the twenty-first centuries, and assessing the growing significance of England's cathedrals as sacred/heritage/tourist sites today. It examines the intersection between the material and representational (buildings, works of art, devotional objects etc.) and belief, practice and experience. It also explores the interface between sacred and secular practices, in what are both sacred places and sites of local and national heritage. In this panel, we draw upon both historical research and contemporary fieldwork data to compare and contrast the motives, materiality, sensory experiences, expectations and interpretations of those participating in contemporary English cathedral focused pilgrimage with what can be known of the medieval milieu.

**Simon Coleman:** Finding a space for pilgrimage: the roots and routes of English cathedrals

English cathedrals represent a remarkably under-researched area, yet they are growing in popularity in terms of numbers of visitors. If one analysis of British religion argues that a powerful trajectory is from "cathedrals to cults" (Bruce 1996), I suggest a trend may be moving equally in the reverse direction – a direction that allows us to juxtapose the roles of cathedrals with those of other pilgrimage sites but also multi-faith rooms, chaplaincies, and engagements with heritage and religious landscapes. The phrase "finding a space for pilgrimage"

represents the exploratory character of this paper: based on preliminary data from an interdisciplinary study still in progress, I ask how both researchers and visitors locate cathedrals in intellectual, religious, spiritual or cultural terms. How do the “roots” of history and architectural style relate to the “routes” formed by contemporary varieties of mobility and urban regeneration?

**Dee Dyas:** Creating a context: using the senses in shaping a pilgrim environment

In the fourth century, as Christian pilgrimage to holy places was coming into being, Cyril of Jerusalem wrote jubilantly “Others only hear, but we see and touch”. The subsequent growth in “sensory piety”, linked to relics, sacred sites and shrines, has shaped Christian pilgrimage experience ever since. Though potentially theologically problematic, the profound human instinct to invest place with spiritual significance and shape spiritual experience through the tangible and material has persevered. Despite the Reformation suppression of pilgrimage in England and other Reformed contexts, it has re-emerged recently with a new force, and the lure of holy places has been reasserting its power, though often without the rich and complex sensory stimuli of earlier centuries. This paper will examine the dynamics which drive “sensory piety” and the role of art, architecture, liturgy and other factors in creating a sensory environment which shapes pilgrim experience and responses.

**John Jenkins:** The dynamics of medieval and contemporary pilgrimage at Canterbury and Durham cathedrals

The pilgrim experience in medieval cathedrals was carefully controlled. Paths and access points around the building were clearly demarcated, and visitors could expect a range of sensory cues to instruct them in how to behave. Canterbury and Durham were both remodelled around the imposing golden shrines of their saints, Thomas Becket and Cuthbert, providing a focal point for pilgrimage and for the cathedral itself. Drawing on historical research and contemporary fieldwork, this paper presents case studies of pilgrim/potential pilgrim and visitor experience at two major English pilgrimage sites. The author examines various sensory interactions with the cathedral and its practices, and question whether the lost dynamics of the medieval experience continue to subtly shape, positively or otherwise, that of the present.

**Marion Bowman:** “Containers of the sacred”: from pilgrim badges to magnets, ducks and selfies

Pilgrimage centres traditionally have been, and continue to be, places rich in material culture. Such special or sacred places were and still are sites of commercialism, with artefacts on sale and a long tradition of pilgrims imbuing objects and substances found there with significance on account of their connection with a sacred site. Coleman and Elsner refer to the souvenirs that pilgrims

take home as “containers of the sacred” (Coleman and Elsner 1995, 100). Concentrating on material culture at English Cathedrals which function as places of contemporary pilgrimage, and focussing on the dynamics of relationality and materiality, this paper explores the range of pilgrimage memorabilia available to pilgrims and visitors, their motives in purchasing such items or creating their own pilgrimage mementos, and the rationale of providers. Can small rubber ducks dressed as bishops or “selfies” taken on mobile phones be taken seriously as containers of the sacred?

## Conceptualizing Japanese Religion

**Makoto Ozaki:** Heidegger and the Lotus Sutra on the beginning

There might be some affinity between Heidegger and the Lotus Sutra concerning the beginning. For Heidegger western history began with the Greeks as the first beginning and now comes to the end, preparing for the other beginning of a new history in which the last God may appear. In the Lotus Sutra the historical Buddha reveals his own eternal origin in the countless past and predicts the appearance of the unseen Buddha hidden in the depth in the eschatological time, i. e., the mappo era. While Heidegger’s idea of the other beginning as the retrieval of the still deeply hidden origin of the first beginning is restricted to finite history, the notion of the eternal original Buddha suggests his cyclic reappearance in history after the demise of the historical Buddha in the anticipatory form of the Supreme Conduct Bodhisattva. Heidegger’s concept of the last God may correspond to the anticipatory Bodhisattva.

**Eckehart Schmidt:** The spirits, the Buddha, and a working definition of religion

It is well known that Theravāda Buddhism is the main religion of Myanmar. In addition to Buddhism, there is another spiritual practise which is of great importance, especially among the rural folks: nat (spirit) worship. Since both spiritualities are often practised by the same individual, the question is how they are related to one another. Is nat worship a special part of Myanmar Buddhism? Is it separated from Buddhism and can it be explained as mere superstition? Are both spiritualities based on two different religious systems? There is some disagreement about this question. The answer depends on the applied working definition of religion. In this paper a definition which focuses on the individual will be proposed. Therein, religion shall not be understood as a monolithic entity distinctly separated from other cultural areas. Multiple religiosity could be described without downgrading nat worship as “superstition” or defining it as one part of Buddhism.

**Michihiro Yokota:** Daisetz Suzuki's outlines of Mahayana Buddhism and its influence upon Max Weber's sociology of religion

In his work *Hinduismus und Buddhismus*, Max Weber described Mahayana Buddhism as "the inner-worldly mysticism". Weber's theory on Mahayana Buddhism was actually based on Daisetz Suzuki's work *Outlines of Mahayana Buddhism*. Suzuki wrote this during his stay in America in order to show western Christians what Mahayana Buddhism is. Suzuki applied Schopenhauer's theory of the Will to the doctrine of Mahayana Buddhism in which all beings are one in the Dharmakaya. This corresponds with Schopenhauer's Will, however the Dharmakaya is not necessarily "blind" as is Schopenhauer's Will. The Will has no direction or goal for history and social organization, but the Dharmakaya provides guidance for how to live our lives. Our shared ignorance of the Dharmakaya corresponds with the blindness of Schopenhauer's Will. In this presentation, I will analyze Suzuki's interpretation of Mahayana Buddhism and show how Max Weber's understanding of Mahayana Buddhism was influenced by Suzuki's work.

**Takashi Okinaga:** The "Logic of Basho" of Nishida Kitaro and the question about the beginning: contrasting with "original chance" of Kuki Shuzo

Why does our question about the beginning of the universe become a mystery? In this presentation, we examine this issue referring to Nishida's "Logic of Basho (topos)". When we ask about the cause of substances, we confront an infinitely retroactive mystery in which a cause requires another cause. But we cannot ask a cause of Basho. This is the fundamental difference between substance and Basho. The question "why did something come into being?" can be answered only when a form is settled to regulate both the "before" and "after" sides of its existence. However, if that form itself came into being sometime, we cannot explore the beginning of the existence of that "something" before the form came into being. Is the peculiarity of Basho, transcending any predicates, really beyond rules, time and causality? We will investigate this topic by contrasting it with the idea of "original chance" of Kuki Shuzo.

## Conspiracy Theories in Contemporary Religious Discourse

**Panel Chairs: Egil Asprem, David Robertson**

Academic interest in conspiracy theories has grown in recent years, as it has become apparent that they are a central locus for contemporary debates over power, democracy and rationality. Some scholars have noted the intersection between conspiracy theories and contemporary religious narratives (Goodrick-Clarke 2002; Barkun 2003), but there has been no sustained critical analysis

of the field, nor theoretical models through which to interpret the multiple and complex interrelations. This panel is intended to help define the boundaries of this developing field and outline avenues for future research. How is conspiracy discourse promoted and/or combated within religious communities? Which resources are drawn upon in such struggles over meaning and influence? What are the common epistemological features of religion and conspiracism, e.g. belief in occluded agencies? Might we usefully analyze conspiracy theories as a modality of religious thought and practice, e.g. as soteriology, theodicy or esoteric hermeneutics?

**Asbjorn Dyrendal:** Elected marginality, popcultural mediation, and new media: dynamics producing conspiracism in “the cultic milieu”

In the original formulation of the idea of a “cultic milieu” (Campbell 1972), deviance and mysticism played the central roles in defining the subculture and its dynamics. With the popular mainstreaming of mystical religion and the knowledge-claims of the attendant practices, deviance would seem to play a lesser role. However, Campbell already stressed how processes of secularization meant that the sciences, not the Church, was now the “other” that defined deviance with regard to ideas about the world. Even though the alternative history, physics, economics, and treatments of the cultic milieu have become mainstream in society and popular culture, they are still “epistemically dispossessed” (Robertson 2014) by authorities. This paper discusses some of the possible dynamics whereby conspiracy theories arise as a form of counter-knowledge in the cultic milieu, from seemingly well-documented explanations such as marginalization and anomie, the internal logic of this conspiracy discourse (Barkun 2003) and necessary disappointment of utopian visions, to how traditions of esoteric discourse relate to new entrepreneur roles.

**David Robertson:** The counter-elite: strategies of authority in millennial conspiracism

Despite frequent exhortations to individualism and free-thinking, it is clear that certain figures are authorities within the field of millennial conspiracism. Alex Jones, David Icke et al. command considerable audiences and sales figures, and seem to function as “gatekeepers”, validating, popularizing and synthesizing narratives within the discursive field. When the hermeneutic of distrust is taken to such extremes, the question of how authority is maintained demands serious attention. Drawing on Max Weber’s notion of “charisma” (1947 [1922]), Matthew Wood’s description of “multiple and relative” “non-formative authorities” (2007) and the author’s description of “epistemic capital” (2014), this paper will examine power structures in the non-institutionalized conspiracist milieu. It argues that such individuals accumulate authority through a strategic mobilization of mainstream and alternative sources which draw from traditional,

scientific, channelled, intuitive and synthetic epistemic strategies, thereby constructing themselves as a “counter-elite”. Such non-formative authority may represent a structural similarity which helps explain the relationship between conspiracism and certain forms of contemporary religion.

**Beth Singler:** Big, bad pharma: New Age biomedical conspiracy narratives and their expression in the concept of the Indigo Child

5.7 million American children aged 3 to 17 have been diagnosed with ADHD. Approximately two thirds of those diagnosed have been prescribed amphetamine based drugs such as Ritalin as a treatment. Diagnoses and prescriptions are also increasing exponentially in the UK. Diagnostic checklists include: fidgeting, answering questions before they are finished and being unable to stick at long and tedious tasks. In this paper I will explore New Age conspiracy narratives which accuse the pharmacological industry, or Big Pharma, of collusion with schools to turn naturally active children into compliant drones. In particular, I will describe the category of the Indigo Children: allegedly a special, intuitive, spiritual generation appearing since the 1980s. This category celebrates the inability of some children to fit into mainstream systems while actively attacking the commercial machinations of “Big Pharma” involving children: over-medication, but also harmful vaccinations and genetically modified foods.

**Kevin Whitesides:** Response

## **Constructing Moral Selves: Transmitting and Appropriating “Muslim” Values In and Outside Institutionalized Religious Settings in Europe**

**Panel Chair: Gerd Marie Ådna**

In today’s dominant European discourse, so-called “Muslim” and “Western” values are increasingly presented as being mutually exclusive. In this context, it takes Muslims a lot of biographical work to construct a moral self. This panel addresses the issue how European Muslims with migration backgrounds construct moral selves in dialogical relations with various collective and personal “voices” that inform their life worlds simultaneously. The focus is on how culturally and religiously framed values are transmitted to Muslim children by parents and religious community leaders, and, vice versa, how such values are actively appropriated by the offspring of migrants in dialogues with the multiple value discourses and practices that characterize the domains in which they participate in their everyday lives. Our goal is to create a discussion forum for researchers who study the construction of religious and cultural identity of Muslim children and their families in various European contexts.

**Marjo Buitelaar:** Doing moral “biographical work”: the narrative construction a Muslim moral self

This paper addresses the impact of being raised within different, asymmetrical pedagogical systems that transmit (partially) different world views and ideologies of personhood. It investigates how religious self-presentations of female Dutch Muslims with Moroccan backgrounds are informed by the interplay between pedagogical styles and personal and social developments. Narrations on religion in the life stories of three highly educated women are presented to analyze in what instances “Dutch”, “Moroccan”, and “Islamic” cultural values are identified by the women and presented as compatible, complementary or contradictory to each other. The focus is on narrations concerning parental styles of transmitting religion. It is reflected how continuity or discontinuity in the stories with parental voices relate to the specific balance the narrators seek to realize in their lives between various kinds of agency and communion.

**Gerd Marie Ådna:** Narratives from Stavanger and Berlin about the interplay between daily lives and moral ideals in the self-reflection of Muslim mothers

This paper addresses some religious and cultural values, as found among Arab- or Turkish/Kurdish-speaking Muslim mothers in Berlin and Stavanger. They want to transmit religious and cultural values to their children and hope that they will become well-integrated in the society, schools and the Muslim community. For instance, encountering the Norwegian society’s expectations that all women should be full-time professional workers is sometimes perceived as being in conflict with “Muslim” family values. Further, the patience of the Prophet Ayoub is often mentioned as an ideal, especially in times of hardship. The mother’s ability to be patient is tested when she acts in roles as her children’s educator, her female friends’ support and mediator, and the organizer of the mosque’s bazaars. This paper takes a history of religions approach in analyzing narratives and observations among first generation migrants in a European urban setting.

**Nadia Fadil:** Reclaiming the “traditional Islam” of the parents: practices of authentication of liberal and secular Muslims in Belgium

Scholarship on Islam has largely investigated the question how younger Muslims relate to the Islam of their parents. Within this perspective, the idea of a generation gap has emerged as an important analytical template to assess these developments. Drawing on fieldwork with Belgian Muslims of Moroccan origin, this paper seeks to nuance this perspective by exploring accounts wherein the religious legacy of the parents is actively reclaimed. This was especially the case for liberal and secular respondents who held onto the “traditional” religion. This paper proposes to take them as redefinitions of what constitutes and can be considered “real Islam”. By re-invoking a different set of criteria that have been discarded in Islamic revivalist tendencies, the narratives not only show

how genealogy and ancestry play a central role in redefining the “real” Islam, but also how the turn to orthodoxy becomes disqualified as an inauthentic way of practicing Islam.

**Riem Spielhaus:** Coping with exclusive narratives: the value discourse among young female Muslim activists in Germany

Based on empirical research among young Muslim activists in Germany this paper addresses how Muslims in Western Europe are confronted with and respond to an assumed dichotomy of “Muslim” or “Islamic” and “European” values. Values are an ingredient of many exclusive narratives of Europe that portray Muslims as incapable of submitting to core values like gender equality or respect for diverse life forms and faith groups. While it appears that Muslims need to be questioned about equal treatment of women, governments present themselves as flagships of gender equality. The paper hence asks, which values do young Muslims present as both German and Muslim values, in such a discursive environment, and which strategies to cope with exclusive narratives do they choose? Another question is what reference frames young Muslims use to legitimize their claims.

## Constructions of Religious Pasts

**Anastasia Serghidou:** Nature, the challenge of “thauma” and the invention of the physical history

Pliny in his *Natural History* (III) proposes a global conceptual approach on what he called “miracles of the earth” (*miraculis terrae*). Indeed, though the notion of “miracle” takes in his work a purely naturalistic dimension it serves as an epistemological base which challenges the evenemential history. Based on the concept of the “exceptional” and the “spectacular,” the author re-evaluates the archaic or classical cosmological predicates related to the power of *physis*. He focuses on the rationale which forges the meteorological dynamics and the meaningful interconnection between geographical localities, human and/or animal identities and religious experiences associated with the epistemological dimension of the *autopsiae*. We mainly explore the evenemential challenge of *thamata* and the way Pliny associates them with the idea of *erêmos*, unexplained disasters and/or vanishing agglomerations, including cities or human communities. We explore the narrative paths the author followed to establish historical temporalities and production of events. By that we take into consideration the conceptual analogies which helped him to cover the “circumstantial” events that meet with the cosmos as a locus of “great and wonderful achievements” (*megala and thaumasta*) (Hrdt I). We finally study the programmatic sentences of Pliny and

the changes they brought, notably on the interpretative level of physical phenomena and religious interpretation (N.H III, I). This last interpretation is expected to be analyzed on the classical reception level through some Byzantine authors, notably through the commentaries of Malalas and Tzetzes.

**Tillo Detige:** Dynamics of reform & Orientalist discourse in Digambara Jainism

While Digambara Jainism's ascetic ideal is that of the naked, peripatetic muni, seats of clothed, sedentary bhaṭṭārakas formed the backbone of Digambara asceticism for most of the second millennium CE. In the seventeenth century, their power bases were eroded by two consecutive reform movements, Adhyātma and the Digambara Terāpanth. Early in the twentieth century, quasi contemporary to the "revival" of the muni lineages, the bhaṭṭāraka institution again came under siege, this time by modernist reformers. Through a comparative study of these various mo(ve)ments of opposition to the bhaṭṭārakas, this paper attempts to trace the impact of the Orientalist discourse on the later reformers' self-understanding and self-articulation. Did Western conceptions about "original" Indian religions degenerating at the hands of "corrupt priests" merely dovetail with the opposition to the bhaṭṭārakas and reinvigorate the ideal of the muni? Or did they enable a new type of criticism by installing an evaluative, normative framework?

**Uta Karstein:** Religion and modernity: the ambivalent role of Christian art unions in the nineteenth century

The presentation discusses first empirical findings from a habilitation project which deals with the complex and ambivalent role of Christian art unions in nineteenth-century Germany from a sociological perspective. Those associations (e.g. "Deutsche Gesellschaft für christliche Kunst") were taking part in debates about architecture and fine arts, were supporting artists and were influencing relevant decision-makers within churches, academies, parishes or councils during the second half of the nineteenth century. In doing so, they were becoming part of conflicts about the secularization and professionalization of art and architecture and the so-called "Verbürgerlichung" (bourgeoisification) of religion. The presentation discusses three dimensions of these associations to illustrate the ambivalent effects and results of their activities: (1) a tension between democracy and elitism in terms of the organizational form of these associations; (2) a tension between autonomy and heteronomy which relates to the support of art; (3) a tension between higher and lower taste patterns related to their target groups.

## Contacts between Religions and Religious Representations

**Miriam Benfatto:** The exegetical method of a Jewish polemical text: the case of Isaac Troki's *Hizuk Emunah* (1593/4)

The *Hizuk Emunah* is an anti-Christian polemical text composed by the Karaite Isaac of Troki. Written in Hebrew, it was later translated into Latin (1681) and widely circulated within the Jewish and Christian contexts. My paper attempts at analyzing the relationship between the exegetical structure of the polemical discourse and issues of historical nature regarding the character of the “historical Jesus” and the features of early Christianity. Is there a relationship between the dynamics of Jewish polemical literature, conceptions of history and hermeneutical approaches applied to the Scriptural materials? Which are the results of exegetical techniques? Is this precise type of textual exegesis enhancing new historical representations? The aim of the paper is therefore meant to explore the rise of historical consciousness in relation to early Christianity, in the midst of heated confessional and inter-religious Scriptural confrontations, which especially took place in areas of high interconfessional divide.

**Richard Marks:** Representations of Hinduism in Jewish thought of medieval Spain: toward a history of Jewish concepts of comparative religion

Four Jewish writers of twelfth to fourteenth century Spain constructed their ideas of Hinduism from Arabic-language travel reports, heresiologies, and other writings, which they adapted to a biblically-based view of history and revelation. Judah Halevi construed Hinduism as a combination of the Muslim images of revelation-rejecting Barahima and image-venerating Sabians. Moses Maimonides likewise saw Hinduism as a remnant of ancient Sabian religiosity, an idolatrous stage in human history. For Abraham ibn Ezra, relying on Arabic traditions of Indian astronomy-astrology, Hindu thought was valuable theoretical knowledge which recognized God in a lower aspect called Elohim. Lastly, based on an Arabic translation of the (Indian) *Panchatantra*, Jacob ben El'azar presented Hinduism as glorious, universal moral teachings derived from human insight about cosmic moral law. These four views of Hinduism (emphasizing idolatry, science, or ethics) illuminate opposing Jewish conceptions of the history of ancient religions and how Judaism differed.

**Shin Nomoto:** Toshihiko Izutsu (1914–1993) reads *Ismā'īlī* Texts: A Japanese Philosopher-Islamicist on a *Shī'ī* form of Islamic Thought

Toshihiko Izutsu was a Japanese philosopher and Islamicist whose contribution to various fields of Islamic studies and scholarship on East Asian thought continuously gains high appraisal. Recently his philosophical project which aims at extracting a paradigm of mystical recognition of existence from the thoughts from Japan to the Middle East has been gradually receiving global attention in

the academic scene. This paper will elucidate his understanding of Ismā‘īli Shī‘ism, once influential in the Middle East from the ninth to thirteenth centuries. In his discussion on this subject Izutsu chooses the topics such as the idea of the Imamate, antinomianism and cosmology from medieval Ismā‘īlism, whereas he does not pay much attention to the idea of cyclical history, one of its indispensable doctrinal elements. Considering this, we will also show how thought on history, an integral doctrinal part of each of the Abrahamic monotheist traditions, is treated in Izutsu’s own mystical philosophical project.

## Contemporary Catholic Transformations or Dynamics

**Anna Hojdeczko:** The tabloidization of the religious-oriented press in Poland: the examples of “Egzorcysta” and “Dobry Tydzień” periodicals  
 Polish Catholic-oriented media surprisingly followed the global tendency of providing “infotainment”, and this style of journalism worked astonishingly well. The staggering example is “Egzorcysta” (“The Exorcist”), a monthly magazine, founded in 2012, the aim of which is “fighting with the spiritual dangers”. This self-proclaimed “tool of modern evangelization” publishes articles about possessions, revelations and spectacular conversions, interviews with exorcists and advice concerning religious life. The magazine’s circulation reached 40,000 at the beginning of 2014. The trend might be confirmed by “Dobry Tydzień” (“The Good Week”), a weekly first published in October 2014, targeted at “women who appreciate tradition, family and religious values” and containing articles about history, celebrities, memories from the time of the Polish People’s Republic and Bible study. The presentation will focus on main issues that appear in those periodicals and will be an attempt to put the religious-oriented press tabloidization phenomenon in a larger context of changes in the modern press.

**Denise Motzigkeit:** New Ecclesial Communities: signs of the times?  
 In the twentieth century many New Ecclesial Communities (NEC) arose within the Catholic Church. Since the Second Vatican Council, these NEC have gained more and more influence within the church. The constantly rising membership numbers stand in contrast to the known situation of the Catholic Church in Western societies, which is characterized by high numbers leaving the church and empty worship services. Against this background, NEC seem to become the “new hope” of the Catholic Church – but what makes them so attractive? At least it cannot be due to their openness concerning church policies or questions of morality, because on these points they strictly adhere to the dogmatic doctrines of the church. NEC are no longer satisfied with the “normal” offers of a regular parish: they are characterized by a great lay spirituality that encourages

individuals to actively create their own lives guided by faith. The community spirit is central. A mandatory organizational structure and strong conservative content make NEC especially appealing to people who no longer get along with the open way of life of the modern spirit. Thus, members of NEC criticize the social form of the church, the way of evangelization, as well as the secular lifestyles of modernity. The following questions will lead through the presentation: How is the criticism of the NEC in church and society expressed in concrete terms? What exactly is criticized by the NEC (with regard to church and society)? What are their claims and struggles? What are the potentials and risks of the NEC for the Catholic Church?

**Dominika Motak:** Traditional Polish religiosity in a maelstrom of modern culture: continuity and change

Kalwaria Zebrzydowska – an old religious complex (calvary) related to the Passion of Christ – is one of the major pilgrimage centres in Poland. The ritual cycle of the Holy Week, culminating in a passion play and a mass procession performed on Good Friday, is regarded as the epitome of traditional Polish popular religiosity. Nevertheless, it may also serve as an excellent illustration of changes which are taking place in the lived religion: we can observe that a traditional religious practice starts to transform into a leisure time and media event, and at the same time becomes a platform for the Catholic clergy to promote its views about current political affairs (e.g. in vitro fertilization). Drawing upon the results of field research and other sources the paper addresses a few theoretical issues particularly pertinent to the dynamics of continuity and change of Polish traditional religiosity.

## Contemporary Chinese Religions

**Jens Reinke:** Constructing a modern Pure Land: Pure Land Practice at Dharma Drum Mountain

In recent years scholars have begun research on Pure Land in Chinese Buddhist history. Here, contrary to the situation in Japan, Pure Land does not constitute a school but is a part of general Buddhist practice. However, most works focus on pre-modern forms of the tradition and very little has been done on the contemporary situation of Pure Land in Chinese Buddhism. This paper tries to fill this gap by examining different concepts and practices of Pure Land at a contemporary Taiwanese Chan Buddhist group, Dharma Drum Mountain (DDM). It is based on extensive fieldwork, publications of DDM, and the writings of the organization's founder, Ven. Shengyan. I argue that Pure Land's concepts and practices and different interpretations thereof are where demarcations between elite

and popular, modern and traditional Buddhism, occur. Clarifying the relationship between these approaches to Pure Land will help us to understand the modernization of Taiwanese/Chinese Buddhism.

**Shun-Hing Chan:** The political influence of the Protestant churches in Hong Kong

This paper seeks to examine the political influence of the Protestant churches in Hong Kong. Drawing on the theory of religious influence formulated by Paul Djupe and Christopher Gilbert, this paper examines how the Protestant churches facilitate the development of socio-religious subcultures – collections of individuals who form attachments that persist inside and outside formal church structures. Membership in these subculture units opens up organizational channels that transmit political information, resulting in numerous salient conduits for political influence within a congregation. This study uses both survey and interview as research methods for a full test of the effects of the Protestant churches on the political behavior of their members. The research findings will provide a better understanding of how voluntary associations expose individuals to political information and norms, how public opinion is formed and why people participate in politics.

## Contemporary European Religiosities

**Anja Terkamo-Moisio:** Religiosity among nursing students in Finland

This paper aims to describe the religiosity of the nursing students (n=91) in five polytechnics in Finland. A cross-sectional electronic survey, including the Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS), was conducted in May 2014. Most of the participants were female (91%). Their ages varied from 19 to 54 years, the mean age was 31 years. Only 9% of the participants were highly religious and 39% of them were non-religious. The means of different categories varied from 2.06 to 2.94 where ideology was the strongest and experience the weakest category. Adherence to a religion was a significant factor in all other categories, except intellect. The age of the participant was significant in category private. Non-religious nursing students confront the spiritual needs of religious patients, which may lead to dissatisfaction on both sides. More information is needed about the religiosity of nursing students in order to improve the quality and ethics of care.

**Elena Stepanova:** Multiple moralities in Russia: religious and secular components

Today's Russia is a place of multiple moralities (moral bricolage), which combine a variety of conflicting discourses. So-called "traditional" religions, the Russian Orthodox Church in particular, view themselves as the only source of "true" mor-

ality based on traditional values. Religion in Russia is unquestionably a major moral authority not only for those who regularly practice religion, but also for a great majority of non-religious individuals. At the same time, the very presence of traditional values in public discourse reveals serious controversies in the search for a new national identity, as well as the lack of reliable common values, which can give meaning and structure to everyday lives. There is an increasingly widening gap between the declarative moral values on the level of collective representations, which do not manifest themselves in actual behavior of people, and the operational values, i.e., principles and rules of behavior of people in their daily lives.

**Göran Ståhle:** Self-help culture and holistic beliefs in relation to Ayurveda in Sweden

This is a study of persons using Ayurveda as self-help in relation to holistic health practices in Sweden. A survey was given to all persons attending a centre for Ayurveda in Stockholm, Sweden during 2014. A selection of 20 persons was made for in-depth interviews. The participants display dissatisfaction with biomedicine. A belief that a state of perfect health is reachable by holistic medicine is held, but practical reasons are cited as explanations for not being able to live according to the guidelines given. The participants also emphasize how holistic medicine is making them able to be active agents in relation to their health issues. This pertains even to their use of Ayurveda where they display a critical and pragmatic attitude. The persons pick and choose the parts that they perceive as working for themselves and relate them to other holistic health methods.

**Klaran Visscher:** Jozef Rulof and the revelations of the Age of Christ: modern religiosity in the Netherlands

My PhD project addresses the case of Jozef Rulof (1898–1952), a marginal but constant figure within modern Dutch religious history. As a self-proclaimed prophet and medium in the service of “The Other Side”, Rulof operated as a painter, trance lecturer and writer of many books that remained, albeit within very small circles, relevant as spiritual guidelines for daily life, to the present day. Over twenty years of writing and lecturing Rulof developed a complex system of rules and principles that address more or less everything in life, space and time, combining elements from his Christian background, which at the same time he fiercely opposes with specific notions from Theosophy, which he also rejects. His aim was to prepare humanity for the coming of a new era, the Age of Christ, which his nowadays followers believe to have really started around 1945, finding proof in Rulof’s writings and post-war societal and historical events.

**Anna Mariya Basauri Ziuzina, Oleg Kyselov:** Religions on Maidan: the case of Orthodox Christians and Jews

The goal of the paper is to study how Jews and Orthodox Christians affected social change in Ukraine during Maidan (a general name for the protest rallies taking place in November 2013 – February 2014). Starting December 2013 the presence of religious organizations became noticeable. The inter-religious council (including the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Jewish religious community) made public statements on the social situation. Rabbis claimed that Jews participate in protests only as individuals, not as a religious community, but the presence of religious Jews was obvious at Maidan. They were convinced to fulfill the mitzvah of tikkun olam. Unlike Jews the Orthodox Christians officially were active on Maidan: Orthodox priests blessed rally participants from the stage, prayer tents were organized, ecumenical prayers were held regularly etc. Although the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Jewish religious community had different public positions, their members actively participated in Maidan, making social changes in Ukraine real.

**Atsushi Koyanagi:** Avant-garde and arrière-garde in German Protestantism  
In the recent research on the history of modern theology, dialectical theology is characterized as the theological avant-garde. Although this characterization is useful, it could become a superficial theory of generation. Thus, I propose in my paper that the idea of “Arrière-garde” should be introduced in the study of modern German Protestantism. “Arrière-garde” is a remarkable notion in the study of the modern French literature history. It has a potentiality to consider the continuity, as well as the gap, between the dialectical theologians and the older theologians such as Ernst Troeltsch and Wilhelm Bousset. With the notion of “Arrière-garde”, I try to place the shift from liberal Protestantism to dialectical theology in the wider cultural movements.

**Gábor Itzész:** Salvation and religiosity: the predictive strength of a Rokeach Value Survey item

The paper presents empirical findings of a national Rokeach Value Survey (RVS) from Hungary. We analyzed data recorded in connection with the fourth wave of the European Social Survey (N = 1,144) to determine whether the salvation item of the RVS can be used as an indicator of religiosity. We performed statistical tests, including crosstabs and Pearson’s correlation to compare the RVS salvation to four other indicators of religiosity, and found that it stands in statistically significant moderate association with them. We also found that RVS salvation correlates with the religiosity principal component (based on the four indicators) in terms of key demographical characteristics (age, gender, education, and domicile). Overall, a smaller proportion of the sample proved religious and a larger proportion explicitly irreligious by the RVS salvation test, which we found a

somewhat stricter indicator of religiosity than the other four measurements but generally able to predict religiousness in a sample.

**Svetlana Karassyova:** Cross-confessional study of the types of religiosity: constructing universal parameters (Belarusian example)

The 2012–2014 all-republican survey was aimed at discovering the universal types of religiosity of modern Belarusians. One of the tasks was to construct cross-confessional parameters of religiosity corresponding not only to different religions, but also different types of religions. The universal parameters were set in the questionnaire as generalized statements. The problem of appropriate recognizability of those abstract statements by the respondents – the bearers of a certain style of conversation, way of thought and life – was one of the risks for the project. Therefore, the questionnaire, along with the list of prepared answers, contains an “other” option. The analysis of answers given by the respondents as “other” and its concordance with the menu of answers proved that the universality and the constructed abstract statements are correct. The paper offers the results of the analysis and the examples of answers. A wide applicability of the constructed universal parameters is noted based on the assumption that Belarus is a model of poly-confessional societies.

## Contemporary Japan

**Eiko Hara Kusaba:** Changing traditional folk beliefs of Itako shamans' activities in modern Japan: comparing two areas' types in Tohoku district

Itako shamans have been very famous for calling to and communicating with deceased persons in Japan. The traditional type of Itako is a blind female. In the Meiji era (later nineteenth century), the activities of traditional Itako shamans changed significantly. Itako shamans have gathered in Osorezan temple in Aomori Prefecture and mass media have reported their activities of summer festivals at Osorezan Temple for calling to the souls of deceased persons. They have changed their activities with the tide of the times. However, another group of Itakos with their blind monk husbands established a new Buddhist Tendai school for blind persons in Iwate Prefecture. This group had many members for a period of time in the past. What has been changing and preserved in the activities of traditional beliefs? I will compare innovative and traditional activities in these two areas' types.

**Kenta Kasai:** Introducing chaplaincy to Japanese society: an experience of the Institute of Grief Care, Sophia University

After a derailment accident of West Japan Railway Company which killed 107 people in 2005, the company established JR-West Relief Foundation and the In-

stitute of Grief Care in April 2009. The Institute is the first of its kind in Japan to offer a general institutional education program of care of the bereaved, or “grief care.” Although there are some programs of clinical pastoral education founded by various groups other than the Institution, general folks in Japan have tended to be skeptical of the religious human care program. The huge accident made people accept the potential of the care of the mixed emotions of the bereaved by “spiritual” caregivers. As one of the supervisors of the clinical education course of the Institute, I will discuss the training program of spiritual care workers, in reference to the theory and method, the “religiosity versus secularity” discourse, and the alliance among the institutes and groups.

**Tetsuro Tanojiri:** Joint struggle of Catholics and communists in assistance for refugees of Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster: spirituality, science and politics in post- 3/11 Japan

Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Disaster (3/11) occurred in 2011. Many people fled their homes to escape radiation exposure. Some Catholics and communists have been struggling jointly to assist them. KN (Kirakiraboshi-Net, their organization) faced three problems. First, the joint struggle was organized in Tokyo, not in disaster areas. Internal–external contradictions and conflicts with their colleagues occurred. Second, the Japanese government enforced religion and science-technology policies to prevent the voluntary emigration. Many other religions and scientists supported the policies; KN had to resist. The third problem related to the emergence of a personal “spirituality of migration”. This is a spirituality of resistance to the “kizuna” concept which gives priority to attribution and obedience to the local community rather than personal life and faith. In this paper, we understand their struggle in the context of the spirituality, science and politics of “post-3/11 Japan”.

**Toshiaki Kimura:** Lost community and ritual revival after the Great Tohoku Earthquake

After the Great East Japan Earthquake, the local festivals of the affected area have attracted wide attention as a means to the recovery of the local communities. Many NGOs and other organizations have offered material and human support to revive festivals and mass media reported on them more frequently than ever before. Theoretically, these positive evaluations of the community festivals are based on classical optimistic theories about the ritual and social integration. However, these scholars do not pay so much attention to the dynamics when the ideal cosmic order intervenes into our everyday world. In this paper, I try to examine the process of revival of the “Oshiokori” festival, which is held once in twenty years in a coastal village, to show how people of the affected area face the gap between their devastated everyday life and the ideal order promoted through the festival.

## Contemporary Muslim Identities

**Laurens De Rooij:** The effect of media on Muslim identity construction and their public and private practices

Everyday media practices of Muslims in England affect the construction of their identities as they locate themselves in their local and global environment. This paper will discuss how media consumption is linked to the construction and expression of diasporic Islamic identities. This paper will explore further links to media usage influencing religious identity construction and the conceptualization of religious identities in light of cosmopolitanism and in a global society. The effects of media narratives regarding Islam from a number of sources consist of, among others, blame, trust, curiosity, prejudice and persecution and are used by various communities to construct their identity and define their place and role in society. The existing protocols of media and public space of a given context characterize the kinds of experiences communities are exposed to, as well as dictate their participation when transitions take place across geographic areas and in many cases across cultural borders.

**Lenka Zilvarova:** “Muslim Fundamentalism” and its mass media representation in BBC News

The way Muslim fundamentalism is reported, be it in social sciences or mass media, is concerning due to chaotic accounts as well as the lack of theory and any fixed framework about what fundamentalism actually is. Nowadays to mark a movement as fundamentalist is definitely in accord with explaining neither its character, nor the heart of the fundamentalism itself. This paper focuses on phenomena, such as Islamism, Salafism and Jihadism, that are frequently labelled as Muslim fundamentalism in general. The question of the label’s relevance in a given context, the issue of mass media representation and interpretation principles form the theoretical frame of the paper. Analysis of mass media contents (including the terms discussed) published on BBC News websites between November 2010 and November 2014 follows. The findings show how the BBC mass media picture of Muslim fundamentalism manipulates public opinion of Muslims as a social (religious) group and fortifies intuitive stereotypes.

**Nadia Fadil:** Europeanizing Islam: a colonizing trap or a process of emancipation?

This paper delves into some recent conversations among Muslims in the Francophone intellectual milieu on the desirability of a European Islam and its relationship to the process of secularization. Comparing Tariq Ramadan’s seminal “Être Musulman Européen” (1999) with a recent publication by Aissam Ait-Yahya “De L’Ideologie Islamique Française” (2013), it seeks to examine how structural contradictions that are internal to Europe’s modernity (universal vs. particular) play

out in the contemporary engagement of Muslims with the Islamic tradition and the European public sphere. Ramadan's work gained prominence through its attempt to synthesize the Islamic Reformist intellectual legacy and cultivate ethical and theological spaces that would enable Muslims to inscribe themselves as citizens in the European society. Ait-Yahya's work, on the other hand, centers on a deconstruction of the narrative of "modernity" by demonstrating its Christian roots and pointing at the incommensurability of Christianity/secularity and Islam. I take these discussions as a starting point and illustrative of a deeper epistemological shift that is ongoing amongst the Muslim intellectuals on the position of Islam in Europe and on Europe as a project.

**Youshaa Patel:** Muslims "imitating" non-Muslims: Islam and cultural change in mid-twentieth century Syria

In this paper, I explain how a Syrian-Albanian religious scholar from mid-twentieth century Damascus attempts to deter Muslims from imitating cultural practices associated with non-Muslims. In 1949, Sulaymān b. Khalīl al-Ghāwji al-Albānī (d. 1958) published a brief treatise that highlights five problematic cultural trends that accompanied the French mandate of Syria after WWI: (1) Muslims wearing foreign headgear; (2) the increasing presence of women in public life; (3) Muslims (men and women) marrying non-Muslims; (4) the spread of photography; and (5) the abrogation of Islamic inheritance laws. I illustrate how al-Ghāwji adapts a pre-modern Islamic discourse to an entirely new cultural context. Thinking with Walter Benjamin and Theodore Adorno, I connect al-Ghāwji's anxieties over rapid cultural change to the decline of Muslim political power, the global spread of Western cultural norms, the social displacement of religious elites, and the rise of mechanical reproduction in the modern Middle East.

## Contemporary Paganism: Leadership, Legitimation and New Forms

### Panel Chair: Milda Alisauskiene

Contemporary paganism is a religious phenomenon to be found in a majority of modern societies. In attracting scholarly interest, various networks of scholars of paganism have been established. This session organized by the Contemporary Paganisms and Alternative Spiritualities in Europe (CPASE) network has invited scholars from various academic backgrounds (psychology, sociology, anthropology) to contribute theoretical and empirical insights about recent developments within paganisms. The contributions to this session comprise interdisciplinary theoretical and empirical insights into various levels of contemporary paganisms. These include a discussion of the individual processes of self-justification

of Wiccans, an analysis of the pagan elements within contemporary tomb pilgrimage, research into the shifts within the activities of the pagan Romuva community and the relations of various pagan communities to the state.

**Leon van Gulik:** Contexts of discovery as contexts of justification: negotiating historical, psychological and biographical narratives in Wicca

As expressive individualist adherents of a countercultural new religious movement, Wiccans find themselves forced to come up with well-founded arguments to legitimize both the enterprise, and their involvement. They originally held the belief that their religion was a remnant of a pre-Christian pan-European fertility cult, which went underground during the early modern period of the witch hunts. However, historical research has firmly established that such a cult never existed. The waning of this paradigm of origin coincides with an increased interest among Wiccans in psychological explanations of the religious psyche as put forward by G. C. Jung. In my paper I will discuss this process, while also giving attention to how one's biography, when used as a means of self-justification, may rely on both collective histories and the Jungian notion of a shared psychological ancestry.

**Michael York:** Pagan elements of contemporary tomb pilgrimage

Much of contemporary Western paganism is involved with localizing the sacred as well as honoring it in a specific locality. While the time-honored practice of visiting sacred places for purposes of holiness or healing has persisted into the present, a modern transformation has occurred that has given rise to contemporary sociological understandings of a pilgrimage-religious tourism continuum. Certainly religious tourism differs from medieval pilgrimage inasmuch as the use of and/or visitation to a sacred place by contemporary pagans operates through changed understandings of what constitutes the physical embodiment of sacredness. One remaining area that offers a pilgrimage-type of locus for contemporary spiritual tourism is the cemetery or resting place of the dead. Vernacular behavior of this kind, I will argue, is a pagan legacy that persists whether religious affiliation has become more officially Christian, Muslim, Hindu, etc. or even a religiosity that is stripped to secular humanistic fundamentals.

**Milda Alisauskiene:** Ancient Baltic Faith Community Romuva: from cultural movement to religious community

The paper discusses the shifts of the Ancient Baltic Faith Community Romuva identity since its establishment as a countercultural movement in the late 1960s until the formation of the religious community as it is nowadays. According to data from the Lithuanian national census in 2001 and 2011 the number of adherents of Ancient Baltic Faith Community increased four times. What social and political factors influenced this increase? What is the place and role of paganism in the contemporary society of Lithuania and its public life? These ques-

tions will be approached with the help of an analysis of social research data both qualitative and quantitative which allows to conclude that paganism is a positively valued religious minority although it is rarely considered to be a religion. The attempts to become a so-called “traditional” religious community in 2001 located this community in the religious field of Lithuanian society that is dominated by the Roman Catholic Church. This event together with the election of the leader of the community Krivis Jonas Trinkūnas in 2002 might be considered a symbolic boundary in the community life within the construction of its identity on the religious background.

**Essi Mäkelä:** Registering liquid religiosity: case study Finland

Finnish law states that the credentials for registering a religious community are a creed, sacred writings, or a well-established sacred basis for religious practice. This presentation discusses the process of registration from the point of view of pagan religious communities. As case studies I use the disqualified application of the Finnish Free Wicca Society and the later registered case of Karhun Kansa, a Fenno religious community. I will discuss the perceptions these groups have had on the processes. The law is vague on defining religion: it leaves more room for interpretation for the communities but also for the legislative board. Not only religious but also political and societal feelings are aroused in the process of registering groups practising fairly unknown individualistic spiritualities. The presentation will discuss why the process of registration is begun and how these communities react to the bureaucracy and opinions of the legislative boards.

## Controversial Islam

**Chentu Dauda Nguvugher:** “Istanbul” and “Jeruselems” in Jos: a perspective of the ethno-religious conflicts in Jos, Nigeria

The agitation for territorial expansion is a basic tenet of most missionary religions in the world. Christianity and Islam, the two most dominant and prominent religions in Nigeria, display this tendency as they try to dislodge each other in the city of Jos. While many scholars of the Jos conflicts have largely referred to historical, political and socio-economic factors, the expansionist motif has received little or no attention. The renaming of a previously Christian section of Jos, but now taken over and dominated by Muslims, as “Istanbul” and such labels as “Iran”, “Afghanistan” etc. in other sections, along with so many so-called “Jeruselems” being painted by Christians in previously popular Muslim areas demonstrate this expansionist tendency. Both groups are likely influenced by their histories and their desire for territorial expansion. Through relevant lit-

erature, interviews and discussions with Muslims and Christians in Jos and environs, this paper examines the motivation and implications for the renaming.

**Milena Uhlmann:** Choosing Islam in contemporary Western Europe: conversion to “reflexive Islam” and alternation to Salafi Islam

My paper examines two different modes of change of a person’s religious affiliation: conversion and alternation, as conceptualized by Richard V. Travisano. In his understanding, conversion entails a change of the convert’s self-identity, whereas alternation signifies a change of roles. Changing one’s self-identity requires reasoning and reflection. When going through a process of alternation, the individual will streamline his behavior to the demands of the collective identity of the new reference group. I will compare my concept of converts to “reflexive Islam”, who internalize the faith as a new system of belief in a process which leads to a broadening of their perspective and the strengthening of their self-identity as well as their self-esteem and agency, with Salafi interpretations of Islam, where role-taking is of particular importance. This will include an analysis of their motifs and the social implications of their choice.

**Sanni Amidu:** New phase of religiosity and ethical renewal in Sudanic Africa: a narrative from Nigeria

Salafism as a renewal of orthodoxy and orthopraxis has been identified with the Islamic world (Meijer 2012). But for Ihle (2003), and more recently Østebø (2012) and Loimeier (2013), Africa, south of the Sahara is all but dismissed in the Western discursive tradition on the phenomenon of peaceful creedal and ethical change. My paper intends to illustrate two different but interrelated tendencies of revivalist and ethical activism among the Yoruba of southwest Nigeria. One is individualistic, the other is communal. At the heart of the former is the promotion of the sense of personal responsibility in a public sphere. The other tendency, which has society as its sphere of operation, has political goals which are ultimately rooted in Islamizing all aspects of life. My paper will focus on the activities and challenges of the individualistic group which has found new local expressions for the quieter forms of reform, religiosity, and ethical renewal.

**SherAli Tareen:** When does innovation become heresy? Modern Muslim contestations on the boundaries of heretical innovation (bid‘a)

The late nineteenth century was a time of intense polemical activity for South Asian Islam. Under British colonialism, the anxiety of Muslim religious scholars (“ulama”) of preserving the normative model (sunna) of the Prophet assumed an unprecedented urgency. These ideological rivalries were animated by a fundamental ethical question that has captured the imagination of Muslim thinkers for several centuries: what are the limits of innovation (bid‘a) to the normative model of the Prophet? Bid‘a refers to novel unsanctioned practices that oppose the prophetic norm. But what are those practices and how should that be decid-

ed is a question that generates tremendous controversy. In this paper, I examine intra-Muslim polemics over this critical ethical question in nineteenth-century North India. More specifically, I focus on the polemics between the pioneers of two major Sunni reform movements/ideological orientations in South Asia, the Deobandis and the Barelvis.

## **CSR Session: Religious Practice/Belief and Non-Belief**

### **Joseph Bulbulia, John Shaver:** Affiliation in collective ritual

Collective rituals have been shown to increase social bonding and may have some positive effect on well-being and mood. An increasing number of experimental and field studies have demonstrated that both behavioral synchrony and pain experienced during the ritual increase both affiliation with other group members and affiliation with larger collectives, irrespective of the participation in the activity. What is less clear at this stage is how these changes may come about. In this presentation, we explore the role of physiological changes in the bodies of participants that may bring about these effects. We review and discuss previous research on the potential role that changes in stress and affiliation hormones may play in regulating affiliation responses in ritual. We then present pilot data that tests these mechanisms in the context of two different naturally occurring rituals. In study 1, participants in one high ordeal Buddhist ritual were sampled. In study 2, participants in a low ordeal Hindu ritual, but with a high social evaluation component, were sampled. Hormonal changes as captured in saliva were measured before and after each ritual. We also asked participants to report on their mood and affiliation motives before and after. We place our preliminary findings in the larger context of the cognitive science of religion and discuss how scholars may move forward in studying social effects of religious ritual in natural settings.

**Olympia Panagiotidou:** History meets cognition: the Asclepius cult as pattern of practice

Cultural diversity and religious change are not only the products of different contexts, historical periods, political dynamics, and social interactions during which various religious and cultural forms arise, develop, and decline. Specific patterns of practice mediate between the external cultural settings and innate human capacities, and extend from the individual brains to the social and material discursive environments, enabling cultural learning, communication, and change. This paper suggests that a bio-cultural approach to the Asclepius cult might throw light on the underlying processes which enabled the development of its main features through an incessant process of reflective interaction be-

tween individuals' neural networks and bodies, and their material, discursive surroundings. The Asclepius cult is presented as a set of patterns of practice developed and shared by people of the Graeco-Roman era. These patterns of practice are not conceived as abstract models, somehow imprinted in the person's mind, but as multiple dynamic processes through which individual brains are coordinated generating particular representations and beliefs, sharing practices and constructing common worlds. The Asclepius cult is used as a paradigm in order to demonstrate how historical dynamics are interweaved with the biological, cognitive and psychological processes that take place in the human body, brain and mind, and generate various historical patterns and behaviors. In this light, modern bio-cultural and cognitive theories can be valuable for historical research in order to understand the individual and collective mechanisms of cultural and religious change and diversity.

**Tamas Biro:** (Not) only the circumcised may circumcise: theological correctness and intuitive religiosity in Judaism

A system of religious rituals that lacks special-agent rituals is predicted by McCauley and Lawson 2002 to exhibit the tedium effect. It will be characterized by Whitehouse's doctrinal mode, unless some splinter group reintroduces imagistic mode elements. Judaism has been argued to lack special-agent rituals, and hence we ask how it copes with the tedium effect. Using circumcision as an example, we shall explore various ways. In the theologically correct (or "halakhically correct") realm, circumcision is shown not to be a special-agent ritual: a special-patient ritual at best, if one generalizes the framework of Lawson and McCauley 1990. Then, mainstream rabbinic texts will be contrasted to three alternative sources. These tend to introduce ideas that jointly facilitate mentally to conceive circumcision as a typical special-agent ritual. Later Midrashim are agadic (non-halakhic) collections, which will be argued to display a stronger influence of intuitive religiosity within rabbinic literature. Secondly, popular understanding of circumcision, unsurprisingly, also displays the same influence. Third, non-rabbanite "splinter groups" seem to experiment with alternative approaches to circumcision, as will be demonstrated in Anan ben David's Book of Precepts. While this experimentation is consistent with the proposal of Whitehouse, McCauley and Lawson, neither Anan's halakhic codex, nor the later Karaite movement can be viewed as a typical "imagistic splinter group". In sum, Judaism challenges cognitive theories of religion. Not fully corroborating them, a detailed analysis of Jewish rituals enables us to reconsider CSR's concepts.

**Quentin Atkinson, Rita Anne McNamara, Benjamin Purzycki, Aiyana K. Willard, Dimitris Xygalatas:** Representational models of gods' minds in eight diverse societies: an ecological account

Some attempts to explain the ubiquity of supernatural agent concepts suggest that because they are associated with “socially strategic knowledge”, they are especially salient and memorable. Socially strategic information is any information that engages the cognitive systems that modulate social interaction. From a cultural ecological framework, a compatible but more nuanced view would predict that as religion minimizes the deleterious effects of locally specific problems of coordination and cooperation, and gods function as difficult-to-verify sources of motivation and reminders to act in accordance with these problems' solutions, what the gods care about should correspond to such problems. Up until now, there has been a dearth of reliable and comparable cross-cultural data attending to representational models of gods' concerns and the degree to which they overlap with local cultural models of the socially strategic. With data collected on fifteen different gods from eight diverse societies, we present evidence that what the gods care about are important indices to understanding the function and evolution of religious systems and highlight the impact that local ecological problems have on religious cognition.

**John Teehan:** Empathy, religion, and social evolution: a cognitive model That religion played a decisive role in the development of complex, large scale societies has significant support within CSR. Belief in “Big Gods” that enforce a group's moral code circumvents the need for direct observation of behavior and so extends moral status to even anonymous members of the group. This model, however, has been criticized for failing to accord with the historical record. “Big Gods” arise too late to explain the expansion of society. Furthermore, most gods described in the ethnographic record are morally indifferent: some source other than religion is needed to explain social expansion. However, both this standard model and its critique fail to give proper consideration to the proximate mechanisms of moral behavior, i.e., the empathetic systems of the brain. These systems underlie the basic elements of moral behavior, and studies show they are modulated by indications of in-group/out-group status. Signals of in-group status, e.g. participation in rituals, trigger the neurological mechanisms for pro-social behavior – independent of the moral interests of a god. Morally indifferent gods are not morally irrelevant gods, as long as they are existentially relevant, i.e., they may respond to human actions in a way that imposes costs on the group. Conformity to behavioral norms that protect the group from such costs signals group membership, priming a suite of empathetic responses that constitute moral concern, even for otherwise anonymous individuals (and such signals need not be costly). This empathetic system allows

even minimally involved gods to contribute to the expansion of the group, and paves the way for Big Gods.

**Andreas Nordin:** Reputation in cognitive and evolutionary understanding of supernatural agent concepts

The aim of this presentation is to discuss religious morality from the perspective of supernatural agent conceptualization and reputation monitoring. Honor, glory and reputation are cultural beliefs transmitted by the support of local institutional arrangements, evolved cognitive proclivities such as reputation monitoring and signalling related to a sense of morality, cooperative trust and punishment. In cognitive and evolutionary accounts of religious “adaptivist” and “by-product” theories, reputation is an important although seemingly given primitive. “Adaptivist” theory points out that supernatural punishment supports commitment enhancement and promotes intra-group competition, especially in the absence of reputational pressure. “By-product” theories such as the “standard model” reason that the relevance of supernatural agent morality is part of a cognitive machinery devoted to social interaction entailing reputation monitoring. From the perspective of altruist and mutualist models of human cooperation and morality, reputation implies different functions and, by consequence, divergent importance in “adaptivist” and “by-product” theories. By comparing altruist and mutualist accounts, the latter (“partner choice” strategies) will be adopted to complement the modelling of the social cognitive machinery that underpins the moral relevance of supernatural agent concepts. An argument will explicate the proposal that reputation is close at hand in supernatural agent cognition since it presupposes “strategic information” and “full-access agents”; further, reputation is likely to have a central position in the cognition of religious morality according to mutualistic theories; and finally, the preoccupation with reputation is likely to be a key element of relevance for moral supernatural agent cognition and religious group commitment.

## Cultural Changes in Islam

**Kieko Obuse:** Japan Islamic Congress: a forgotten episode in the history of Islam in post-war Japan

Japan Islamic Congress (JIC, Jap: Nihon Isuramu Kyodan) is a controversial Islamic organization which emerged in the early 1970s and claimed over fifty thousand members (i. e., Japanese converts to Islam) in the 1980s. However, the group is very little remembered within Japan’s Muslim community, and its activities are largely shrouded in mystery. This paper discusses JIC’s major activities, through examining published and unpublished (internal) sources, and interviews with

former JIC members as well as leading figures in the present Japanese Muslim community, and clarifies what was behind JIC's expansion and sudden demise, and why it has been forgotten, or ignored, by the majority of Japanese Muslims in Japan. Particular attention will be paid to JIC's attempts to build connections with major Islamic countries such as Saudi Arabia and Indonesia, and its unconventional interpretation of, or attempt to Japanize, Islam.

**Masashi Nara:** Openness through purification: Islamic revival amongst Hui Muslims in Yunnan Province, China

This paper examines how Islamic revival has influenced inter-ethnic relationships in Yunnan Province by focusing on marriage practices shared amongst Hui Muslims. Hui Muslims have historically preferred endogamy, especially since the end of Qing dynasty when they were massacred by the Han people. However, Islamic revival in the post-Mao era has made rigid religious discourse more influential in Hui society. Consequently, religious purification has progressed amongst Hui Muslims through removing "Hanized" elements from their everyday life. This strengthens a preference for endogamy. However, Hui-Han intermarriage has increased. Although these phenomena are superficially contradictory, religious purification paradoxically expands the scope for accepting Hui-Han intermarriage. Such purification categorically separates "Muslim" from "Hui", although these were traditionally viewed as indivisible categories. Consequently, Hui Muslims have progressively been enabled to marry within any ethnic group which has converted to Islam. Hence, religious purification does not necessarily make Hui society exclusive but more open.

**Murtala Ibrahim:** Nasfat: the rise of born again Muslims in Nigerian urban landscapes

This paper is a result of an ethnographic study of NASFAT (Nasrullahi Fathi) which is one of the largest Islamic religious movements that emerged in the mega city of Lagos in the past decade. The paper has looked into NASFAT's embodied and sensational spiritual practices that are similar to Pentecostal forms of worship. The paper argues that NASFAT's innovative approach to spirituality has appealed to large numbers of Muslim youths and somehow checkmates their attraction toward Pentecostal Christianity by giving them immediate access to transcendental reality. This access is believed to foster spiritual empowerment that serves as an instrument for facing the challenges of worldly life. By avoiding religious base identity politics common to other religious groups NASFAT was able to anchor its religiosity on individual piety through which a new image of Islam emerges as a privatized religion that is compatible with modern life.

## **Cultural Racism and Interreligious Prejudices: Establishing a Dialogue between Approaches of the Humanities and the Social Sciences**

**Organizers: Silvia Martens, Anna-Konstanze Schröder**

This open session aims at a constructive exchange between different disciplinary traditions that are concerned with the discrimination against others, especially against different religious groups. In our interdisciplinary project “Xenosophia and Xenophobia within and between Abrahamic Religions” at the University of Bern, we are confronted with different terminologies, methodologies and data as well as theoretical and phenomenological similarities and overlaps in the research approaches of different disciplines in the humanities and the social sciences. Practical questions that arise include: How do terms such as “racism” in social anthropology and political science relate to terms such as “prejudices” in psychology and sociology? How can we combine quantitative measures as typically used in psychology with qualitative analyses as they are typically used in the humanities? What to do with terms such as “Xenosophia” or “Islamophilia” that are found in humanities research but have no equivalent in psychological measures? The discussion focuses on these and other content-related and conceptual questions. We will provide a concept-map to structure different approaches to discrimination in the social sciences and the humanities and highlight (possible) connections between them. We invite you to add to this map and to also indicate your research groups’ geographical location on a world map.

## **Current Dynamics within Orthodox Christianity: Between Tradition, Innovation and Realpolitik**

**Panel Chairs: Sebastian Rimstad, Vasilios N. Makrides**

During the last 100 years, the areas where Orthodox Christianity predominates have experienced numerous socio-political and other upheavals. Moreover, processes of globalization, local nationalisms, political cleavages and regionalisms have heightened the challenge of religious pluralism in these regions, as well as increased the number of Orthodox faithful residing outside the traditionally Orthodox heartlands in Eastern and Southeastern Europe. All of these developments have prompted various responses within the Orthodox world. Underlying most of them is the question of authority within the church: to what extent are pressures from secular models, societal modernization processes, global developments and strategic political considerations considered legitimate from the point of view of Orthodox Christian theology? How do the various Orthodox

Churches react to these pressures and accommodate them? Are there any discernible differences in this respect between the historical Orthodox mother-churches and the Orthodox transnational communities across the globe? The eight papers of this panel, divided in two sessions, attempt to offer glimpses of the evolving dynamics within the contemporary Orthodox world and its oscillation between traditional commitments and the challenges of change.

**Daniel Jianu:** Orthodox Greece and digital media: theology, science and social media as reflected through the particularities of the “blasphemy law”

In 2012, a 27-year-old Greek blogger was arrested for what the authorities called “malicious blasphemy”, namely for managing a Facebook-page that lampooned the very popular Eastern Orthodox monk Elder Paisios of Mount Athos (1924–1994). Although the Greek Church has shown that it is very open to the digital age by enabling the request that various church documents, like baptism certificates, be made available online and by an increased use of social media to attract the Greek youth, it has also strongly supported and encouraged these charges of blasphemy. This begs the question of what the social, theological, cultural, and political implications of the use of social media in modern Greek society are; and specifically for the Greek Orthodox Church, what the limits of acceptable behavior and use of social media are. The paper will analyze this case against the backdrop of historical and theological considerations regarding the relationship between science/technology and Eastern Orthodoxy.

**Lukasz Fajfer:** To be online or to stay offline – that is the question! Mediatized spaces within the Orthodox Church in Poland

Mediatization has been gaining an increasing scholarly interest in the past few years. This term is usually understood as a multi-layered process enhancing the influence of media communication on people’s lives. Mediatization concerns many spheres of everyday life, such as consumption, entertainment, politics, social institutions and many others, and it affects churches and religious organizations as well. Some of them take advantage of modern media, others still struggle with the issue of using them. This paper investigates the mediatized spaces within the Orthodox Church in Poland. Primary attention is given to the Internet use of the Orthodox Church. In doing so, the following questions are posed: Which media/programs/tools are specifically used? For what purpose are they utilized and since when? And what are the consequences and implications thereof? The related discussions within the church will be taken into consideration and will be analyzed in view of the dynamics of the Orthodox Church’s further development.

**Georgios Trantas:** Pro- or anti-European? The Orthodox Church of Greece at the crossroads

The overall attitude towards the concept of Europe within the Church of Greece is neither unitary nor homogeneous. Disparity can be identified between its Holy Synod – itself partly fragmented – and the official representation of the church in Brussels. The Synod has pursued a utilitarian approach while differentiating itself from the EU, indicative of “introvert state-centrism,” whereas the church’s representation in Brussels is prepared to engage in dialogue and seeks convergence, thus demonstrating an extrovert predisposition. Late Archbishop Christodoulos of Athens (1998 – 2008) often served as mediator between the two camps at times of discord. Current Archbishop Hieronymos is distanced from politics and avoids instigating further public unrest. The paper will try to assess the whole situation and explore the current dynamics within the Orthodox Church of Greece.

**Dragan Šljivić:** On the enemy within: the Serbian Orthodox Church’s response to the civic-liberal critique in its official periodicals (2007–2012)

In general, the Orthodox Church has had relatively little experience with democratic governance, which has caused some researchers to question the compatibility of Eastern Orthodoxy with a democratic political order. Nevertheless, the Serbian Orthodox Church and most of its hierarchs were vocal supporters of the democratic forces in the country and have challenged the legitimacy of authoritarian regimes. This paper will show the way the Serbian Church currently shapes its own position on the basic tenets of democracy through its responses to the attacks from extreme liberal circles. It will be argued that the absence of a genuine dialogue between the church and other participants within Serbian society could be detrimental for the overall development of Serbian democracy. The inclusion of the Serbian Orthodox Church in the dialogue on the future of Serbian democracy may thus be important for its final and successful consolidation.

**Valdis Tēraudkalns:** Standing between conflicting loyalties: the Orthodox Church in contemporary Latvia

The aim of this paper is to analyze how the Orthodox Church of Latvia positions itself in the public space and how it is perceived by political actors on the one hand, and by the media on the other. First, it is an integral part of the Moscow Patriarchate, which functions as an arm of the public diplomacy of the Russian state, often placing the local church in a difficult situation. Second, the Orthodox Church in Latvia proclaims its loyalty to the state of Latvia. It sees the support of the state as a safeguard against the Estonian scenario of two separate and competing Orthodox Churches. The Latvian Orthodox Church also looks for allies in promoting the gender politics of the Patriarchate of Moscow. Finally, it positions

itself as standing above ethnic conflicts, while at the same time having to deal with various nationalisms (both Latvian and Russian) present in contemporary Latvian society.

**Nicolas Kazarian:** The Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, jurisdiction and power: the stakes of a Pan-Orthodox Council

The starting point of this paper is a paradox that the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople faces today. The Ecumenical Patriarchate, which has been the first Church within the communion of Orthodox Churches for centuries, is the ecclesiastical institution which has lost the most territory and members during the twentieth century, from the end of the Ottoman Empire through the exchange of populations between Turkey and Greece in 1923 to the closing of the Halki Orthodox Theological Seminary in 1971. Its local weakness has pushed the Ecumenical Patriarchate towards a strategic redeployment of its global power through the forthcoming Pan-Orthodox Council. Although it serves as the guarantor of unity and communion among the numerous autocephalous Orthodox Churches, the Patriarchate of Constantinople is marginalized by the rise of the national Orthodox Churches, particularly of the Patriarchate of Moscow. This paper will highlight and analyze the efforts of the primate of the Orthodox Church to organize this Council as a form of resilience. In other words, how is the Pan-Orthodox Council a question of power for the Ecumenical Patriarchate?

**Sebastian Rimestad:** Using history as a weapon: jurisdictional conflicts on the periphery of the Orthodox world

In the Orthodox Church, there is a plethora of jurisdictions, each claiming to constitute the church in its entirety. This is particularly noticeable in those cases where two or more jurisdictions co-exist, each claiming to be the legitimate local Orthodox Church. This pertains to, for example, Estonia, Moldova, Ukraine and former Czechoslovakia, where competing churches exist, variously supported by one Patriarchate or the other. These conflicts have an important aspect in common, namely the way both parts claim legitimacy on the basis of recent history. Both sides usually accuse the other of having acted illegitimately and uncanonically at some point in the twentieth century. This history being quite well documented, there is no shortage of arguments for both sides to turn to. This paper will analyze and compare the four cases mentioned above, particularly the deployment of twentieth-century history in their arguments.

**Emil Bjørn Hilton Saggau:** The return of Duklja: the Montenegrin Orthodox Church's recasting of history

The Montenegrin Orthodox Church was revitalized in 1993 after a bitter feud between the local Montenegrins and the Serbian Orthodox Metropolitanate of Montenegro during the breakup of Yugoslavia. This new Orthodox community has since tried to transform, adapt and re-shape the history of Montenegro to fit in

their claim of an independent status detached from the Patriarchate of Beograd. This reshaping is partly based on the revival of a “Dukljan” identity linked to the medieval Slavic state known as Duklja or Diocleia, which is claimed to have been religiously and culturally independent of the Serbian medieval state, known as Raska. This paper investigates this revival of the “Dukljan” identity, the reshaping of its history within the Montenegrin Church and how it is used to detach the Montenegrin Orthodox population from the Serbian Metropolitanate.

## Current Perspectives on Atheism

**Ethan Quillen:** Doing away with theoretical abstractions: a discursive analysis of the definition of Atheism and critical analysis of the positive vs. negative paradigm

In recent years the study of Atheism has grown in popularity, leading to both positive and negative results. On one end, this has engendered a polyvocal and polyfocal discourse, garnering perspectives from a number of different methodological and theoretical approaches so as to develop a truly multi-disciplinary understanding about how Atheism is defined and how Atheists define themselves. On the other, this myriad of voices has led to an ever-broadening discordancy, an equivocal discourse that makes it all the more difficult to state with any sort of certainty what Atheism is or how Atheists define themselves. The latter issue is the result of a theoretical abstraction, a scholar-based attempt at theorizing a universal interpretation about Atheism that might pragmatically generalize the concept. Offering an analysis of this discourse, this paper will endorse a move away from such generalizations, offering instead a means with which to approach this subject more objectively.

**Ingela Visuri:** Autism, theism and atheism

The study of autism and religion has been neglected until recently, perhaps due to the (false) notion that all individuals on the autism spectrum would be atheists. Interest has however begun growing rapidly, and autism is foremost studied from cognitive perspectives on religion. This paper is a critique of publications aiming at establishing autism as a case of atheism, arguing that these are based on a simplified view on both autism and religion. Research rather needs to acknowledge that theistic belief and unbelief are likely the result of complex psychological and sociocultural processes. Thus, methods and approaches need rethinking in order to explore autism and religion in depth.

**Stephen LeDrew:** Atheism as a secular religion

This paper explores the question of whether the New Atheism and the groups and organizations associated with it could be understood as a kind of secular

religion. The New Atheism is not only an aggressive critique of theism, but itself a belief system that promotes scientism and evolutionism as a conceptual structure that provides meaning and coherence to experience through a teleological narrative of human origins and social progress. Atheist organizations, meanwhile, provide community and transcendence through collective practice and rituals that establish the sacred authority of science. These substantive and functional aspects of religion in the New Atheism will be analyzed with reference to Auguste Comte's Religion of Humanity, which the New Atheism mirrors in many respects. While typically understood as an intellectual or cultural movement, this paper argues that our understanding of contemporary atheism is enhanced by sociological and historical perspectives on the study of religion.

**Ethan Quillen:** Fictionalized identity: narrative representations of Atheism as ethnographic source

For a number of reasons – a shortage of developed ethnography, a discordant discourse on defining the term, and a lack of group organization – Atheism as an identity is a precarious concept, and is thus difficult to “define” with any sort of certainty. Likewise, and as if to remedy this issue, the predominant means of studying Atheism seems to be mired in sociological examinations. The intent of this paper is to offer a more qualitative, yet also experimental, approach. By adopting the language that underscores the methodology of Discourse Analysis, and coupling it with narrative and textual scrutiny, this paper will look at how Atheist identity construction is made available via three artistic – aesthetic – media: a novel, a film, and a painting. Presented as an introduction, this process will further support the idea that perhaps it is through the experimental where we might make better sense of certain precarious religious concepts.

## Current Views on Secularization Theory and Religious Decline

**Carles Salazar:** The decline of religiosity in Western Europe: An anthropological approach

The purpose of this paper is to propose an anthropological perspective on one of the strangest cultural oddities of the present time: the decline of religiosity in western European societies. Taking the definition of (popular) religion as a way of engaging with the world, rather than a way of thinking about the world, as a theoretical point of departure, the hypothesis to be developed is that neither the secularization of sociopolitical institutions nor the alleged expansion of scientific rationality can fully account for that decline, but rather it is closely related to the cultural effects of the peculiarities of European demo-

graphic development in the twentieth century. This demographic development has to do with an increased life expectancy, unique in human history, and its related cultural effects refer to the new understandings of death brought about by that exceptionally long life expectancy.

**Sampsa Andrei Saarinen:** Revisiting Nietzsche's reflections on the nineteenth century "crisis of faith": a case for paying attention to the interplay of moods and motivations in the history of religions

The critical attention devoted to narratives of secularization in the last decades has spawned increasing interest in "the secular": now understood as an important topic of study for the history of religions. This paper approaches the "crisis of faith" among intellectuals in the nineteenth century, an epochal turn in European intellectual history, through the writings of F.W. Nietzsche. The reflections of this idiosyncratic thinker are singular for their interrogation of religious moods and motivations in an era of change. Herein lies their relevance for contemporary scholarship. Despite the efforts of influential scholars such as Clifford Geertz, the way specific traditions condition moods and motivations is nowadays seldom seen as a defining feature of religions. This paper argues that a renewed hermeneutics of moods and motivations is an essential task for the history of religions: a task that is especially pertinent when it comes to understanding religious change.

**Stanislovas Juknevičius:** Secularization theory revised: a post-Jungian approach

The report argues that a post-Jungian approach to religion can be an alternative to secularization theory. It is based on two ideas of Carl Gustav Jung's. The first one is that gods do not die but only change their names. In network society the members of each imagined or imagining community create and worship their own gods. The second idea is that compensation is a basic law of psychic behavior. A growing interest in the mysterious in arts, literature and daily life is a compensation for the rapid advance of science and technologies. Institutional religiosity has decreased in most Western countries, but non-institutional religiosity has increased. On the other hand, some decrease of institutional Christianity in the West is compensated by the resurrection of Islam worldwide. In general, religiosity in modern societies does not decrease but only changes its intensity and forms of expression.

## Dalits and Religion

### **Panel Chair: Martin Fuchs**

What is it that Dalits seek in religion? How do they understand religion? How do the problems of conceptualizing “religion” reflect in the ways the relations and problems of Dalits with the field thus categorized are being understood? (“Dalit”, originally a modern self-designation, is here used to cover the historically discriminated people earlier termed “Untouchables”). The panel wants to discuss the different ways in which members of marginalized groups, whose authority in these (as well as in other) matters has traditionally been questioned or overlooked, structure religious discourses and define their religious practices. The category Dalit in actual fact covers a wide range of discriminated, but differently positioned groups of people. The relation between (religious) ideas, practices and social groups cannot be reduced to questions of identity, but has to be conceived as interactive. The panel will focus both on the ways religious practices and ideas are being articulated and appropriated by different actors as well as on the ways new and uncommon religious experiences and imaginaries are being formulated and expressed (this includes non-verbal modes of expression). Cases addressed in this panel may comprise religious movements and self-constituted denominations of Dalits, the engagement of Dalits with bhakti, the changing relations of Dalits with institutionalized Hindu religion(s), Dalit engagement with Christian and Islamic denominations, and the presentations may also encompass the local religious traditions of Dalits.

**Till Luge:** The Bavari panth and the Dalit question: conflicting constructions of history and identity

The Bavari panth of eastern Uttar Pradesh is part of the Satnami family, a set of Sant groups that are or were tolerant toward and sometimes even composed of Dalits. Although the poetry composed by past Bavari panthi saints is soteriological rather than political, issues of caste, class, and religious identity are addressed at times and the notion that such divisions may derive from human nature is rejected. Today, however, the Bavari panth is largely controlled by members of the upper castes and rather oblivious to Dalit issues. Nonetheless, the panth is important to many Dalits, since they understand the history and nature of the panth in sociopolitical terms. This presentation shall contrast the different discourses on caste, class, and religious identity as found in the poetry of the saints and produced in interviews with and in the natural discourse of Bavari panthis belonging to various social groups.

**Ishita Banerjee-Dube:** Dalits and Mahima Dharma

How do radical religious orders of subordinate groups deal with caste in general and Dalits in particular? Does the interrogation of caste and social hierarchy in-

herent in the tenets and practices of the faith allow Dalits to become full-fledged members of the new community of adherents or do they still remain separate from members of “touchable” castes? What impact does the gradual and shifting evolution of the religious order have on the everyday interaction of its lay members? To what extent do existing societal norms condition the tenets of the faith? How do Dalit disciples juggle with and negotiate their identities as members of an associative community and that of an ascriptive one? My intervention will address some of these issues by tracking the growth and evolution of Mahima Dharma, a heterodox religious order of mid-nineteenth century Odisha that exists till today. Through an analysis of the doctrines and practices of the abstemious, itinerant ascetic preceptor of Mahima Dharma and his “tribal” poet-philosopher devotee, as well as their diverse understanding and apprehension by ascetic disciples and lay members – consisting primarily of Dalit and lower caste peoples, I will try and unpack the mixed and contingent world of Mahima Dharmis where doctrines and social rules get confounded and contested and new spaces are carved out only to get circumscribed. My brief account will attempt to lay bare the many meanings of being Dalit within a “rebel” faith; a faith that often gets subsumed by the overarching presence of village and caste society and yet enables its followers to circumvent the norms of such a society.

**M.T. Joseph:** “Engaged Buddhism” of Dalits in Maharashtra: plurality of perspectives and practices

Navayana Buddhism of the Dalits of Maharashtra embodies a modern interpretation of Buddhism. Along with Siddhartha Gautama (the Buddha), the interpreter (Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar) is accorded supreme sentiments of veneration by the Navayana Buddhists. This paper is based on observations carried out by the author and is an attempt to look at the multiplicity of ways in which Dalits belonging to different strata and ideologies approach Buddhism. Scholars who have studied Dalit religiosity generally characterize it as systems of thought and practice that privilege immanence over transcendence, the ethical dimensions over metaphysical ones, and instrumentality over abstraction. The acts of interpretation have been analyzed as interventions in fashioning religion to political and social philosophy for the purpose of forging ideologies of emancipation. However, a closer look at the theory and practice of Navayana Buddhism would present a complex picture. Atheistic rationalism and related standpoints that read modernity in tradition exist side by side to a growing practice of “devotionalism”. The notion of the monk as social worker enshrined in Dr. Ambedkar’s thoughts is supplanted in some contexts by bhanteji (monk) with ritualistic and devotional overtones. Very broadly one could also observe differences of class and gender habitus flowing into the variations in the way a Navayana Buddhist would ap-

proach and understand his/her religious thought and practice. This paper seeks to demonstrate how the ideas and practices relating to Navayana Buddhism in the field are a mixture of many streams, coming from different standpoints and historical antecedents. If this diversity is to be studied in its own terms, it is imperative for the academicians to move beyond the familiar terrain of binaries and polemics. This paper is an attempt in that direction. At the same time it also attempts to pinpoint certain common denominators that bind this multiplicity of ideas and practices into certain identities.

**Saurabh Dube:** Religiosity and iconography in Dalit art

This paper shall explore issues of religiosity and iconography in the work of Savindra ("Savi") Sarkar, an important, contemporary expressionist and Dalit artist. Savi is a Mahar, a neo-Buddhist from Nagpur, who lives and works in Delhi now. Central to his iconography and imagination are very particular representations of religiosity and hierarchy, history and the here-and-now. The sources are overlapping and distinct, poignant and varied. Moving recitals of untouchable pasts by Savi's unlettered paternal grandmother. Liturgical lists drawn up within the political movement led by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar concerning the disabilities faced by untouchables, especially under Brahman kingship in western India in the eighteenth century. Haunting lore of Dalit communities deriving from different regions of India. Passionate parables regarding the life and times of Dr. Ambedkar and of other (major and minor) Dalit protagonists. Telling tales of Buddhist reason. Sensorial stories from Dalit literature. And Savi's own experiences as an artist, an activist, and a Dalit in distinct locales, from statist spaces in New Delhi, to remote places of gender and caste oppression in rural and semi-urban India. My paper would explore how Savi seizes upon these discursive and experiential resources of faith and reason, sieving them through the force of an expressionist art, in order to construe thereby icons and imaginings, a religiosity and an ethic that are contestatory yet complex, strong yet sensitive.

**Heinz Werner Wessler:** Dalit criticism of Ambedkar's conversion to Buddhism

While the Mahar community in Maharashtra followed Ambedkar in his conversion to Buddhism in October 1956 to quite some extent, and while Buddhist conversion campaigns among marginalized groups in Indian society are a continuing feature of Dalit consciousness movements since then, certain groups within the Dalit community resist the call to Buddhism as part of the Dalit awareness movement. Two of the prominent voices among these Dalit critics of Ambedkar are MC Raj, who has identified *bhūśakti* ("the power of the earth") as the most prominent feature of Dalit religiosity, and Dharmvīr. "There always were enemies of the Dalits in this country – in the old days Brahmans and Buddhists, in the middle age Hindus and Moslems and in the present age Hindus and British"

(Dharmvīr, Kabīr aur Rāmānaṃd : kiṃvadaṃtiyāṃ. Nayī dillī 2000. Kabīr nāi sadī meṃ; 2, p.134). After a phase of rigorous re-reading of Sant religiosity in an effort of reclaiming Kabīr and the nirguṇ bhakti tradition, Dharmvīr turned toward an effort to revive the Ājīvaka religion, the third prominent heterodox tradition besides Buddhism and Jainism in Indian antiquity. It died out early, and only few original inscriptions and quotations have survived. A.L. Basham and other researchers have tried to reconstruct the structure of its text corpus and belief system from these few sources and from Buddhist polemics. One of the arguments used by Dharmvīr and his followers on their return to the Ājīvaka religion is the belief that its founder, Makkalī Gosālā, appears to have belonged to the Kumbhakāra, i. e., potter caste, and therefore by modern standards a representative of a marginalized group.

**Martin Fuchs:** Response

## **The Dark Side of Late Antiquity: Marginality and Integration of Esoteric Trends in Late Antique Spirituality and Philosophy**

**Panel Chair: Chiara O. Tommasi**

The present workshop aims at presenting the results – and therefore paving the way for further researches and scholarly cooperation – of a triennial project (2013–15) sponsored by the French Maison des Recherches de l’Homme, the German DFG and the Italian Villa Vigoni Foundation. The project involved an international team, coordinated by Dr. Luciana Soares (EPHE Paris/A. von Humboldt Stiftung Bonn), Prof. Dr. Helmut Seng (Univ. Konstanz/Frankfurt a.M.) and Dr. Chiara Ombretta Tommasi (Univ. Pisa) respectively. Following the recent scholarly revival for Western esotericism (which, however, is mainly concerned with modern and contemporary phenomena), the proponents aimed to establish how some esoteric or “marginal trends” that are only partially falling in line with mainstream culture, permeated late antique spirituality (second to sixth century) and interacted with the major philosophy of the period, Platonism, being either rejected or incorporated by the predominant culture.

**Chiara O. Tommasi:** Ancient esotericism: a new labelling for an old phenomenon?

In the ancient world it is possible to find an array of doctrines or teachings addressed to small groups of adepts or initiates, often conceived as alternatives to official religious traditions, which can be usefully paralleled to areas covered by the academic studies of modern esotericism. These trends became quite widespread during late antiquity, being characterized by foreign influences and the introduction of new rituals, which implied the compresence of trivial practices

(magic, superstition) or their elitist or secret character. Underlining the tension between mainstream and marginal groups (such as Gnostics, Hermetists, etc.) and discussing their reciprocal interaction appears much more challenging than reiterating the opposition between orthodoxy and heresy or the dialectical confrontation between rational or irrational trends. As remarked by some scholars of early Christianity, “orthodoxy” can be seen as a fluid and continuous process that implies a progressive process of self-definition.

**Ilinca Tanaseanu-Döbler:** Rituals

A crucial question in the study of marginal trends involves the practice of performing or even “inventing” rituals. Alongside with traditional cultic practices, a key feature of late antique paganism is the ascription of a “sacred” status to particular authoritative texts (such as the Chaldaean Oracles or the Orphic writings or even the Homeric poems), based on a distinctive way of interpretation. Theoretical knowledge derived not least from the exegesis of such texts establishes and shapes rituals or religious practices, as theurgical texts or magical papyri witness, and, at the same time, textual exegesis can be employed to found or justify the existing ritual praxis. All these textual and ritual endeavors are aimed eventually at a progressive ascension of the soul, especially as far as the insertion of prayers in a specific ritual or the (philosophical as well) techniques of the “spiritual exercises” are concerned.

**Luciana Gabriela Soares Santoprete:** Gnosticism and Neoplatonism in the digital era

The paper will approach the issues that led to the implementation of an electronic project which deals with “traditional” Middle and Neoplatonic philosophers illustrating the interconnectedness of Platonism and the other main philosophic-religious Platonizing “marginal” currents, in order to furnish the scientific community with new digital resources, such as a database capable of performing cross-disciplinary searches between the Philosophic, Gnostic, Hermetic, and Chaldean texts using vocabulary and doctrines; or a bibliographic index. The philosophical references will be analyzed to answer the following questions, among others: What are the polemic viewpoints, the vocabulary and the elements from Gnostic, Hermetic, and Chaldean tenets that can be seen in the works of the Middle and Neoplatonic authors? What philosophical doctrines can be found in Gnostic, Hermetic, and Chaldean texts? What is the current state of research on all of these different references and what conclusions can be drawn today on their relationship?

## The Dawn of the Therapeutic in the Age of Aquarius: Healing, Transformation and Well-Being as Technologies of the Self in Postmodern Religious Discourse

### Panel Chair: Inken Prohl

Notions of the human individual being subjected to religio-therapeutic techniques for the sake of his or her well-being have become increasingly popularized throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Various providers – among them yoga teachers, qigong masters, Reiki initiates, shamanic healers, transpersonal therapists, self-help talk shows, and many others – offer a variety of customizable psycho-physiological techniques designed to ameliorate the individual's self-perception while preserving a sense of religious flair rooted in ancient traditions. These post-secular trends seem to have emerged in the wake of transcultural encounters since the nineteenth century between diverse institutions such as the New Thought Movement, Theosophy, Psychology, and Buddhist Studies, as well as prominent social actors including Swami Vivekananda, Carl Gustav Jung, D.T. Suzuki, and Osho. This panel proposes an in-depth analysis of the history of the global religio-therapeutic discourse and offers a selection of cases to reflect the transcultural complexity of religion and healing in a progressively growing neoliberal economy.

**Franz Höllinger:** Spirituality and healing in the contemporary holistic milieu

A central aim of the contemporary holistic milieu that developed out of the New Age-movement of the 1970s and 1980s is to reestablish the connection between religion and healing which had been dissolved as a consequence of the differentiation of professional spheres during the process of (Western) modernization. In this context, religion generally means a rather vague form of spirituality manifesting itself in some kind of ritual practice and belief in the existence of a universal energy. Healing, in turn, refers to any kind of improvement of physical and emotional personal well-being. The positive effects of spiritual rituals on personal well-being are explained by means of merging traditional religious, magical and spiritualist concepts of healing and modern psychological, psychosomatic and psychotherapeutic approaches. The following factors (explanations) are considered particularly important: (1) the potential of spiritual or magical symbols and rituals to direct the human mind towards desired goals; (2) the cathartic effect of spiritual and symbolic healing rituals; (3) influencing (“harmonizing”) the energy flow or energy field of human beings as a means of health improvement and (4) the charisma of the healer as an important factor for inducing the aforementioned effects.

**Dimitry Okropiridze:** Gopi Krishna: The discursive catalyst of the Kuṇḍalinī-awakening

This paper focuses on a discursive catalyst of the recent religio-therapeutic discourse – the Pandit Gopi Krishna (1903–1984) from Kashmir, India. Krishna was the first to meticulously describe what came to be known as the kuṇḍalinī-awakening, now widely interpreted as a physical and mental process mentioned in Sanskrit texts and resulting in a superhuman condition. Krishna describes various symptoms of the rising kuṇḍalinī – imagined as a serpent moving through the spinal column – in his seminal autobiography *Kundalini: The Evolutionary Energy in Man* (1967). On the one hand the reader is presented with a narrated blend of near death experiences and excruciatingly painful sensations caused by the “burning” kuṇḍalinī. On the other hand Krishna recounts blissful, transpersonal sensations, clairvoyance, and other superhuman capacities. This paper will contextualize the discursive impact of Krishna’s kuṇḍalinī-experience on the religio-therapeutic discourse in the late twentieth century and locate it in the network of modern Indian Gurus and Euro-American consumers of psycho-physiological techniques for self-improvement.

**David Jordan:** Sufism and parapsychology in Iraq: the case of the Kasnazāniyyah Order

Facing the advance of education and sciences in modern Muslim societies on the one hand and a growing critique of heresy by puritan Salafism on the other, one may assume that Sufi orders in Islam might put less and less emphasis on miracle performances for which they have become so famous throughout the centuries. Contrary to that assumption, the case of the Kurdish Kasnazāniyyah Order in Iraq shows that miracle performances such as the piercing of certain parts of the body with skewers without any injury are still a central practice supposed to prove physically the shaykh’s spiritual healing power and to contribute to membership recruitment. These miracles are, furthermore, buttressed carefully through parapsychological research in order to prove their divine origin scientifically and challenge thus Western materialist and positivist perceptions of the human as sole source of agency.

**Martin Riexinger:** Self-improvement and eschatology: the Turkish author Muhammed Bozdağ

The Turkish Islamic author Muhammed Bozdağ (b. 1967) became famous with his self-development books and related media activities. With his activities he apparently aimed at the increasingly wealthier and better educated religious middle class which has emerged in Turkey in the last two decades. Many of his ideas, in particular parascientific justifications of his concepts, are borrowed from Western New Age authors. However, he apparently considers other aspects of the New Age as dangerous, as they threaten a theistic worldview and promote

individualization at the expense of collective norms. In order to counter this he also advocates a “post-modernized” form of traditional Islamic eschatology. For this purpose he uses again many holistic concepts from Western and Japanese New Age authors. Bozdağ’s writings may hence be seen as indication for how far New Age concepts can be “Islamically digested” in the Turkish context.

## Death, Lived Religion and the Crisis of Meaning

### **Panel Chair: Eric Venbrux**

Religion in contemporary Western society is characterized by the decline of apparent frameworks for meaning making, resumed in the concept “crisis of meaning” (Berger & Luckmann 1995). This seems very much the case in the Netherlands due to sweeping secularization and individualization. At the same time we observe tremendous creativity in Dutch ways of coping with death, dying and disposal. In confrontation with death, the most important cultural values by which people live and evaluate their experiences are conveyed. It does not only present an opportunity for expressing beliefs and values but also an arena for construing meaning. How does this contribute to a new perception of religion? By presenting cases where varieties of religion and non-religion, particular contexts and actual death practices collide, we bring in the value of thanatology for the study of lived religion and spirituality.

**Peter Nissen:** Fading vocabularies: death and religious meaning making in the Netherlands

In the last five decades the Netherlands witnessed a rapid process of deinstitutionalization of religion and worldview. Fifty years ago the country ranked among the European countries with the highest degree of church affiliation. This has changed in such a way that historians refer to “the strange death of Dutch Christianity”. Religiosity and meaning making have relocated themselves outside the institutional churches. But also among Dutch church members religious notions have changed radically. As a result the global meaning system to which Dutch people can refer in situational meaning making has been weakened. In the paper this will be studied for three kinds of vocabularies: the verbal, the ritual, and the symbolic vocabulary. This process leads to a certain level of cultural aphasia on the one hand, and to the development of verbal, ritual, and symbolic creativity on the other hand.

**Brenda Mathijssen:** Dutch funerary practices: innovation and tradition

In the Netherlands one finds a hybridity of lived religion, whereas traditional Christian belief and church membership are declining. In this dynamic context of innovation and tradition, beliefs and practices of funeral participants are

transforming. By looking at accounts of participants in “secular” and “religious” funerals, this paper will explore dynamics of religiosity in people’s experience of crisis in confrontation with death. Specifically, we will focus on eschatology, ritual elements, and situational meaning making. What afterlife beliefs are to be found among funeral participants? In what way are ritual elements perceived? Is it fruitful to focus on liminality to understand situational belief?

**Frans Jespers:** Belief in reincarnation: a Dutch case study

Western belief in reincarnation has shown a spectacular growth over the past five decades: from zero up to almost thirty percent of the population (ISSP 2008). This western – originally esoteric – idea of reincarnation as a series of ever improving lives, a chain of learning geared to fulfillment, does not only provide comfort in this life through the certainty that there will always be a new opportunity, a better situation, but also a kind of salvation. It also provides a framework for practices such as contacts with the deceased (by psychics) or retrieving memories of past lives (in “regression” therapy sessions). Ideas on reincarnation are animatedly represented and discussed in popular texts and images. Through a selection of Dutch books and websites, this paper seeks to provide insight into the cognitive and emotional components that leading figures in the field of reincarnation have on offer for their followers.

**Claudia Venhorst:** Negotiating Muslim death practices in the Netherlands Muslims in the Netherlands are mainly of migrant background and dying in a “strange” environment is a rather intense experience that poses challenges for all involved: the dying, their significant others and care providers. This paper investigates how to gain insights into the “lived religion” of Islam as practiced by a diversity of Muslims in this particular context, to arrive at a more detailed and penetrating view on their ritual practices and meaning making processes where death and dying are concerned. These ritual death practices are being influenced by the context of origin, by migration, and by their current context and are driven by ritual re-imagination and negotiation. They are reflected in and instigated by ritual narratives that weave “webs of significance” that have implications for all major interpretive questions. This will be vividly illustrated through a case study of Dutch-Surinamese-Javanese Muslims.

## **Defining Religious Minorities in a Pre-Global World (Antiquity and Late Antiquity)**

**Panel Chair: Mar Marcos, Alessandro Saggio**

Religious minority as a concept is well known in the contemporary world, permanently under discussion in politics about religious freedom and in scientific

research about the establishing of a current concept of “religion” and religious identity. This panel aims at discussing some questions about the definition of “minoritarian” groups or small religious groups in relationship with the majoritarian or the mainstream religions. Reflecting on the past and focusing on the Ancient Near East, the Mediterranean and the Christian world in antiquity, it is our purpose to contribute to a critical understanding of the contemporary globalized religious dynamics as a coherent part of world history. In this panel, we aim at investigating the interplay between the global framework and the local dynamics in societies as a historical matrix within which the religious minority as a concept has been conceived and the religious minoritarian groups self-represented. Such a poly-focalized field of research aims at critically reflecting on the cultural (political, social, religious, linguistic) network within which the religious groups had interacted with other groups; on the normative space within which the dynamics of inclusion and/or exclusion had been achieved; and on the narrative social understanding of religious minority as concept, identity, group, and agency. Regarding religious groups as loci of cohabitation, rather than emphasizing their ideological and theological polarizations, we suggest taking into account the sources they produced as instruments of self-representation. This panel aims to offer answers to the following questions: How do minorities or small religious groups define themselves in relation to the state or dominant/majoritarian religions? How does a state or a dominant religious group interact with those groups or communities that seem not to be conformed to the mainstream beliefs? How does negotiation on self-definition determine conflict or facilitate cohabitation of religious groups? How does religious identity impact on ancient and modern conceptions of “religious freedom” and how may we assess our understanding of this process in a historical perspective? Eventually, how do both documentary and literary sources thematize, represent and discuss these issues? This panel will be published as a theme section of the *Journal of Studies in Religion*.

**Santiago Montero, Diego Mateo Escámez De Vera:** Minorities and divination practices in the Roman Empire

In the present paper we will analyze the divination practices attributed by the classics to some minorities within the Empire and, in the provincial context, to certain groups and sects. These consist of rites which, most of the time, were alien to the official practices carried on by specialized priests in the municipal and provincial cadres. We will also analyze how official practices – auguratio, haruspicina – became the minority with the triumph of Christianity in the fourth century CE, and so how inductive divination became a minority practice with the rise of revelation, prophecy and natural divination.

**Luca Arcari:** “Minority” as a practice of self-definition in Second Temple Judaism (Dead Sea Scrolls, 1 Enoch)

With this paper I intend to analyze some practices of self-definition well attested in several documents of Second Temple Judaism, wherein a concept less or more coincident with our definition of minority assumes a pivotal role (Dead Sea Scrolls and 1 Enoch). My principal focus is to underline how a practice of self-definition, in terms of an actual or of a perceived minority as regards a broader context (or a context culturally constructed as a macro-context), determines the interactions between neighboring groups that share actual and symbolic spaces. First of all, the paper aims to focus on distinct aspects concerning the implicit value of the documents analyzed: for example, the use of specific literary forms and/or specific terminology, the reformulation of traditional topoi, the use of appellatives and formulae that also characterize contexts represented and/or are considered as “other” in order to construct a viable representation of the self. In such a perspective, the paper will also pay attention to cases of re-negotiated identities, in which the “other” appears to be re-constructed in terms of conflict, with the aim of defining specific group identities. My paper intends to analyze the construction of conflicts as instruments of self-definition, rather than mirrors of real and/or well-documented social contrasts.

**Mar Marcos:** When Christians called for religious freedom: the rhetoric of the “new race”

Throughout the history of the ancient Mediterranean, a plurality of religious groups and traditions coexisted in Rome, without any theoretical discourse over religious freedom having ever been formulated. Religious cohabitation changed with the spread of Christianity. As a monotheistic, exclusivist religion with a universalistic scope, Christianity was incompatible with the traditional religious practices of the Graeco-Roman world as well as with the religious demands of the Roman state. During the persecutions, Christian apologists developed a discourse in favor of religious freedom founded on arguments of various kinds, including Rome’s traditional toleration based on a respect for “national” religions. Searching for legitimacy, and in order to gain the same respect as the other “nations”, apologists brought out the argument of a “new race”: Christianity should be accepted as a licit religion because it constituted a *tertium genus*, after the Greeks and the Jews. But the rhetorical argument of ethnicity, flexible and ambiguous as it was, could turn into a dangerous one. From the outside, Christians were also seen contemptuously as a distinct race, foreign to Graeco-Roman culture and suspected of misanthropy and political disloyalty. To counteract pagan criticism, apologists reshaped the argument of ethnicity to stress the universal character of their religion. The aim of this paper is to study the use of the argument of race in the building of the early Christian discourse on

identity and religious freedom, and the many rhetorical values of this reasoning in apologetic contexts.

**Emiliano Rubens Urcioli:** Silent majorities claiming “minority rights”. Weakness and strength of small numbers in Tertullian’s rhetorical strategy. According to strongly fluctuating estimates, at the very beginning of the fourth century, Christianity is a cult practiced by ten to fifteen percent of the total population of the Empire. It is, indeed, a minority religion. Furthermore, within this minority, most believers take Christian religious identity for a situational membership, i.e., for a not relevant system of meaning in most social contexts of everyday life. “Communitarians” like Tertullian, supporting an imperative idea of religious allegiance within a hierarchical arrangement of membership, represent the majority of the extant sources, but they were a tiny (even though influential) minority in their societies – and maybe also among the clergy. So, how can a minority of a minority pretend to be the social force that it is not? By converting its objective weakness into a virtual asset. Invisibility, which characterizes the Christian religious phenotype due to its unflashy traits and allegiance dynamics, even more than to its tricky legal status, may become an uncanny feature, if one only knows how to use it. This paper focuses on the rhetorical strategy by which Tertullian, in as little as three chapters of his *Apology* (chaps. 37–39), shifts from a majority’s threat to a minority’s plea: the appalling representation of the social desertion and spatial withdrawal of Christians as an outraged “multitude of men” turns into the cheering pledge that this curia of “upright, virtuous, pious, and pure people” respects the rules of the social game and thus deserves a political guarantee for a safe religious life. At the center of the picture (chap. 38), Christian alleged detachment from politics is the very core of Tertullian’s strategic reasoning: with the same argument (“we do not care about state affairs!”) a putative majority can claim to be socially harmless (“we do not declare war on you!”) and an effective minority can call for tolerance and recognition (“you have no right to harass us!”).

**Maijastina Kahlos:** Minority report: “minorities” and “majorities” in argumentation in the late antique inter-religious and intra-religious disputes. In the course of the fourth century, Christianity was gradually shifting from a minority position to the majority one or at least to a strong minority within the Roman Empire. Graeco-Roman religions (called “paganism” by Christian writers) were gradually shifting to the minority position or a weakened majority. It is impossible to define the proportions of religious groups in the Roman Empire; at best we can speak of guesstimates. The same applies to the proportions and power relations between the Nicene and other Christian groups (e.g. Homoians or “Arians” as they were called by the Nicene Christians). In certain areas and at specific times, the Homoians held the upper hand while the Nicene Christians

were at risk of being marginalized. Nevertheless, for the most part of the fourth century, the Nicene Christians were setting the boundaries for the normative orthodoxy. This paper will discuss the argument of the majority position in the inter- and intra-religious disputes in the fourth and fifth centuries. Jerome of Stridon, for instance, rejoices at the expansion of Christianity in the city of Rome. Augustine of Hippo derides “pagans” who according to him were a small minority living in fear and shame. Isidore of Pelusium and Theodoret of Cyrrhus declared that “paganism” no longer existed. Furthermore, the triumph of Christianity over paganism was exulted in the imperial legislation. I will not take any stand on which religious group or sect was in the majority or minority in the Empire at a particular moment. Instead, I will study, for instance, for what purposes was the majority position argued for and what kinds of arguments and rhetorical techniques were used. What was the background of these claims and who was the audience?

**Alessandro Saggiore:** *Sine suffragio*: exclusion of religious minorities in the Theodosian code

In the sixteenth book of the Theodosian Code, dedicated to the theme of religion, we find both the definition of Christianity as a “religion”, and that of “religious otherness”. Heresy, apostasy, Judaism, and paganism are the general concepts identified as “religious”, though also in the sense of otherness. Into these general definitions fall then communities, groups, places, which in turn are integrated or excluded within the horizon of *res publica*. The concept of *suffragium*, well known in the field of legal studies as “vote”, after the *comitia* had ceased to meet in the early part of Tiberius’ principate, changed its meaning. From the political point of view, it inherited from its original significance the meaning of influence exercised by the powerful. Connected with this, *suffragium* meant also patronage, recommendation, and the money paid to secure power to a candidate. In late antiquity, the legal term takes on a meaning in relation to religious issues, to define social inclusion or exclusion. The communities are then placed within a range of possible levels of acceptability concerning the social consensus derived from the civic-religious communion.

**Gian Franco Chiai:** *Christiani adversos Christianos* in late antique Asia Minor

The numerous Christian inscriptions found in Asia Minor show the complexity and variety of the Christian communities in this part of the Roman Empire, including after the end of the persecutions and the affirmation of Christianity as the imperial religion. Particularly the epigraphic documents from Phrygia and Lydia testify – frequently in the small district of the same village community – to the presence of many Christian sects (Montanists, Novatians e.g.), who often with intolerance and exclusion refrained not only from the local pagan tra-

ditions, which always remained strong, but also from those of other Christians, who did not follow their faith and lifestyle. Through the analysis of a selected number of epigraphic documents, this paper aims on the one hand to reconstruct how the Christian communities bring out their identity as exponents of the true faith, and on the other hand to show how the inscriptions enable us to find out the various competing forms of the *Christiani adversos Christianos* in the local contexts.

## Defining Religious Minorities in a Global World (Early Modern History)

### Panel Chairs: Sergio Botta, Marianna Ferrara

Religious minority is a concept historically conditioned and informed by the dominant religious system. As a category, it appears constantly at stake when historians attempt to outline the ways by which colonial experiences have come to forge newly conquered territories, altering both the landscapes and mindscapes of societies under colonial control. This panel aims to address and problematize the concept of religious minority, hoping to cast new light on the multifaceted religious, political, ethnic and socio-cultural interplay occurring between global/wider frameworks and local dynamics in early modern history. By focusing on the dynamics involved in conflicts, negotiations, exchanges and compromises between minority and hegemonic religious actors, as well as on the necessary process of self-definition and self-representation on the part of non-dominant groups, we aim to highlight and critically assess the complex realities of religious minorities in different areas of the world within a time-frame that stretches from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries. Critical interventions will deal with the colonial sources such as missionary works, travel chronicles, archival materials, and any other source useful for our research proposal. A critical and deep understanding of the connected world will definitively impact our knowledge of contemporaneity.

**Anna Andreeva, Chiara Ghidini:** Transferring the economies of the “sacred”: the case of the Ryūkyū Islands at the turn of the seventeenth century. The *Ryūkyū Shintōki* (Account of the “Way of the kami” in the Ryūkyū, c. 1603–1606) is one of the oldest surviving texts providing historical descriptions of the religious landscape of the Ryūkyū Islands before the Satsuma feudal domain established its suzerainty over the Ryūkyū Kingdom in 1609. Stretching southwest from Kyushu to Taiwan, the Ryūkyū were a site of multiple polities and peoples, with a strategic position at the crossroads of maritime routes connecting Japan, Southern China, Korea and Taiwan. Recorded by the Japanese Buddhist Pure

Land priest Taichū (1552–1639) at the request of Ryukyuan court officials, Ryūkyū Shintōki reflects the founding legends, traditional beliefs and ritual practices of the pre-1600s Ryūkyū archipelago. Most importantly, the text charts the historical attempts to “replicate” on Ryūkyū’s soil a religious landscape constructed and developed by the Buddhist-Shinto milieu of medieval Japan, and exemplifies the multifaceted religious culture of pre-modern Ryukyus. Andreeva focuses on the relevant aspects related to Japan’s medieval religious landscape and on the way it entered the Ryukyuan archipelago. Ghidini deals with Ryukyuan local systems of worship, later advocated by Japanese folklorists in order to corroborate their theory of “Shinto” rituals and oracles performed and delivered mainly by shamanistic women in ancient Japan. Since it is through Taichū’s use of the formula “Ryūkyū Shintō” that Japanese folklorists came to refer to Ryukyuan religious system as Shinto, we believe that a deeper gaze into Taichū’s text is crucial in order to better understand the cultural and social dynamics taking place in the Ryukyuan archipelago shortly before the sovereignty of the independent kingdom was eventually shattered by Satsuma’s colonial domination in the seventeenth century.

**Gautam Chakrabarti:** “In-between” religiosity: European Kāli-bhakti in early modern Calcutta

One of the most engaging socio-cultural traits in late eighteenth-century India was the disarmingly involved and comparativist manner in which European travelers responded to the richly syncretized field of devotional spirituality in eastern India. The predominantly shākta orientation of early modern Bengali configurations of religious devotion led, especially in the vicinity of the rather heterodox city of Calcutta, to the familiarization of European migrants to the Goddess Kāli, herself representing a certain subaltern, tāntrika configuration of Hindu devotionalism. Anthony Firingee, (Antōni Phiringī) originally Hensman Anthony (?-1836), was a folk-poet/bard, who, despite being of Portuguese origin, was married to a Hindu Brahmin widow and famous for his much-feted devotional songs, addressed to the goddesses Kāli and Durgā, in Bengali towards the beginning of the nineteenth century. He was also celebrated for his performance in literary face-offs, occasionally of a competitively scurrilous nature, known as Kavigān (bardic duels) with the then crēme de la crēme of Bengali composers. His āgamani songs, celebrating the return of Goddess Durga to her parental home – a process that marks the Bengali autumn-festival of Durgā Pujā – are immensely-popular till today and he was instrumental in the construction of a temple to goddess Kāli in the Bowbazar-area of North Calcutta that is nowadays famous as the Phiringī Kālibāri (foreigner’s Kāli temple). In this paper, the literary-cultural construction of a religious hybridity, operating between and cross-fertilizing Indo-European cultural conjunctions, will be exam-

ined through the study of individual, “in-between” religious agency, in this case of Hensman Anthony, and literary-cultural borrowings.

**Wei Jiang:** Minority, heterodoxy, and alternatives: popular religions in the context of Catholic accommodation in China, sixteenth to seventeenth centuries  
In recent historiography, Christianity as a local religion in Late Imperial China has been considered in three different aspects. Erik Zürcher claims that the accommodation policy of the Jesuits responded to the cultural imperative of China that distinguished orthodox Confucianism from the heterodox religious sects. Nicolas Standaert holds that the notion of religion in the early modern period concerns is more adequately interpreted in a cultural and secular sense rather than in its modern concept. From an anthropological point of view, Eugenio Menegon asserts that Christianity became a local religion through a successful adaptation to the kinship network in rural China. The three statements consider popular religions as a minor parameter to measure the localization of Christianity. This paper, instead, examines the interactive dynamics between Christianity and Chinese popular religions in a series of case studies in both rural and urban settings in the southern vice-province of China, sixteenth to seventeenth centuries.

**Paolo Aranha:** “Sheep in the midst of wolves”: representations of marginality and persecution in early modern Catholic missions to South India  
Central to the Christian notion of mission is the idea that the Good News will be rejected and lead to persecutions. Jesus warned his disciples: “I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves” (Matthew 10:16). This paper explores how Catholic missionaries to South India represented themselves as potential or real victims of the hostility of “gentiles” and “Moors”, even when these majoritarian communities were far more tolerant than the Catholics themselves, especially notorious in the Portuguese Estado da Índia. On the basis of an analysis grounded in Church and missionary history I will verify how situations of religious tension and marginality came to be defined in terms of “persecution”, with special reference to the Jesuit missions of Madurai, Mysore and the Carnatic in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

**Marianna Ferrara:** The “useful” Brahmin: understanding the cohabitation of minorities in South Asia throughout the descriptions of Brahmins in the Italian travel chronicles (sixteenth to seventeenth centuries)

Brahmins and ascetics are described in many travel chronicles on India as the authoritative inhabitants of a wide land where strange rituals were performed and terrific idols were venerated. The Brahmins were often at the center of these descriptions as “useful” mediating figures who had negotiated between the foreigners and the “gentiles”, between the ambitions of the former and the interests of the latter. In the “discovered” lands there were also long-term resi-

dents such as Muslims, Jews, or like-Christians. The Italian travel chronicles composed between the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries provide a rich repertoire of details on how the Brahmin minority was perceived from the view of travelers and traders and compared with the other religious minorities who had a commercial and/or military position on the Malabar coast. I will compare these data with the Sanskrit sources containing a self-representation of the Brahmins as a protected and authoritative minority.

**Sergio Botta:** Manufacturing indigenous culture as religious minority in New Spain: the work of Fray Toribio de Benavente Motolinía  
During the first stage of the colonial history of the New Spain (1524–1577), missionary orders (Franciscans, Augustinians, Dominicans) dominated the production of religious discourses about otherness. The Franciscan Toribio de Benavente Motolinía took part in the famous expedition of the Doce, which gave life to the mendicant mission in 1524. The friar was also the author of two major works – the *Memoriales* and the *Historia de los Indios de la Nueva España* – that in 1541 concur to the manufacturing of an image of the Mesoamerican indigenous cultures as a religious minority. The paper will analyze the rhetorical strategy used by the Franciscan to represent indigenous religion as a dissolved phenomenon and as an historical fact related only to the pre-Hispanic past. In particular, the paper will focus on the use of the Old Testament discourses relating to idolatry as a dispositif to symbolically separate Christianity from indigenous religions.

## **De-limiting “Right Religion”: Transgression, Innovation and Tradition in South Asia**

### **Panel Chair: Peter Valdina**

Our panel rallies around the topics of transgression, innovation and limits as interrelated processes in religious (and thereby social) contexts in South Asia. Religious boundaries in South Asia always remained porous, fluid or even blurred. While the insistence on sharp, discernable limits of religious traditions frequently appeared, religious practices and communities regularly transgressed these very limits. In the context of lived South Asian plurality, “theological” borrowings and accretions both on the level of teachings and practices were ubiquitous. Likewise “other” religious communities and philosophic principles presented a negative foil, against which one could fathom the boundaries of one’s “own” tradition. It must be stressed that transgressing these limits could challenge, reinforce, or introduce structures of hierarchy and social dominance. We mean to trace the process by which contours are de-limited through challenges to existing

orders in four different religious traditions. Defining “right religion” entails the establishment, justification and defense of new limits against the next onslaught of transgressions. We ask if limits are more than limiting. Can they also be productive frameworks accommodating currents of thought? Does this give us a new way to read their transgression?

**Rahul Parson:** Relatively “right”: manifold perspectives of truth in the works of Banārsīdās

The seventeenth century Jain merchant Banārsīdās authored South Asia’s first autobiography, the *Ardhakathanaka*. In his work he discloses a catalogue of his social and religious deviations that led him to particular spiritual epiphanies and eventually to de facto leadership of a Jain reform movement called *Adhyātma*. He demonstrates, albeit poetically, that like the soul passing through different stations towards liberation, the social being also occupies different developmental stages that allow for a variety of ways of being in the world. Banārsīdās’ work suggests that within the Jain scriptural corpus there are justifications for his former deviance. His exegesis reveals the possibility of social transgression in Jain philosophical literature concerned with spiritual transcendence. Therefore, those who condemned him missed the point of Jain values of neutrality (*madhyastha*). Banārsīdās maintains that a way of being, behaving, or a statement can be simultaneously true and false, transgressive and appropriate, if seen from multiple perspectives, e.g. Jain *anekāntavāda*. The narrative presents his misadventures as necessary and productive as they compel him to develop a sense of “right” religion that is personal and relative, thereby militating against religious absolutism.

**Amit Dey:** Myriad ways to god: the improvising Muslim mystics of South Asia

The paper focuses on Bulleh Shah of Punjab, Shah Abdul Latif of Sind, and the baul and jari singers of Bengal during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Consulting Persian and Urdu *tazkiras* (*Akhbar ul Akhiyar*, *Safinat ul Auliya* etc.) Punjabi *kafis* and *dohas* and Bengali folk songs, the paper aims at exploring the endeavors of some eclectic poet-singers towards the construction of an alternative path of mutual understanding often culminating in mutual appreciation. Understanding such “imaginaire” Muslims is becoming relevant in the context of the emerging hyperactive, exclusionist and homogenizing socio-political institutions of South-Asia. At times these poet-singers reflect a “competitive spirituality” or they may function within the framework of established religion. In this context we aim at analyzing the transgressions (*bida* or innovation to many) of poet-singers with a motive to accommodate the “other” (non-Muslims) and the constraints imposed on such propensities by the prevalent socio-economic circumstances. Partially rejecting the “five pillars of Islam” and challeng-

ing the notion of miraj or “heavenly ascension of the prophet,” some of these poet-mystics introduced counter hierarchies to legitimize what they understood to be the “right religion”.

**Vera Höke:** Brahma, Krishna, Jesus and Socrates: transgression and limits in the Brahmo Samaj of India

The nineteenth-century Brahmo Samaj of India, under its experimentally minded leader Keshub Chandra Sen (1838–1884), may at first sight appear as a kind of religious “anything goes”. However, possibilities within the limits of “right religion” were in fact restricted. The insistence on the necessity of first-hand experiences of the divine on the one hand, and the rejection of “idolatry” on the other, informed Keshub’s choice and interpretation of religious traditions. Shifting between abstract (nirguna) and personal (saguna) notions of the highest being (addressed variously as Brahma, Ishwar, Hari, Father, Ma, Mother and God to name but a few), both the popular practices of the lower classes and authority grounded on the knowledge of specific holy texts (the traditional domain of Brahmins) were rejected. Yet, this limit was a creative framework. At the expense of traditional Brahmin and common culture, room was made for European personalities and currents of thought to intertwine with Vaishnava practice in a specific way under the auspices of “right religion”.

## Developments within Russian Orthodoxy in Past and Present

**Elena Medvedeva:** Penitentiary religiosity in Russia

The problem of religiosity among prisoners is studied through different aspects in social science and humanities. The main attention is paid to the role of religion in a prison colony as one of the correctional methods of work with prisoners. Socio-psychological studies of religious components in the everyday life of a prison colony reveal contradictions in attitudes to the role of religion for prisoners. Notwithstanding that correctional authorities cooperate actively with religious organizations, mostly with the Russian Orthodox Church as the most predictable and well-known partner, divine worship is public and plays a generally pedagogical role. So prisoners prefer to attend divine worship even though they do not practice religion themselves. Most of the prisoners show only superficial religiosity. Participation in official events approved by correctional authorities (celebration of religious holidays, church building) is seen as an obvious sign of correction and is taken into account in consideration of parole.

**German Bokov:** Science and religion in the Russian Federation nowadays: conflict or conversation?

The report discusses the main aspects of the relationship between science and religion in the Russian Federation nowadays. It shows an official position of the Russian Orthodox Church concerning the latest scientific developments, secular culture and education, and the separate views of different scientists and theologians. The paper deals with approaches to religion within both modern evolutionary and theological theories. In particular, the paper examines the problem of teaching basics of religious cultures and secular ethics in high school and religious studies in the higher educational system. This is connected with negative reaction from the academic community in the Russian Federation towards attempts to introduce theology into secular space, science and education.

**Tatiana Folieva:** The results of the introduction of religious subjects into the school educational program (according to qualitative research data)

In the Russian Federation a course “Basics of religious cultures and society ethics” has been introduced into the school educational program. We conducted a qualitative research, aiming to discover to what extent these courses have an impact on the religiosity of the children. At the end of the research we have obtained 720 drawings. The religiosity is higher among those children where the subject “Fundamentals of Orthodox culture” is taught from the first grade. The course outlines a concept of religion, but the kids keep this knowledge in mind only under constant review of the learned material. After the sixth grade, the child starts to develop his own vision of God that differs from the one introduced to him during lessons. Thus, the existing system of education and the presence of school subjects on religious culture do not affect the religiosity of children.

## Diaspora: A Source of Hybridization

**Barbara Dellwo:** Visibilization of religious belonging and social position: highly skilled Muslim migrants in Geneva

In the aftermath of the “cultural turn”, there is a common understanding that the main fault lines dividing people are of cultural and, increasingly, of religious nature. Based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted within the project “(In)visible Islam in the City”, which explores the ways in which individuals of Islamic culture express their presence in Swiss urban spaces, I noted on the contrary that social position was a major factor in their everyday practices and strategies of self-representation. Firstly, highly skilled migrants historically enjoy a better image than other migrants. Furthermore, their social, cultural and symbolic cap-

ital provides them with more resources to handle the dominant discourse on Islam in Switzerland. In light of these facts, I intend to show how highly skilled Muslim migrants shape and display a certain form of “Orientalism”, responding both to the rhetoric of cosmopolitanism and to a global process of urban marketing of diversity

**Georgios Trantas, Eleni Tseligka:** Greek migrants in Germany and their entopic fulfilment via their church

Migration entails mobility, therefore location is in flux. Yet in the case of Greek migrants in Germany the establishment of their communities has been facilitated by the Greek-Orthodox Church with spatiality being taken into consideration so that it became part of their collective narrative. This allowed for an appropriation of the place by – and in – the latter, such that narrative begot entopia and the initial deterritorialization shifted to spatial fulfilment and integration. The aforementioned phenomenon can be attested by extended iconographic examples where, at a symbolic level, German language and prominent local landmarks have been integrated in church-building frescoes. Additionally, new figures of memory have enriched their now hybrid calendar and cyclical time-lapse perception, with new anniversaries that stem from their unique narratives and self-perception. Notably, the public manifestation/celebration of narrative hybridity is mostly organized and hosted by their corresponding parishes, within the premises of the latter when possible.

**Natalia Zawiejska:** Angolan evangelical communities in Lisbon

The paper is based on field research conducted in 2013–2014 in Portugal and Angola. In the last two decades several Angolan evangelical communities started to mark their presence in Lisbon’s religious landscape. Many of them are independent evangelical churches based on one leader’s charisma, but there are several cases where an Angolan division of a global denomination or a well developed Angolan based denomination started the missionary work in Portugal. These are the cases of Assembly of God of Maculusso and Good God Church (Igreja Bom Deus). The paper will show the complex interchange between Portuguese society and Portuguese religious institutions and these religious migrant communities. I will concentrate on spatial and material dimensions as well as appoint the political, cosmopolitan and global context of the actions undertaken by these communities in balancing between adaptation and maintaining their social and religious identity.

## Differentiating Nonreligion

### Panel Chair: Johannes Quack

There is an apparent growth of research on people who explicitly or implicitly distance(d) themselves in diverse ways from specific religious traditions and ways of life or from religion as such. These studies of “nonreligion” or “nonreligiosity” complement research on secularism and secularity. In our panel, we differentiate specific modes of nonreligion by approaching nonreligious phenomena relationally, i.e., we propose focusing on their various (often co-constitutive) relations towards respective local religious fields in order to contextualize historical transformations and ongoing changes in these religious fields as well as struggles of religious and nonreligious actors about issues of secularism. By interrelating individual biographical factors and the wider socio-cultural, religious, and political contexts shaping distinct understandings and expressions of nonreligiosity, we move ahead of obvious contrasts such as the opposition between indifference to religion on the one hand and various forms of atheism on the other. Focusing on methodologies and concepts of representations and interpretations of such different types/kinds/modes of nonreligion, our panel aims to bring together scholars engaging empirically and theoretically with these questions.

**Susanne Schenk:** “Don’t make it so religious”: an analysis of how secular humanism is negotiated in Sweden

“Modes of nonreligion” differ in their rationalities of nonreligion itself or simply point to distinct strategies of how to promote nonreligious ideals and values. Analyzing such different modes, it is not only important to compare seemingly homogenous forms of nonreligion of distinct groups, but also to research the pluralism of such modes within one organization as well as diverging understandings of nonreligion on the individual level. Based on my research about secular humanists in Sweden, my paper discusses the relationship between diverse rationalities and manifestations of nonreligion, how they are negotiated, how compromises are established or conflict lines solidified. This analysis helps to understand the interdependency between competing modes of humanism and generational shifts of nonreligious activism as well as their entanglement with the on-going societal change.

**Alexander Blechschmidt:** Different “modes of nonreligion”? Analyzing the local diversity of organized nonreligion in the Philippines

How can the concept of different “modes of nonreligion” help to describe and understand the local diversity of nonreligious groups and their socio-political activism in different cultural contexts, and thereby contribute to what Cannell called “a genuine comparative anthropology of secularisms” (2010)? In my

paper I focus on two of such nonreligious groups in the Philippines – besides East-Timor the only Christian-dominated country in the region of Southeast Asia – and look at the differences and similarities between them as well as their internal dynamics and changes over time regarding their overall profile and agenda. By analyzing these recently established forms of organized nonreligion, their agency and forms of engagement in struggles over issues of “secularism” in relation to the local-specific religious field and its transformations (cf. Quack 2014), I will illustrate the complementary potential of differentiating nonreligion to shed new light on the dynamic ensemble of religion, politics and modernity.

**Stephen LeDrew:** Atheism in America: conflict and differentiation in a new social movement

Atheist activism in the U.S. has recently attracted the attention of scholars who approach it as a social movement. In this presentation I will discuss how debates regarding goals and strategies within atheist and secularist organizations are highlighting deep ideological tensions that are not only shaping movement dynamics, but threaten to fragment the movement and halt its recent explosive growth. These tensions, I argue, are essentially political, and involve distinct understandings of the nature of atheism and what it means to be an atheist, with some groups seeking to replace religion with scientific authority, and others linking atheism to a conception of social justice. This reflects the duality in the historical construction of atheism, but it also represents a new stage in its development, as new groups and ideologies are emerging that combine atheism, politics, and ethics in novel ways.

**Stefan Schröder:** Negotiating “Humanism”: practical and evolutionary humanism as different modes of nonreligion in Germany?

In German society, the term Humanism is associated with many different phenomena, from ancient Greek philosophers, to the “era” of Italian Renaissance, to a specific concept of higher education based on ancient languages. However, for the last twenty to thirty years irreligious organizations which were traditionally called “Freethinkers” or “Freereligious Congregations” have been trying to occupy the term and re-define it as their nonreligious “Weltanschauung”. In my paper, this negotiation process of the concept “Humanism” shall be refined through comparing Humanism-drafts of two eminent German irreligious organizations, the Giordano Bruno Foundation and the German Humanist Association. Are there different modes of nonreligion at play, competing over the interpretational sovereignty of the concept? Or do we observe the formation of a coherent irreligious “Humanist movement” in Germany? In raising these questions, some general conclusions on nonreligion and criticism of religion in Germany are aspired.

## Doing Study of Religions in Public Institutions

### Panel Chairs: Sarah J. Jahn, Lene Kühle

Doing Study of Religions in public institutions in countries where religion is legally separated from the public sphere is a common research topic. The participants of the panel are doing research of “religion” in several public institutions in different European and/or North American countries; but, what does it mean to do research on “religion” in public institutions? The question does not only touch upon the issue of research practice, but also raises fundamental methodological considerations, and calls for consideration of science-policy and -politics that arise from a specific understanding of what is meant by the “Study of Religions”. Overall, it can be stated that research on religion has to be analyzed on different levels and from different perspectives, because there are also several understandings of “religion”. After a general introduction by the chairwomen, the participants will discuss this overarching topic of the panel with reference to their own research experience.

**Julia Martínez-Ariño:** Questions, risks and implications of doing research on religion in public institutions: a reflexive approach

Drawing upon empirical research conducted in prisons, hospitals and schools in Spain and Canada and departing from Beaman’s (2013) notion of “the will to religion”, this presentation will reflect upon some of the main epistemological and methodological questions and risks – and their political implications – that arise when doing research on religion in public institutions. What are our preconceptions of what religion is and how do they influence the way we approach the object of our research? Do we reify categories of religion with our research, or do we help deconstruct them? Do we reinforce majority-minority dynamics and the minority and “stranger” status of minority religions? Are we, by searching for religion and religious people, overemphasizing the importance of religion in particular institutional contexts? Do we miss non-traditional and non-institutionalized forms of religiosity and religious care provision when entering the institutions through formally established gatekeepers?

**Ines Michalowski:** Bringing together different levels of comparison in research on religion in public institutions

The international comparison of how public institutions accommodate immigrant religious minorities implies many different levels of comparison that need to be taken into consideration for case selection, data collection and data analysis. Using the example of the armed forces in five European countries and the U.S., the paper shows that each level of comparison relates to specific hypotheses about what explains differences in immigrant religious minority accommodation. Institutional differences discussed include differences in national

ideologies, specificities of the public institution under study and differences across local organizations or branches of that particular public institution. Some challenges of collecting and analyzing the data that captures differences across these institutional levels as well as the particular challenges of collecting data in an institution as secretive as the military will be presented for discussion.

**Katharina Frank:** Challenges for the Study of Religions in public schools. In different countries, Religion Education has developed as a subject for all pupils. If there is no possibility to opt out, it has to respect freedom of religion in all its aspects. It seems self-evident that the Study of Religions constitutes the reference discipline for this new subject. The contribution presents basic research on Religion Education in Switzerland and experiences from a scientific evaluation in the canton of Zurich. It illustrates the specific challenges the Study of Religions is faced with, when attending to this topic of public affair: methodologically, it is necessary to provide new instruments for qualitative and quantitative research in order to be accepted by the established Educational Sciences. In regard to science politics, it has to establish itself against theological claims and also against interreligious understandings of religion as anthropological constants.

## Dreaming Buddhism and Awakening

### Panel Chair: Stuart Lachs

Some Buddhist schools in the West are presented in sanitized versions. One especially salient feature of these schools is the presentation of the leader as an enlightened being beyond the understanding of the mass of humanity. This imputed enlightenment divides the world into two groups: the enlightened master and everyone else. At the same time, this elitist perspective contradicts Western conceptions of Buddhism, according to which “spirituality” implies autonomy, rationality, and freedom. So how can Westerners comply to the new world views and practices these Buddhist teachers bring with them? How can they cope with the contradictions? This panel explores several cases of cultural misunderstanding and different co-adaptation strategies. We will explore the rhetorical and practical ways in which Western students are taught a radically different conception of Buddhism, and the ways in which and the reasons why these adaptive strategies sometimes fail.

**Stuart Lachs:** For whose best interest?

Zen master Joshu Sasaki recently died at the age of 107. Though he was considered by some to be the pre-eminent tough old style authentic Zen master in the West, by other well informed people it was known that this was not the case. Sasaki is an interesting example of a traditional Rinzai Zen master and the organ-

ization built up by him shaping a Buddhist organization in response to and in interaction with his mostly Western disciples. I will show how the meeting of a charismatic traditionally trained Japanese Rinzai Zen master with, in many ways, a naïve and uninformed modern Western audience in search for meaning led to a unique blend of modern and traditional Buddhism. But also this unique mixture in concert with Zen's legitimating story facilitates a world unto itself, marked by troubling behavior by both master and disciples.

**Andre van der Braak:** Gurus and Charisma: New perspectives on the student-teacher relationship in the West

As the confluence of Eastern religions with Western modernity matures, it is becoming increasingly clear that premodern Asian models of the relationship between charismatic gurus and their disciples are no longer adequate in a modern, or even postmodern, Western context. This paper discusses various possibilities for new perspectives on the student-teacher relationship, based on recent developments in transpersonal psychology and object relations theory that emphasize the dialogical nature of the self.

**James Mark Shields:** Response

## Dynamics of Accommodation: Law and Religion in Contemporary Western Societies

### Panel Chair: Werner Menski

Over the past few decades, state courts had to deal with an increasing number of cases that involved religious issues. At the same time, legal responses to the demands of religious groups have come under public scrutiny. This negotiation process between state law and religion(s) concerns almost all aspects of individual life, such as clothing (burqa ban) and the integrity of the body (circumcision), but also the (legal) status of religious groups as corporate entities. It challenges legal frameworks that are often built amidst specific historical conditions that did not reflect the religious plurality that modern states face today. As a result, both the law and religions find themselves undergoing change, adaption, seclusion and contestation. This panel explores the tension between the objectives of state law and the interests of religious communities by bringing together researchers from legal studies, anthropology and religious studies.

**Markus Klank:** The long way to recognition: on the legal status of Jehovah's Witnesses in Germany

In March 1990, after more than forty years of repression, Jehovah's Witnesses became officially recognized as a licit religion by the former government of the German Democratic Republic. Following the German reunification in October 1990,

Jehovah's Witnesses asked the state of Berlin to confirm that their official status has now been changed to the privileged status of a corporate body under public law. This initiated a complex legal dispute that engaged different legal authorities for years. After fifteen years, Jehovah's Witnesses were finally granted this legal status in the state of Berlin but they have not succeeded yet in all German states. This paper focuses on the impact of a decade-long legal dispute on the religious community of Jehovah's Witnesses in Germany and how it affected their internal approach to (state) law. It also raises the question if or how far legal settings transform religious groups and vice versa.

**Mareike Riedel:** A matter of faith or birth? Jewish pluralism as a challenge for state law

The entangled nature of religion and ethnicity is a central feature of Judaism. The question "Who is a Jew?" has always been a subject of halakhic debate and is answered differently within the various streams of Judaism. What appears on first sight to be an internal religious matter has occasionally engaged secular courts like the UK Supreme Court regarding the admission policy of a Jewish school. This paper draws on several case studies in a comparative way to assess how state courts addressed the competing understandings of Jewish identity and how they tried to make sense of its hybrid nature within legal categories of religion, ethnicity and nationality. This paper argues that the concept of "Jewish identity" transcends Western legal categories that are built upon a particular understanding of religion. Such an understanding risks not only imposing certain notions and criteria of religion but also restricting the freedom of religion for minority religions such as Judaism.

**Helene R. Kirstein:** An ethnological analysis of "religion" in the European Union's dialogue with churches

Religion as a complex concept constitutes a distinct organization for churches in the contemporary democratic process of consultation in the European Union. Dialogue initiated by the European Union establishes a position for churches that is both unique and universal at the same time. The goal of the churches can be seen as one of changing both everyday habits and public policies in a global context related to such topics as nuclear weapons, environmental issues, climate change, and poverty. In reference to these subjects, churches utilize theories drawn from science, theology, law, and the humanities to understand and explain their aims. Nevertheless, although both partners in the dialogue recognize the churches' objectives as wholistic in conception and purpose, both also see churches as having a specific contribution to make to the improvement of society. My research will show that this apparent contradiction is actually an enabling, foundational principle of the dialogue itself.

**Martin Ramstedt:** Translating Buddhism into different European normativities: the case of the Shaolin Europe Association

In 2010, the UNESCO accorded the status of “world heritage” to the Songshan Shaolin Temple in the Province of Henan (People’s Republic of China) as part of a whole series of monuments comprising both sacred and secular sites. Far from taking issue with the ensuing reordering of monastic life along secular lines, the abbot of the Shaolin temple, the Venerable Shi Yong Xin has continued to lobby for official recognition of his monastery’s “Shaolin Chan Culture” as “intangible heritage”. Already back in 1999, Shi Yong Xin had founded some institutions that have fostered his endeavor, inter alia the Shaolin Europe Association. The paper argues that the cultural translation of the Shaolin Chan Culture into different – spiritual and secular – European normativities has not only supported the international branding of the Shaolin martial arts. It has also rendered Shaolin’s international image more compatible with the criteria of the respective UNESCO program.

## The Dynamics of East Asian New Religions

### Panel Chair: David William Kim

The East Asian nations have a similar historical background of modernization in the nineteenth to early twentieth centuries. While the society, culture, religion, and thought were altered with advanced technology and Christianity, the new religious movements also emerged from the Asian traditions of Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism, Shintoism, and Shamanism. How, then, did they motivate the local societies of East Asia region? What were the new perspectives they offered? How were the new religions challengeable over the traditional beliefs? The papers of this panel explore the following subjects to demonstrate the socio-religious dynamics of East Asia, such as the metaphysical relation between God and man within the context of the Korean Daesoonjinrihoe and Japanese Tenrikyo, the newly individualized spirituality of a Taiwanese new religion (“the Sacred Teaching of Mind-only”), the social engagement of Won-Buddhism, and the history of Tenrikyo and its restoration in contemporary Japan.

**Gyung-Won Lee:** The god-man relation in East Asian New Religious Movements: the cases of Daesoonjinrihoe and Tenrikyo

The paper explores the metaphysical relation between god and man within new religious movements in East Asia. The founder of Daesoonjinrihoe is taught as being present in the world as the Lord of the ninth heaven in order to create an earthly paradise through the work-process of so called Cheonji-Gongsa (“re-forming the universe”). Human beings are seen to have privileges by which

gods and men are harmonized (Shinin-Johaw). Meanwhile, the god of Tenrikyo (god the Parent) is comprehended as the creator of all creatures including human beings. So, all human beings are viewed as brothers and sisters. They teach that as god and men keep the relationship of parent and children, they can enjoy an ideal life. Thus, the comparative study of the paper will not only demonstrate the individual concept of the God-man relation, but also unveil the creative identity of the Korean and Japanese new religions.

**Shu-Wei Hsieh:** Master, scriptures and rituals: a study on Taiwanese Sacred Teaching of Mind-only

The paper investigates a new religious movement in Taiwan by focusing on its master, scriptures and rituals. The Sacred Teaching of Mind-only is a new religion which is integrated with divination and fongshui practices. The founding master, Hunyuan, is a charismatic figure as well as a new religious innovator in Taiwan. The small-scale cases of charisma illuminate its theoretical and comparative purposes. Then, how can one interpret the religious community and their unique teachings? The paper analyzes the new Taiwanese religion by means of three perspectives: (1) the relationship of master with the scriptures; (2) the links of circulation of impacts between scriptures and rituals; (3) methods and theories to explore alternative models of spirituality and new religion. The newly individualized spirituality is often represented in different ways, but this paper tries to address the new spirituality empirically as well as the broader flows within religious and divination traditions.

**Kwangsoo Park:** A study on the “Gaebyok (Great Opening 開闢)” thought and social reformation of Won-Buddhism

The religious culture of modern Korea is a traditional heritage of Korean spirit and history. It is very important to study such heritages because they are a treasure house maintaining a variety of Koreanity. They have been collected throughout the process of confrontation and naturalization of conventional religions of foreign origin. Among the founders of new Korean religions, Chung-Bin Pak (1891–1943), better known by his religious epithet, Sot’aesan, founded a reformed Buddhist movement called Won-Buddhism (Wonbulgyo). The leader’s main purpose in the reformation of Buddhism was to apply Buddhism to the contemporary secular society. Then, how do the new religious teachings engage with the local communities of Korean society? The paper argues that the new religious founder’s goal of reformation was based on the thought of Gaebyok (Great Opening of Era) in order to build a peaceful world through reformations of the imbalances in social and religious systems.

**Jiro Sawai:** Scriptures and their restoration: a case study of Tenrikyo  
Tenrikyo has the three Scriptures, which constitute the foundation of its faith. Before WWII, however, the new Japanese religion was severely persecuted by

the Japanese Government. Therefore, it was very difficult for Tenrikyo adherents to communicate its teachings to people on the basis of its Scriptures. As soon as WWII was over in 1945, the Tenri community immediately began to restore its teachings, based on its Scriptures. Thus, in my presentation, by examining the history of conformation and restoration in Tenrikyo, I attempt to explore what the changeable or the unchangeable in Tenrikyo faith is. From a historical viewpoint of religions, in order to clarify the characteristics of religions in modern Japan, it may be significant to demonstrate how Tenrikyo restored its original teachings as the foundress Miki Nakayama taught them.

## **The Dynamics of Material Text Practices and the Somatics of Sacred Scripture**

### **Panel Chairs: Isabel Laack, Katharina Wilkens**

The semantic interpretation of religious texts is a central endeavor of religious studies, shaped by Bible studies, philologies and the comparative concept of sacred scripture. The fact that people in many traditions relate to religious texts in material, sensory and somatic ways is only gradually coming into academic focus. The panel seeks to overcome judgmental divisions in the discourse of religious experts and in academic thinking such as literate vs. oral cultures, reading vs. seeing/feeling, text vs. image, “intellectual” text interpretation vs. “superstitious” text practices and religion vs. magic. In order to develop this field of study we use the perspectives of material/visual religion and aesthetics of religion. Analyzing material from diverse regions and epochs, theoretical questions of efficacy, literacy and somatics of material text practices are discussed. The panel explores the worlds of sensory phenomena in text practices and considers the dynamic constellation of religion, sensation and materiality.

**Kristina Myrvold:** Drinking the guru’s transformative words: uses of amrit in Sikh religious practices

In Sikh religious traditions there are various practices of using amrit, that is, sweetened water that has been consecrated by recitations of compositions from the scripture Guru Granth. Usually the term refers to the blessed nectar-water given to neophytes during the initiation ceremony of Khalsa, when a person adopts a normative Sikh identity. However, in living practices it also implies a whole range of consecrated waters that are attributed transformative powers. This paper examines how different types of amrit are believed to produce various effects on people, depending upon textual and contextual factors during the process of transforming ordinary water to nectar, including the identity of the agent preparing amrit, ritual spaces and instruments, and dispositions among

recipients. The transformative powers ascribed to particular waters are intimately connected with semantic properties of the recited scriptural hymns or what these hymns have come to represent in the broader Sikh tradition.

**Hanna Nieber:** The body reading the dissolved Qur'an

When Qur'anic verses, sometimes supplemented with certain names, drawings, or numbers, are written with saffron ink and then washed off with water, this water in Swahili is referred to as *kombe* and healing powers are attached to it. The written word – the picture of the text – which has taken considerable time and knowledge to prepare is not legible to the eye anymore, but the body can absorb the liquid and then be affected by it. The body “reads” a “formless script”. This paper, based on ethnographic fieldwork in Zanzibar, views the practice of drinking *kombe* as a sensational form and investigates how different actors value or disapprove of this practice due to its sensuousness. It aims to highlight how the afflicted body is conceptualized in the argumentations with respect to its relation to the imbued script. The paper draws on the materiality both of the body and of text in its specific Swahili context.

**Katharina Wilkens:** Drinking the Qur'an as modern practice

Protection and healing have been sought through a number of material text practices throughout Islamic history. Efficacy is guaranteed by the sacred reality of the Book embodied through air and water. While these practices (classified as *sihir*, permitted magic, in Islamic theology) have been discussed as contagious magic in academic literature, I am interested in relating the interconnectedness of scriptural and medical practice with a view to such questions as popularity, efficacy and viability over time. The comparable Alpine Catholic tradition of swallowing small paper copies of a miraculous Madonna at a pilgrimage site did not survive into the second half of the twentieth century. Qur'anic scriptural practices can thus be interpreted within the framework of multiple modernities in which medicine and scripture do not present an insurmountable antinomy.

**Isabel Laack:** Sensing sacred reality in Aztec divination codices

The ancient Aztecs (Mexico, thirteenth to sixteenth century) used a system of written visual communication combining elements both of “writing” and of “art”, producing something between our categories of “text” and “image.” Analyzing the material text practices around divination codices such as the *Codex Borbonicus*, the paper seeks to explore how the Aztecs used this visual medium to communicate their knowledge about the workings of sacred reality perceived as the materially present and sensorially experienced essence of all things. According to my interpretative thesis, the divination codices depicted rather than represented aspects of this sacred reality, thus showing an approach to visuality and writing that has fundamental consequences for the processes of “reading” and interpreting these “texts”.

**James W. Watts:** Ritualizing possession of iconic books

Drawing on recent comparative studies of material scriptures and iconic texts (Myrvold 2010; Watts 2013), I will survey ritual practices of “possessing” sacred texts. For many people, having a scripture or other iconic book in one’s possession provides prestige and spiritual merit. Devotees without the resources to become scholars or expert readers can nevertheless ritualize a scripture iconically. They therefore ritualize their possession of books by collecting, carrying, displaying, and even ingesting them, among many other practices. Many owners of scriptures feel particularly impelled to protect them from pollution and desecration. Particularly rare or distinctive texts may get treated as relics on analogy with bodily relics. Iconic books convey social legitimacy to their owners, whether they are individuals, a community, a tradition or an institution. By claiming a scripture as their own, communities and individuals assert the right to determine its meaning and on that basis to judge each other’s orthodoxy. Carrying them on one’s person and in portraits claims association with inspired authority and shows one’s learning, piety, and orthodoxy. The stereotypical images of certain books of scripture have therefore come to represent entire religious traditions as much as any other symbols.

**S. Brent Plate:** Response

## **Dynamics of Politics and Religions: Beyond a “Standard Model” of Secularization**

### **Panel Chair: Karsten Lehmann**

The Academic Study of Religions is witnessing a fundamental reconfiguration of the debates on what is frequently described as the “secularization paradigm”. The 2000s and 2010s were dominated by an increasing debate on notions such as de-secularization (Peter Berger), re-enchantment (Christopher Partridge), or the “resurgence of religions” (Martin Riesebrodt). In a most recent article, the English sociologist of religions David Martin opened a new dimension for those debates. He made the point that even those new debates are basically reproducing the main structure of what he describes as the “standard model” of secularization – which is characterized by the basic bipolarity of the secular and the religious. Along those lines, internationally renowned scholars of religions such as Linda Woodhead, Detlef Pollack, José Casanova, and Francois Gauthier have been arguing for a stronger historization of the very notion of secularization. In a number of publications (such as *Religion and Change in Modern Britain/2012*; *Umstrittene Säkularisierung/2012*; *Europas Angst vor der Religion/2013*; *Religion in the Neoliberal Age/2013*), they argue that it is necessary to go

beyond the mere dualism of “the religious” and “the secular”, and to find a new terminology to adequately describe the respective processes. The panel at hand wants to follow this avenue by adding a comparative dimension to the respective debates. It wants to start from the general critique of the “standard model” of secularization. On this basis it intends to discuss to what an extent terminologies that go beyond the standard model can be developed in different cultural contexts.

**Ansgar Jödicke:** Beyond the “standard model” in the South Caucasus?

Both the standard model of secularization and the alternative models of a revival of religion do not fit to the recent developments of religion in the new independent states of the South Caucasus. On the basis of fieldwork in Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia, I argue that a secular political self-understanding is still dominant in all three countries, although religion has doubtlessly gained more influence in politics and society. This theoretical dilemma can be solved when we analyze religion at different social levels such as personal religiosity, organizational authority, interactions with politics etc. I will discuss the relationship between these levels in my contribution.

**Weigang Chen:** Beyond the “standard model” in China?

The powerful resurgence of religion in the post-Cold War world forces a major rethink of the “standard model of secularization” and, in so doing, puts the Huntingtonian paradigm of the “clash of civilizations” at the heart of current discussions on global politics. It is this neo-Weberian position the present paper proposes to challenge. Drawing on the historical and conceptual linkage between Confucian Marxism in China and liberation theology in Latin America, it concurs with José Casanova in arguing that a radical reinterpretation of the “public” roles of religion holds the key to a formation of civil society that goes beyond the limits of Western liberal democracy.

**Karsten Lehmann:** Beyond the “standard model” in global contexts

Throughout the last two decades, globalization theory has established itself as one of the most significant theoretical frameworks in the Academic Study of Religions. The present paper argues that a globalization perspective can also contribute to a better understanding/critique of the “standard model” of secularization. On the basis of an in-depth analysis of modern human rights discourses, it shows to what an extent these discourses have become more and more hybrid. Since the establishment of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), human rights discourses have accumulated multi-fold religious and secular layers. This is not only central to the understanding of present-day human rights. It also adds a significant dimension to the discussions of the panel.

**Kim Knott:** Response

## Dynamics of Religion and Cultural Evolution

**Hubert Seiwert**

### Opening Keynote and Gary Lease Memorial Lecture

The theme of this conference “Dynamics of Religions: Past and Present” can be understood as just another term for religious change, whose past and present forms are traditionally studied by the history and the sociology of religions. A more specific understanding of “dynamics” focuses on the effects religions have on the evolution of human cultures. In this lecture, culture is conceived of as the environment of human activity that has been produced and is continuously reproduced by humans. Since whatever can be studied as “religion” has been produced by humans, religions are part of the cultural environment, which includes both material and immaterial artefacts. Cultural evolution – being a cumulative process marked by the reproduction and modification of the cultural environment – is therefore affected by those products of human activity that are objects of the study of religions. It will be explained that their effects contribute both to the maintenance of the cultural environment and to its modification. Empirical examples to illustrate the dynamics of religions and cultural evolution will mainly be taken from the history of religions in China, past and present.

## Dynamics of Religion in Pakistani Society

**Panel Chair: Syed Furrukh Zad Ali Shah**

This panel intends to discuss the dynamics of religion in Pakistan. The four participants focus on various aspects to develop an understanding of a country which is famous for being the heir of first human settlements – with a rich history, reflective of a diverse Indo-oriental culture, carrying different Islamic religious expressions – and a modern nation-state facing challenges of governance, globalization and modernity. The first participant shall highlight the changing patterns of “madrasa education”, which have been vigorously resisted in the past; the second paper intends to explain the religious transformation on social media and its consequences; the last paper shall look into the changing patterns of local politics, with emerging cultural patterns being subsumed under appeals to religion. All these are broadly linked to various aspects of the politics and discourse of religion from four different angles but ultimately creating an understandable pattern.

**Misbah-Ur Rehman:** From resistance to reforms: religious education in Pakistani madrasas in the aftermath of 9/11

Traditional Islamic institutions, the madrasas, are under intense scrutiny due to their apparent linkages with terrorism. It is being argued that madrasa pedagogy produces fanaticism and intolerance, which are detrimental to pluralism and multicultural reality. More often than not, the assertion has been that madrasas have become factories for global jihadis and a breeding ground for terrorism. Thus, in Pakistan and Afghanistan they have been linked to the rise of the Taliban (a Persian/Pashto plural of “talib”, a student of madrasa). The curriculum taught in Pakistani madrasas is an evolved version of the standardized teaching developed by Mulla Nizam al-Din of Lucknow (d. 1748), called Dars-i Nizami after its founder, consisting of texts written mostly during the twelfth to fifteenth centuries. With minor changes, this curriculum continues to be taught in religious institutions until today. In order to counter the “narrow mindset of medieval ages”, there have been several attempts to reform this curriculum. The first attempt was in 1962 and another one in 1979 but none of them could achieve their aims. The events of September 11 created an increased interest in these institutions on a global level and the process of reform accelerated. Though attempts made by the then military ruler Pervez Musharraf did not succeed, the changing environment forced many of the madrasa officials to change their perspective about reforms and a new movement of “reforms from within” appeared. Currently, the curriculum itself is untouched, but madrasa officials have agreed to introduce 2–5 years of “secular curriculum” before students start their “religious curriculum”. The current paper will analyze these reforms locating them in the changing political environment.

**Bilal Rana:** The social Ghazwa: extremist and counter-extremist Islamic discourses in Pakistani social media

Social media has provided users with an interactive space for discussions. The emergence of new media technologies is changing the premises of discussion about Islam. Pakistani social media has become a new arena for discussion and interaction among extremists and moderate Muslim voices. Muslims as content producers on social media are engaged in discussions about Islam and its multiple interpretations. Marginalized voices have gained a new platform to challenge the dominating discourse of Islam in Pakistan. Scholars have recently focused on the role of social media in propagating or resisting Islamic extremism in Pakistan. This study will conduct a qualitative meta-analysis of existing literature on extremists and counter-extremist discourses in the social media of Pakistan. This study will conceptualize the academic and main stream work on diversified Muslim discourses in the social media of Pakistan. The purpose is to point out the gaps within the literature and set an agenda for future research.

**Hussain Muhammad:** Religion, music and mass mobilization by PTI: transformation of political culture in Pakistan

The emergence of Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaaf (PTI) or "Pakistan Movement for Justice" as a strong political force since October 2011 brought about significant changes in the political landscape of the country. Using the slogan of "Change", PTI succeeded in soliciting support from certain new segments and strata of society. Despite having a strong presence in the newly emerging social media, PTI could not ignore the importance of large political gatherings for securing and showing political strength. PTI used new devices, coined new political vocabulary and introduced a new style for mobilizing its enthusiastic supporters/activists in public gatherings in different cities of Pakistan. They employed an unusual combination of religious jargon and live music at their rallies. The response of the young participants, both male and female, with dancing and singing gives a unique shape to these meetings. The trend has been significant both for politics in general and for the tradition of right wing politics in Pakistan in particular. This new pattern of blending music, singing and dancing with political speeches, however, attracted sharp criticism from Pakistan's traditional religious establishment. The trend is seen to be a departure from Pakistan's so-called traditional Islamic values of "haya", i.e., modesty, by many religious groups. Though a debatable issue, listening to and playing music is proscribed by many religious clerics in Islam. Similarly, dancing and free mixing of genders is considered to be immodest behavior by them. Terming the political meetings of PTI to be mere "musical concerts" and "dance parties", they accuse Imran Khan of spreading "obscenity", "contaminating" Pakistan's Islamic civilization with "Western" Culture and Civilization and playing into the hands of the "Jewish" lobby. Prominent among the critics of PTI is Jamiat-ul-Ulama-i-Islam (JUI) of Maulana Fazl-ur-Rehman, an important religio-political party of Pakistan. Maulana Fazl-ur-Rehman and Imran Khan have emerged to be arch rivals in Pakistani politics. This is in spite of the fact that like JUI, PTI also maintains the public image of a right wing political party. Analyzing this new pattern of PTI politics and the subsequent negative reaction of various religious groups, from the perspective of adaptation and transformation through which Pakistani society is passing, poses certain questions. Can these new experiments of PTI be understood in the context of traditional "right" versus "left" wing politics? Or is the ideological division of Pakistani politics and society into "right" and "left" wing no longer valid? How far can the intercultural global exchange be held responsible for the emergence of this new style of PTI politics which employs singing and dancing on a public platform? Can this phenomenon be understood in the paradigm of the Sufi traditions of this region and the harsh criticism of Ulama in the context of traditional Sufi-Ulama rivalry? To what extent can this

trend be an outcome of a non traditional and in varying degrees, a liberal interpretation of the new creed of religious media-savvy preachers? Is the political aspect involving political point scoring and mileage enough to fully explain these developments? How far do these experiments of PTI have the potential to affect political, social and religious changes in Pakistan and in which direction?

## The Dynamics of Silent Prayer in Antiquity

### Panel Chair: Maik Patzelt

Silent prayer is a religious practice that has been discussed rather ambivalently in ancient discourses. Whereas some ancient authors regard such a practice with scepticism or even as an expression of malevolence and criminality, others treat it quite respectfully and even positively. This panel aims to understand this very ambivalent discourse on silent prayer, which ranges from deviation to idealization. Therefore, Christian and non-Christian authors must be understood as participants in multiple discourses that consequently lead to the assumption that they not only reflect on silent prayers, but rather create their personal interpretations on silent prayers. This panel focuses mainly on the positive interpretations. It seeks to elaborate questions of reinterpretation, innovation and thus of performance, space, social acceptance and experience. In what way was a given tradition of (silent) prayer adapted, transformed or even opposed? Furthermore, which legacies were in use and subsequently produced?

### **Erika Meyer-Dietrich:** Imagined spaces in New Kingdom Egypt

The paper explores the relationship between silent prayer and imagined spaces mainly in the iconographical record. Silent prayer is here taken as a practice in space and time to constitute imagined spaces. As a repetitive practice prayer maintains these spaces and creates a religious knowledge about them. Archaeological finds from Middle Egypt confirm several important changes in prayer practices during the New Kingdom (1550–1069 BCE). The prayer's posture changed. Traditional places for silent communication over ontological borders were abandoned. New symbols were created for the sun as divinity. This paper considers the consequences of these changes. In particular, it will focus on the creation of new places and spaces. Which were the new places to substitute old areas for silent prayer? How did the development of private religious practices becoming a means of social acceptance further the creation of new places? How did the representation of praying persons constitute imagined spaces in an urban environment?

**Pieter Willem van der Horst:** Unarticulated prayer in early Judaism

Ancient Israel shared with all other nations of the ancient Mediterranean world the custom that prayers were said out loud. In post-biblical Judaism, however, there were right from the start some elements that made for significant difference. For Judaism the most important factor simply was that in the Bible there was a story about Hannah praying in silence which, although being frowned upon by Eli the priest, was heard favorably by God. The paper will discuss the “Wirkungsgeschichte” of this story. It will, however, also deal with other elements that helped create a prayer practice that was different from the dominant custom of prayers said out loud.

**Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony:** The performance of silent prayer and hidden worship in Eastern Christianity

This paper explores the performance of silent prayer and hidden worship among a variety of Eastern Greek and Syriac authors (fourth to eighth centuries). By focusing on the history of this topic I hope to shift the emphasis in the study of Christian prayer beyond the history of doctrine, and to focus on the practice of inner worship, its inner space and images. I will examine the dynamic of the Greek ascetic literary legacy (fourth to fifth century) and its impact on Syriac Christianity (fifth to eighth century). Above all, this paper asks about the ways in which the teachings and the religious anthropology of Eastern influential authors – Evagrius Ponticus, Mark the Monk, and Pseudo-Dionysius – shaped Syriac thought on silent prayer and hidden worship as reflected in the writings of Isaac of Nineveh (second half of the seventh century), John of Dalyatha and Joseph Hazzaya (eighth century).

**Maik Patzelt:** The paradox of Seneca’s “mental” prayer

As it seems, praying in ancient Rome was a very loud business, especially during official services to the gods. Thus, it is not surprising that several people were stigmatized as deviant because of their silent prayers. Or should that be surprising? This paper elaborates the most paradoxical case of Seneca within that discourse. He posits his version of a silent prayer against every other style of praying, ironically even including other silent prayers. Regarding the wider discourse, the following points shall be the focus of discussion: How does Seneca attend to the achievement of social acceptance? Does he create a new tradition as the church fathers suggest or does he just position a more or less new practice – or just a new interpretation – within a wider framework of existing praying practices? Which experiences accompany his concept of “mental” prayer? What transfers of sacred spaces occur?

## Economy and Religion beyond Neoclassical Economics of Religion

### Panel Chair: Alexander Alberts

The distinction between an “economic” and a “religious” sphere in human affairs has proven fruitful and controversial at the same time, in the history as well as historiography and systematic study of religions. Yet, scholars of religion have been rather reluctant to exploit the resulting relationships between “economy” and “religion”. Though some steps have been made towards an “economy of religion” from a religious studies perspective, the field is still predominated by neoclassical economics of religion. Moreover, in religious studies the reception of approaches such as anthropological “*économie religieuse*” and economic sociology is marginal at best. This panel wants to compensate for this imbalance and goes beyond the neoclassical paradigm. It therefore provides an invitation to employ more widely the heuristic distinction between “economy” and “religion”, discussing the application of new institutional economics, Marx’s intrinsic analogy between capital and religion, and finally capitalism as religion.

**Christoph Lucas Zapf:** A conceptual framework for the economics of religion

The “economics of religion” explores the interplay between religion, economy, and economics. Its interdisciplinary nature leads to a multitude of methods and theories being involved. The paper provides a conceptual framework and a systematical overview of different approaches in the economics of religion while paying special attention to the relationship between economics and the study of religion. A tangible example of how to describe the influence of religion on economic processes (i. e., religion as an independent variable) substantiates the systematization. The paper will argue that the theoretical framework of New Institutional Economics is especially commensurable with a religious studies perspective on the economics of religion. Methodological issues will be discussed by employing a comparative approach and the concept of mental models. The paper opens a perspective on the economics of religion beyond disciplinary constraints and promotes an innovative research approach.

**Jens Schlamelcher:** Enslaving the creator: analogies of religion and capital in the early and late works of Karl Marx

What are the differences between “economy” and “religion”? How can we grasp the relation between these two “spheres”, “fields” or “functional systems”? These questions are still paramount in the sociology of religion. Recent approaches such as proposed in the new paradigm of economics of religion tend to deny any differences between them, conceiving religion as just another “market”. As this paper will show, the classic Karl Marx has found more subtle an-

swers to these questions. This presentation aims to revisit his insights and show the intrinsic analogies between religion and capital in his theory. Marx never questioned Feuerbach's thesis of religion as a human invention resulting in subordination. However, he revealed that capital functions in precisely the same way on a material plane. Secondly, Marx proved that capitalist modes of exploitation can, due to their generic production of "false consciousness", ignore religion as a primary justification for material exploitation. Thus, Marx offers an understanding of both modernity and re-sacralization at the same time.

**Alexander Alberts:** Capitalism as religion? A typology of a convoluted comparison

For over 150 years, writers, theologians and scholars have sought to compare the striving for monetary profit (and its justification by *laissez-faire*) to religion ("capitalism as religion", abbr. CAR). According to CAR, elements commonly understood as belonging to the economic system of society (e.g. capitalism, money) are in fact intrinsically religious. This (mostly normative) discourse has received little attention from scholars of religion up till now. Its function, inner motives and axioms remain unstudied. Promoting a systematic analysis of CAR, this paper proposes a typology of the major distinctions operative in CAR's topoi. Inspired by sociological systems theory, it refrains from interpreting CAR in terms of a causal history of ideas. Rather, it adopts a perspective based on distinction theory and Luhmann's evolution of ideas. From this analysis the paper concludes with a critique of CAR.

## Embedding Religions: Converting Figures and Conversion Stories

### Panel Chair: Carmen Meinert

The panel presents the ongoing work of the interdisciplinary group "Buddhism in Motion" on conversion narratives. Stories about the conversion of communities are understood as analytical instruments to investigate ways of "making sense" of the introduction of a religion in a specific region. The objective of the papers presented at this panel is twofold: an investigation of the object-language level, and of the meta-language level. Firstly, papers aim at characterizing the dialectics of conversion accounts with respect to: (1) agent(s) of conversion and the strategies implemented; (2) justification of the propagation of the religious faith; (3) description of the converted other; and (4) repercussions of the conversion. As narrated reconstructions of the past, conversion stories are not merely an expression of the agenda of a religious community but also of dynam-

ics which go beyond the religious field. It is these underlying strings that the group seeks to unravel as a second step.

**Robert Mayer:** Padmasambhava and the Buddhist conversion of Tibet

The mythology surrounding the figure of Padmasambhava, the tantric hero famed for his role in converting Tibet to Buddhism in the eighth century, expresses many aspects of Tibetan self-representation, ranging from an uncivilized land of barbarians up to the arrival of Buddhism in the golden age of the Tibetan Empire. The stories connect Padmasambhava's deeds with a process of historical destiny, the creation of a sacred geography of Tibet, and with ongoing various religious themes. Features of the narratives are explored: developments over the generations, and contrasting versions favored by different groups, or the same group in different contexts. Padmasambhava is in fact not seen so much as an historical culture hero, but rather as a buddha with endless manifestations, so the narratives are never fixed, and remain alive with unlimited possibilities for new permutations. The Bon – the religious rivals – developed their own counter-narratives as well.

**Stephen Eskildsen:** Bodhidharma: bringer of the true dharma to China

Although Bodhidharma was active roughly 500 years after the introduction of Buddhism to China, he came to be touted as a heroic figure who converted Chinese Buddhists to authentic Buddhism for the first time. In Chan Buddhist sources this “authentic” Dharma is defined largely by austere discipline, meditation and wisdom that is “beyond words and letters”. However, as we shall see, Daoist sources indicate that his name also came to be associated with the transmission of “embryonic breathing” methods, or of methods for anticipating death and navigating through the intermediate state. Certain late imperial texts would maintain that the authentic Buddha Dharma transmitted by Bodhidharma was none other than the Internal Alchemy meditation of the Daoist Quanzhen tradition, and that Chinese Buddhists after Bodhidharma needed to be converted to the True Dharma once again.

**Lisa Wevelsiep:** Bringing Buddhism back to its homeland: narrating the (Re-)introduction of Buddhism in Bangladesh

Sources about Buddhism in the region of today's Bangladesh are scarce, but in most accounts the import of a new lineage from Arakan in the middle of the nineteenth century stands out as a central incident. Narrations about this intra-religious conversion usually take a quite standardized form, placing the monk Sāramedha and a return to a “true” vinaya-based Theravada Buddhism at the center of the story. The narration evokes a certain picture about the state of Buddhism as perceived before the reformation and as envisioned ideally for the future. By looking at this story with respect to the question how this narrative is informed by connections to other movements of reorientation in the

global Buddhist world and colonial encounters at this time, the case study gives less insight into what happened at this moment historically, but elaborates how Bangladeshi Buddhists situate themselves in a web of other narrations.

**Licia di Giaconti:** When Laozi travelled to the West: fictive conversions in medieval Daoist narratives

One of the most famous stories in the medieval Buddhho-Daoist interplay describes the travels of Laozi from China to India and the conversion of the “Barbarians” (huahu). Medieval sources (third to seventh century CE) contain many accounts of or allusions to this narrative. The paper shall briefly summarize the development of the story and discuss the religious history of the Santian neijie jing and the complex religious geography of the Taiqing jinye shendan jing. The main point here is to draw attention to those motifs that are not easily understood within a “nation-state” paradigm (= China versus foreigners).

## The Emergence of Buddhism, Christianity and Islam: Old Problem, New Perspectives

### Panel Chair: Jan N. Bremmer

In recent years important developments have taken place that are transforming, or already have done so, our understanding of the earliest phases of Buddhism, Christianity and Islam. Regarding Buddhism the discoveries of much earlier texts than known so far have given us a series of texts of which the impact may well be compared to that of the Dead Sea Scrolls on the study of Second temple Judaism. In the analysis of especially second-century Christianity recent studies have not only re-dated important witnesses, but also paid much attention to the rise of the notions of “heresy” and “canon”. Finally, in the study of Islam scholars have started to re-evaluate our earliest notices about Muhammad and the Qur’an, as exemplified by the work of Patricia Crone. The aim of this panel is to evaluate these new developments and thus to arrive at new insights in the emergence of these world religions by focusing on the new developments but also on problems like canonization, the transition from oral to written sources as well as the process of religious authority.

**Jan N. Bremmer:** The rise of Christianity: old problems, new perspectives  
In recent years there has been much attention to early Christianity, yet its rise still remains rather enigmatic. In my contribution I intend to concentrate on the second century. In recent years we have witnessed pleas for re-dating important textual witnesses, such as the Letters of Ignatius and the Martyrdom of Polycarp, for re-evaluating the role of Marcion, for paying more attention to the Apocryphal Acts, as well as for critical discussions of notions such as “heresy” and

“canon”. To what extent do these new developments change or confirm the more traditional views of the rise of Christianity?

**Einar Thomassen:** New perspectives on Islamic origins

The emergence of a religion is a matter of theoretical interest in itself. In addition to looking at new sources, my paper will attempt a comparative analysis of the formation processes of Christianity and Islam with the help of such categories as orthodoxy and heresy, the canonization and function of Scripture, and the establishment and nature of religious authority. The similarities and the differences between the two religions in these regards are equally interesting. It should also be possible to make generalizations about successive stages in the formation processes, which in both religions took more than three hundred years to reach an equilibrium.

**Jens-Uwe Hartman:** Monks, money, and manuscripts: reflections on the fast growth of Buddhism in India

The date of the Buddha is still disputed, and no less disputed are the original content of his teaching and the early growth and development of his movement. The complete absence of sources, be they written or archaeological, for at least one or two centuries after the death of the Buddha encourages models which are highly speculative. However, amazing manuscript finds of the last twenty years provide a starting point for a fresh appraisal of that development, and they also shed new light on the important implications of the transition from an oral to a written transmission of the Buddhist lore.

## Emotion as a Dynamic in Religious Practices in Antiquity

**Panel Chair: Esther Eidinow**

Emotion is a vital aspect of religious practice and often the force that establishes or transforms religious traditions. Indeed, interest in emotion spans the natural sciences, social sciences, and the humanities and thus provides an ideal stage for interdisciplinary examinations of human experience. This panel explores emotion as a dynamic in three religious traditions: ancient Greek magic, Second Temple Judaism, and formative Christianity. All three papers will examine the benefits and limitations of applying these theoretical approaches to understanding the cognitive components of emotion to the analysis of ancient religious practices and discourses.

**Esther Eidinow:** Metaphors to maim by

The texts in the corpus of ancient Greek binding spells show that occult aggression in this ancient culture was distinctively phrased: verbs of registering, dedicating, immobilizing, and above all binding are all found in the ritual formulae.

The general intent behind such constructions is relatively clear, and yet, for all the recent work on these spells, the question of how or why these particular terms were employed remains unanswered. In order to explore this aspect, this paper uses conceptual integration theory to examine and offer an explanation for the metaphor of binding in these spells, building on Sørensen's work on cognitive approaches to magic. It suggests that these metaphorical associations help to explain the power apparently attributed to these spells, by refining our understanding of the motivations of those using them, and the expectations of their effects on the victim.

**Angela Kim Harkins:** Emotional communities in the Second Temple period: the pro-social instrumentalization of affect after the exile

The Second Temple period is marked by penitential prayers which were often combined with rituals of mourning. Prose prayers written in the first person with petitionary and confessional elements are said to have been performed by highly esteemed individuals (e.g. Moses, Solomon, Ezra, Judith). I propose that the ritual arousal of emotion from both the phenomenal experiences of performing mourning rites and also from the discursive practice of reciting confession of sins and petitions contributed to, but cannot wholly account for, the emergence of a religious subjectivity that served various pro-social purposes. This strategic arousal of emotion allowed communities, after the rupture of the exile (586 BCE), to establish continuity with the past by recovering a first-hand experience of foundational events. The displays of grief can act as costly displays and credibility-enhancing displays, thus moving a community to deepen their commitment and heighten their receptivity to common goals and covenant renewal.

**Kristyna Kubonova:** Transition, transformation, transmission: Blood libel from the perspective of the Cognitive Science of Religion

Blood libel has been traditionally studied within historical discourses, by using mostly comparative or descriptive methods, which are on the one hand important for elemental understanding of the phenomenon but lack on the other hand possibility of going beyond their own limits. However, Cognitive Science of Religion provides different methods, tools and perspectives which seem to enable a deeper insight into the blood libel phenomenon and open a wider room for scientific discussion. To support this assertion I would like to present a conference paper on Dan Sperber's concept of culturally transmitted misbeliefs and its applicability to the blood libel phenomenon, specifically to the Leopold Hilsner's case (also known as Hilsner Affair or Polna Affair) which took place in Bohemia at the turn of nineteenth/twentieth century and was specific in many ways.

## Emotions, Bodies, Experience

**Catherine Hinault:** From cloistered asceticism to Callisthenics: the emergence of a Protestant health ethic among French Canadians of evangelical obedience in late nineteenth to early twentieth century Quebec

In the heyday of French-speaking Protestantism in Quebec (1880–1920), French Canadian Protestants, together with some of their liberal-minded Catholic – at least nominally – French Canadian “close connections,” used *L’Aurore*, the interdenominational French Protestant weekly, as a soapbox to advance the reformation of French Canadian society, which they viewed as fettered by clerico-nationalism of the ultramontane variety and thus enfeebled, among other ills, by toxic Catholic representations of the body. Using hygienic teachings, an integral part of Anglo-Protestant late nineteenth-century culture, as their main battering ram, they endeavored to push back the walls of this Catholic habitus while carrying out an attitudinal reterritorialization of the body complete with muscular Christianity, prophylaxis, temperance, or homeopathy. As well as being a projecting screen for modernist aspirations fleshed out by a Protestant ethos, the French Protestant body appeared at times geared up to become some sort of “cultural capital,” as envisaged by Bourdieu.

**Emese Berzsenyi:** The representation of the historical development of disability in the major religions

In my dissertation “The representation of the historical development of disability in major religions”, I explore the history of disability from the perspective of a historian of religion. I examine the history of disability in the context of the social sciences and religious studies, and in light of the different cultures and civilizations influenced by the major religions. Disability History has only become a stand-alone discipline in recent years. Even though the topic had been examined in many different ways previously, it was always subjected to the values and interests of other disciplines. This led to the situation that nowadays crucial fragments of research on the topic can be found in almost any discipline, yet little, if any, attempt has been made to collect and unite these fragments into cohesive works. Due to my research being carried out at the University of Vienna I mainly focus on German literature.

**Takako Okinaga:** Bioethics for decision support on end-of-life care

In this presentation, I discuss the outlook of “Advance Care Planning (ACP)” in Japan, with attention to the dilemma of life-prolonging treatment in end-of-life care, which has been questioned by the study of bioethics. ACP is the development and expression of the wishes of a person nearing the end of life, with the goal of discussions with family and friends with whom the person has a relationship, and may involve health care providers and/or lawyers who may prepare

wills and powers of attorney. In ACP, a substitute decision maker is also appointed. This presentation aims to explore the current situation of Advance Directives (AD), Living Will (LW) and decision making in Japan, based on a survey involving questionnaires to 1,000 adults. Based on such a survey, I would like to consider how to support the decision making in end-of-life care in Japan.

## **Empirical Case-Studies of Continuity, Transition, and Discontinuity in the Context of Asceticism**

### **Panel Chair: Anders Klostergaard Petersen**

The panel presents four internally very different empirical case-studies of continuity, transition, and discontinuity in the context of the study of asceticism. Asceticism has traditionally mostly been examined in terms of self-rejection, self-renunciation and self-privation, but based on a more comprehensive notion – in the wake of Peter Sloterdijk – of askésis as programs of training. The four papers aim to develop a broader basis for the scrutinization of asceticism from a cross-cultural perspective. Rather than relegating asceticism to the study of Christian monasticism and some Eastern religious practices, the papers focus on four very different cases that simultaneously reflect forms of asceticism found in different types of religion. Asceticism is examined both in terms of a way of life as well as in the ritual context of self-privation. The shared theoretical frame of reference of the four papers allows for a discussion between the four empirical case-studies.

**Bjarne Wernicke Olesen:** Mapping medieval Śākta tantric traditions: on the conceptual modelling in the study of Hindu “Śāktism” and some characteristic ascetic developments in medieval India

In medieval India, or what Alexis Sanderson has called the “Saiva Age”, from roughly the sixth to the thirteenth century, influential tantric ascetic traditions underwent a development from concerns about the detachment from worldly desires to the detachment from cosmic opposites and a renewed interest in worldly aims. This development pertaining to the concerns of tantric ascetics as well as tantric householders corresponds with a well-known development from dualism to feminine monism. This paper will discuss some of the characteristics of these “Śākta” ascetic developments with an emphasis on cultural evolution and will examine some of the challenges we face with respect to the critical, analytical and tradition-external conceptual modelling of what has become known as Hindu “Śāktism” or the “Śākta tantric traditions”.

**Johanne Louise Virenfeldt Christiansen:** Ascetic practices in the Qur'an: the vigil as a case study

Asceticism is an important concept in the study of religion, but the Qur'an and early Islam have often been ignored in these discussions. The Qur'an does contain positive descriptions of ascetics (Q5:82) and ascetic practices like fasting (Q2:183–187), but a polemical tone is also intoned against those who exaggerate such practices (Q9:31–34; 17:26–27). Does this ambiguity render the concept of asceticism irrelevant with respect to the Qur'an? I suggest that Sloterdijk's definition of *áskesis* as "exercise" may be useful for understanding Qur'anic references to vigils. From a reading of *sūrat l-muzzammil* (Q73:1–9, 20), I argue that Qur'anic articulations of vigils should be considered as articulations of a "training program" intended not only as refrainment from sleep and time but also as a way to maintain the believer's level of training. In this way, the Qur'an may be seen to participate in the broader ascetic tendencies of late antiquity.

**Søren Feldtfos Thomsen:** Protestant monasticism: the ascetic ideal in Danish devotional literature after the Reformation

In this paper I explore the Protestant marital household as a space for the continuation and transformation of Christian monasticism after the Reformation. Tracing the ascetic ideal of medieval monasticism in a number of vernacular devotional titles from sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Denmark, I argue that Protestant devotional authors implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) drew on a monastic ideal of communal life upon which they modeled not only private religious practice but also the marital household as such. Inspired by Weber's concept of "inner-worldly asceticism" and more recent discussions of asceticism by Gavin Flood and Peter Sloterdijk, I demonstrate how Protestant devotional texts served as a medium for the intensified "sacralization" of the domestic sphere and its social relations in early modern lay religious culture. This included not only an appropriation of monastic ritual practice and social hierarchy, but also of the monastic notion of manual labor as a form of asceticism.

**Ella Paldam:** Ascetic practices in contemporary Chumash ceremony: refrainment as a ritual strategy in the revitalization of indigenous beliefs and practices Since the late 1960s, cultural revitalization of indigenous beliefs and practices has occurred among indigenous peoples all over North America. Among the Chumash Indians in southern California, very little coherent information about pre-colonial religion exists, and the community has been Catholic for generations. Nevertheless, religiosity and spirituality has been at the core of cultural revitalization since it began, but due to the lack of sources, it has been a process of "building the ship as it sails along." Ascetic practices such as fasting, sweat-lodging, and other types of refrainment immediately became an integral part of ceremony. In this paper, I explore the origins and gradual change in ascetic prac-

tices among the Chumash. Additionally I pose the question of how the insights from this case may be located within the larger theoretical framework of Sloterdijk's approach to asceticism.

## Empirical Examinations of Asceticism from the Perspective of Cultural Evolution

### Panel Chair: Anders Klostergaard Petersen

In the wake of renewed interest in cultural evolution – associated with Bellah and Eisenstadt – this panel focuses on the phenomenon of asceticism from a cultural evolutionary perspective. Whereas the first two papers are concerned with empirical analyses of asceticism in the religious context of late Second Temple Judaism and formative Islam, the last two papers – in continuity of Sloterdijk – extend the phenomenon to include wider cultural phenomena such as art. All four papers share Sloterdijk's understanding of *áskesis* as programs of training. It is on the basis of such an admittedly more comprehensive concept of asceticism that we are able to include not only various forms of religiously motivated bodily self-renunciation but also, for instance, art. Through the various examples provided we shall examine asceticism in terms of continuity, transformation, and discontinuity. Thereby, the panel covers all four of the central themes of the World Congress.

**Sif Egede:** Asceticism as martyrdom: excessive *askesis* in the context of late Second Temple Judaism

In Bellah's concept of the Axial Age, renunciation from the world constitutes a prevalent feature. The devaluation of the earth and concomitantly worldly goods correlates to a parallel change in religious life style. Although periodic ascetic practices such as fasting are mentioned in the Hebrew Bible, asceticism comes to the fore of the discussion in the first century BCE story of the mother and her seven sons in 2 Maccabees. Convinced of other-worldly life, they exemplify the ultimate ascetic action: martyrdom. Contrary to other contemporaneous ascetic movements, these ascetics are not depicted as merely renouncing their daily lives as a consequence of a philosophical and religious devaluation of the world. They are sacrificing their lives for the sake of the Torah. The narratives about this radical form of self-sacrifice serve to glorify extreme asceticism in late Second Temple Judaism – at least so in the context of 2 and 4 Maccabees.

**Mette Bjerregaard Mortensen:** Asceticism in the early extra-Quranic tradition

Based on Weber's typology of authority (from charismatic to traditional and institutional authority), I consider the phenomenon of asceticism in the context of

formative Islam. The underlying idea is that there is an intrinsic relationship between the emergence of particular forms of genre and specific types of authority. Whereas the Quran is predominantly epitomizing a charismatic type of authority, the subsequent emergence of a vast body of extra-Quranic literature (hadith and sirah) is indicative of the transition towards a traditional form of authority. The more distant Muhammad becomes as founder of the new religious movement, the more important is the need for retaining the traditions of Muhammad in terms of biography (sirah) and as a model to be emulated (hadith). Both elements exhibit the transition to a traditional form of authority and the evolvement of ascetic practices (most explicitly in the hadith literature).

**Anders Klostergaard Petersen:** Asceticism in the transition from religion to art: bridging the gap between asceticism in the context of religion in particular and in the context of culture in general

Traditionally, asceticism is conceived of as a religious phenomenon. In the wake of Peter Sloterdijk, however, one may examine it as a far more prevalent phenomenon disseminated with the emergence of early modernity to wider and semi-autonomous sectors of culture such as education, sports and arts. In order to account for this process of increased diffusion, I shall apply a cultural evolutionary perspective that will allow us to account for the continuity in and of ascetic practices, on the one hand, and the discontinuity in terms of the emergence of secular forms of asceticism, on the other hand. Operating with a macro-perspective that takes us back to the emergence of utopian or axial age forms of religion in antiquity, I shall consider the phenomenon in terms of a continuum at which we for obvious analytical purposes may impose various caesura that, simultaneously, will enable us to account for important transformations.

**Lieke Wijnia:** Transforming art into programs of training: self-staging in contemporary art

The contemporary art scene offers a relevant field to be explored in the framework of asceticism as programs of training (Sloterdijk). This applies not least to the most influential current of performance art. This paper highlights the work of Serbian artist Marina Abramovic (1946). Since her first performance in the early 1970s, Abramovic has tested and explored physical and mental boundaries, her own as well as those of her audiences. While continuously demanding committed involvement, her long-duration works have seen a remarkable transition in character, from physical to mental intensity. In performances like *The Artist is Present* (2010) and *512 Hours* (2014), Abramovic not only creates the conditions for her own self-staging but also for that of the audience members. I explore the dual character of performance art as a contemporary form of asceticism by examining how the performances offer a mode of training for both the artist and the audience.

## “Empty Secrets”, “True Mysteries” and Causes for Concealment: Approaches to Religious Secrecy and the Public

### Panel Chair: Egil Asprem, Christiane Königstedt

Georg Simmel is often invoked as a pioneer of the notion of the “empty secret”: the sociological form and function of secrecy are independent of its content, and can operate even in the absence of actual secrets. But how arbitrary is the relation between content and form really? Focusing on “religious secrecy” and the public, this panel addresses different aspects of the relation between the form, function, and content of secrecy: the reasons and aims of religious groups, who adopt secretive communication and organizational strategies; how these reasons relate to specific contents, to other organizational purposes, and to public perceptions and biases. And further, how these secretive strategies are represented and perceived in the public sphere, creating novel speculations about the secret’s content as well as the intentions behind secretive behavior. Reconceptualizing the relation between form and content may help us better understand the dynamic cultural productivity of secrecy and attempts to unveil it.

**Christiane Königstedt:** The paradox of “exoteric secrecy” and contemporary spirituality

Having developed from counterculture to a broader public phenomenon since the 1970s, the former “New Age” cannot only be regarded as a special form of contemporary religion, but also as a paradoxical case of “exoteric” secrecy. The wide availability of its religio-spiritual contents is accompanied by somewhat shared, but rather unspecified, myths about a profound change of the universe and of human life. Within the milieu, spiritual experiences remain very personal and are not revealed to everyone. Further, constellations of asymmetric knowledge distribution, as in teacher-pupil or “magician”-client relationships, constitute a staple characteristic within the empirical field. This raises several questions concerning “religious secrecy” to be investigated here, above all: what is public in different contexts, what is hidden, and why? Or, in a broader framework: what kind of dynamic relations with other forms of knowledge in society do “secretive areas” indicate, and how important is (within the case under discussion here) the notion of “empty secrets” and accusations thereof as a reaction from critics?

**Egil Asprem:** Travelling secrets: reflections on the epidemiology of secretive representations

The essential lack of transparency regarding both the content of concealed knowledge and the causes for adopting strategies of dissimulation enables intriguing dynamics of cultural creativity and meaning-making. There is ample historical evidence (e.g. in conspiracy theories, discourses on “mystery cults,” “spiritual alchemy,” etc.), that the use of secretive techniques for quite specific,

practical ends can trigger innovative speculations on profound esoteric secrets that were never there, along with novel ideas concerning the rationale for secrecy. We can better understand this dynamic by drawing on the epidemiology of representations pioneered by Dan Sperber. The key theoretical problem of an epidemiology of secrecy is to explain why, how, and in what sense secrets, which on the face of it are about restricting public communication, can become powerful cultural entities that are transmitted through larger populations. This paper explores secrecy as a form of meta-representation that produces “relevant mysteries,” affording salient but divergent inferences in different social and cultural contexts, which account for the cultural and religious productivity of secretive representations.

**Chrystal Vanel:** Secrecy in Mormonism: from separation to speculation

Mormonism is a strongly proselytizing religion, with more than 80,000 young full-time missionaries worldwide, and a sophisticated communications network in both old and new media. But Mormonism is also a secretive religion. While its chapels are wide open to the public and all its members, its temples are only open to the most faithful Mormons. Through secret (“sacred”) rituals, they can hope for deification in the afterlife and be married for “time and eternity.” It is possible that the top Mormon leadership may undergo even more secretive rites. Mormon secrecy solidifies a particular Mormon community, distancing Mormons from others, as they are united by common secrets. But those secrets also generate speculation from journalists, critics, and certain Christian groups. The same can be said of Mormon finances, which typically are not communicated to the faithful, nor the public.

## **The Environmentalist Turn in Religions: Religious Communities in Society, Adaptation and Transformation; Practices and Discourses, Innovation and Tradition**

**Panel Chair: Carrie B. Dohé**

Anthropogenic climate change and overuse of natural resources are the major crises facing humanity today. Given the global scope of these problems, individuals and communities around the world seek to contribute to their solution. This includes religious actors. In this panel, scholars researching Christianity in Denmark and Germany, Buddhism in Germany, Afro-Cuban religious traditions, Islam in Chicago, and Chinese popular religion in Taiwan explore how specific religious communities and institutions are adapting to cultural change wrought by environmental degradation and climate change and investigate the mechanisms and agents of religious innovation. They consider what sources religious

actors draw on to develop their own religiously-specific environmental ethics and practice, and the resistance they face by others who do not support the environmentalist turn in their religion. The scholars examine both religions that have traditionally separated humanity from nature as well as those that do not, and address how these differing understandings impact specific religious communities' attempts to grapple with climate change. They examine transformation processes towards more sustainable structures and behavioral patterns in various normally secular venues and through different means: campaigning in the public sphere; grocery shopping; and transportation. These presentations also discuss how traditional religious ethics are mobilized or modified to formulate and stimulate new religiously-grounded environmental ethics and practices.

**Carrie B. Dohe:** Together for the preservation of nature? The prospects for and challenges of interreligious engagement for nature conservation in Germany In February 2015, the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation and the Abrahamic Forum co-sponsored a dialog forum to initiate an interreligious project for nature conservancy in Germany, combining the two main churches with several new, immigrant-based religions. The goals of the project are four-fold: a collective declaration on religious communities and nature conservation; interreligious teams to conduct educational outreach in schools; an interreligious week to be held in conjunction with the Christian ecumenical Creationtide; and an interreligious network. Despite the initial enthusiasm expressed by the ninety participants, the project faces several challenges, from a lack of funds and personnel to a refusal of some groups to work with representatives of their enemies or persecutors in other countries. Based on ongoing participant observation and conversation with individual actors, this presentation will provide an overview of the four projects and the various prospects for and challenges to this new initiative.

**Lioba Rossbach De Olmos:** Gods and humans in the environment: shared responsibilities in Afro-Cuban religions

The Abrahamic religions' view of the origin of the world centers on the act of creation by an almighty god. Man was the "coronation" of his creation including the mandate to reign over the rest of the material world. The anthropogenic destruction of the world as well as an "environmental turn" in religion can be seen as an outcome of this domination. This is not the case with many polytheistic religions, where the environment is not separate but intermingled with the human sphere and is itself an integral part of religious belief and ritual practice. Deities and humans are both conceived as relevant entities with environmental responsibility. This will be shown and discussed by the example of Afro-Cuban religions. In their world conception humans are less powerful, and the environment and its

spiritual actors are understood as acting on their own authority. This cosmological conception also allows sustainable conduct.

**Jens Köhrsen:** Religious involvement in environmental action: an empirical case study

The presentation addresses the religious involvement in sustainable transitions, i. e., transformation processes towards more sustainable and eco-friendly socio-technological structures and behavioral patterns. Based on academic debates about religion and sustainability, three main ways in which religion can contribute to sustainable transitions are identified: (1) campaigning and intermediation in the public sphere; (2) “materialization” of transitions in the form of participation in projects related to sustainability transitions; and (3) dissemination of values that empower environmental attitudes and actions. The three potential dimensions of religious involvement are studied for the empirical case of the energy transition in Emden, a northern German city. The empirical case-study is based on a completed research project which was conducted in 2012/13. It shows how and to which extent the Lutheran, the Reformed, and the Catholic Church contribute to the local transition process.

**Jacob F. Tischer:** Environmentalism in Taiwanese popular religion

Growing consciousness about environmental issues in Taiwanese society has directly reflected on popular religious institutions, which are usually run by lay people and are both value-traditional and technologically innovation-friendly. I aim to explore the relationship of power and interests behind their adoption of environmental-friendly practices (or the failure thereof) with reference to three case studies: One revolves around a temple that has sealed its incense burner (the temple’s spiritual centre) and encourages its visitors to “pray with their hearts instead of burning incense”. This has met with criticism from community members whose livelihood depends on selling sacrificial items such as incense and paper money. Another is the case of a female deity which since 1987 has been protesting the construction of a nuclear power plant in the vicinity of her temple – successfully so far. Thirdly, I will look at the promotion of pilgrimages on bicycle by some popular temples.

**Sigurd Bergmann:** Response

## Equilibrium – Violence – Entanglement: Interaction between Minority and Majority Religious Communities in the Middle Ages

### Panel Chair: Dorothea Weltecke

Religious affiliation and identity has to be repeatedly negotiated, defined, and chosen. The external borders of religions are repeatedly re-determined and penetrated. Frequently, quantitative relationships between religious groups are incongruent with prevailing power relationships. Followers of dominant religions continue to quite often be numerically inferior so that non-dominant religious communities have had to take on subordinate positions. This process has direct consequences for, on the one hand, social, economic, and cultural developments and, on the other hand, the development of religious doctrines and convictions themselves. Not rarely, and across a broad societal spectrum, religious minorities have seen themselves subjected to persecution, violence, or exclusion. Models explaining religious violence need theoretical and methodological refinement. This panel will deal with these aspects of interaction between majority and minority religious communities by selecting case studies from diverse cultural milieus ranging from medieval Anatolia to South Asia.

### Dorothea Weltecke: On religious violence in the late Middle Ages

Religious violence is very present in today's public debates. In the humanities, violence has been studied intensively, but in different disciplines. In religious studies, meta theories on religion and violence were developed which clearly assume religions as a cause of violence. On the contrary, in sociological and political studies on violence religion is only rarely mentioned, and its function as a cause of violence is by no means given. Thirdly, historians studied individual traditions of violence and individual acts, identified agents, strategies and ideologies, but did not usually refer to sociological theories of violence. Surprisingly, therefore, there is no history of religious violence proper. Could there be and what could be a genuine historical contribution to the debate on religious violence? As a first attempt to answer this question three emblematic aspects of late medieval religious violence (the crusades, the inquisition, the persecution of Jews in the German lands) shall be discussed in the light of the theories.

**Pekka Tolonen:** Conceptualizing differences in religions and faiths in the High Middle Ages

In the High Middle Ages, by and after the so called Gregorian Reform, the boundaries of Christianity and orthodoxy became acute again (after late antiquity). With the lack of a word for the modern "religion" the boundaries of orthodoxy were discerned otherwise. Outside of Christianity were the "pagans" and "idolaters". Christianity itself was divided into orthodoxy and heresy. Jews and Mus-

lms found their place within a Christian historical framework being not quite heretical Christians but neither fully pagan (Nongbri 2013). The growing awareness of “us” and “them” within Western Christianity has been observed to be connected to the formation of the persecuting society, where different kinds of minorities were excluded more strongly (Moore 1987). It should also be noted that use of the terms “pagans”, “idolaters” and “heretics” was highly polemical and political during the Middle Ages (Janson 2003; Patschovsky 2003), clearly demonstrating how religion extended to other areas of human culture (e.g. social, economical, political) in a different way than it does today. In this larger context of sharpening the boundary of “us” and “them” I will concentrate on intra-religious discussions. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries there was growing interest in the different orders of the church and comparison between them (Bynum 1984). Texts like the anonymous twelfth century *Libellus de diversis Ordinibus et Professionibus qui sunt in Aecclesia* (Constable and Smith 1972) and James of Vitry’s thirteenth century *Historia Occidentalis* (Hinnebusch 1972) are good examples of this. How do they compare the different vocations and lifestyles? In my paper I will juxtapose these learned texts with the experience of the unlearned. The earliest sources of the Inquisition in Languedoc include a list of more than 600 people who had had dealings with heretics (Cathars and Waldensians) during the early thirteenth century (Duvernoy 2001). The sources depict a time when competing groups were debating with each other. Most of the people interrogated had contacts with only one group while there were also men and women who would have had contacts with both of them. How did people see the different groups and the Roman church which condemned the others? The view of the Inquisition is also present in the source. Posing questions to the people shows the underlying understanding of “religion” and religious movements. All of these sources shed an interesting light on “medieval religious sociology”.

**Stamatia Noutsou:** The sociotheological turn and the study of religious violence in the Middle Ages and a case study: The Cistercian epistemic worldview and the violence against the heretics

Having as a point of departure Ames’ argument, that “In various ways, religious convictions could build foundations for repression in particular circumstances, and violence could play diverse roles within an economy of belief” (2005), the aim of this paper is to examine the interlink between the Cistercian epistemic worldview and the violent persecution of heretics, by focusing on the anti-heretical writings of the Cistercian monks in the second half of the twelfth century. Following the socio-theological approach, which studies “a group’s internal epistemic worldview” and the external world, where the group operates (Juergensmeyer and Sheikh 2013), I will analyze how the the internal Cistercian religious

beliefs in relation to the external social structures led to the violent persecution of heretics.

**Tomas Bubik:** Church reformer John Hus as a model for the re-interpretation of religious, national, and social identity

The figure of the medieval reformer John Hus, burnt at the stake in 1415 at the council of Constance, has been reinterpreted throughout Czech history. On the one hand, the Catholic Church considered him a heretic rebelling against the authority of the Church, undermining its doctrinal positions and respect towards the Church. On the other hand, Czech Reformation regarded Hus as a role model of religious life, willing to sacrifice his life for higher ideals. Nationalists have tried to use Hus as a symbol of anti-German resistance, and of national character (genuine Czech-ness). Further, some Marxist-Leninists saw Hus as a significant social reformer who stood up against the feudal type of social order and who represented social critique of his society. All these interpretations illustrate the fact that a religious leader can gain many faces during history, all construed depending on the social needs and prevailing ideology.

**Alexandra Cuffel:** Response

## Esoteric Catholicism

### Panel Chair: Helmut Zander

The contacts between the Catholic Church and esoteric thinking have not yet been studied in depth. In this panel, we discuss these interactions in order to explore the innovation potential of non-hegemonic groups and practices for people and groups rooted in their inherited Catholic tradition: we examine how “esoteric” – meaning mesmerist, spiritualistic or anthroposophic – beliefs and practices shaped and transformed some segments of Catholicism. Given that these developments are reciprocal, we also focus on the influence of a Catholic background on esotericism. We suggest analyzing these processes in the Catholic Church with a model of internal differentiation, as opposed to the often-used model of external segmentation.

**Maren Sziede:** Catholic mesmerists in Germany

This paper aims to explore the invention of a particular form of Catholic piety informed by mesmerism as being a major medical-religious current in the early nineteenth century. It suggests that Catholicism at the time was much more heterogeneous than usually accepted and examines a field of Catholic piety and theory building often neglected in Catholic historiography. There is a strand of German scholars that “Catholicized” mesmerist beliefs and practices. I will examine these developments, which started in the early 1820s and were lo-

cated in two regional centres, Bonn and Munich, along with their protagonists K.J.H. Windischmann, J. Ennemoser and J. Görres. One main feature of these interpretations that mingled mesmerism and Catholic beliefs is the reference to mystical phenomena (stigmatizations and visions). I will argue that one cannot understand this so-called “ultramontane piety” without taking into consideration its mesmerist roots and the Catholic-mesmerist hybridizations.

**Marco Pasi:** Western esotericism, alternative spirituality and Roman Catholicism in modern Italy

Little research has been done about the way in which the religious background of a particular country has influenced the development of modern Western esotericism. Did modern Western esotericism develop in different ways in Roman Catholic countries with respect to Protestant countries? This paper will focus on the Italian case (less studied than, for example, its French counterpart) and more specifically on the way in which the arrival of new forms of esotericism and alternative spirituality in Italy in the second half of the nineteenth century interacted with the traditional religious predominance of Roman Catholicism in the country. The analysis will particularly focus on Giuseppe Mazzini’s (1805–1872) religious thought, and on the cultural and political legacy he left behind after his death. The analysis will also focus on the response of the Church, which extended to the phenomenon of Catholic modernism at the turn of the twentieth century.

**Helmut Zander:** Robert Spaemann: esoteric dimensions of a Catholic philosopher

This contribution aims at analyzing an esoteric network within the Catholic Church. As an example will serve Robert Spaemann (\*1927), a well-renowned philosopher in Germany and former holder of the Chair of Philosophy at the University of Munich. Though, on the one hand, an “orthodox” Catholic – he was engaged, for example, in the question of abortion and animal ethics – Spaemann was also, unbeknownst to many, wrapped up in an anthroposophical milieu and formed part of an esoteric Catholic network (including, *inter alia*, the theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar and the jurist Martin Kriele), in which he defended reincarnation and the meditative use of tarot cards as a means of access to secret knowledge. This paper will discuss Spaemann’s techniques of integrating these “esoteric” positions into an “orthodox” view as part of an internal Catholic differentiation. This case will enable us to discuss processes of pluralization without external segmentation.

## Esotericism

**Johanneke Kroesbergen-Kamps:** Hidden meanings: the occult in studies on society and religion in Africa

Since the 1990s, there has been a marked increase in scholarly articles and books about religion and society in Africa discussing the so-called “occult”. This popularity is somewhat surprising, since the concept “occult” is by no means uncontested within religious studies. In a critical review, Ter Haar & Ellis (2009) propose to abolish the term altogether. Hanegraaff (2005, 2012) discusses the history and use of the concept, and retains it as a technical term, specifically applied to certain nineteenth century trends in western Esotericism. This approach suggests that the term may be redeemed if it has a clear subject matter and can be used in a non-pejorative way, at least on an etic level. In this paper the use of the concept occult in African studies is analyzed for its subject matter and connotations to see whether the concept can be retained in this field of study.

**Marco Toti:** The “Prayer of the Heart” in Western Christianity: history and meaning

During the second half of the seventeenth century a specific spiritual practice emerges in the Catholic milieu: the so-called “oraison cordiale”. This contemplative “method”, that shows historical relationships with the devotion to the Sacred Heart too, is connected with the well-known Mary of the Incarnation, St Francis of Sales, J.P. de Caussade and St Ignatius Loyola, and is mainly represented by figures like A. Berger, J. Aumont and M. Le Gall. The aim of this paper is to try to locate some possible filiations among the latter figures and to discuss the question of an “esoteric Christianity”, taking the definition of “esotericism” by W. Hanegraaff as a starting-point; a comparison with the Eastern Orthodox “prayer of the heart” will also be provided.

**Pavel Nosachev:** Concept of “esoteric tradition” in Soviet and post-Soviet Religious Studies in the 1970–90s

In his latest monograph W. Hanegraaff assumed that research in the field of Western Esotericism has been governed by mnemohistoric constructs, and due to that scholars studied not the factual data but their own ideas of phenomena, enclosing historical data within those perceptions. In my paper I would like to display the results of my research on applying the theory of the invented tradition and the mnemohistorical constructs to Soviet and post-Soviet Religious Studies of the 1970–90s which approached the sphere of Western Esotericism. Since the ‘70s, due to a non-critical embrace of emic views of the Western Esotericism adherents, the concept of “esoteric tradition” has developed among Russian-speaking religious scholars, becoming the reputable benchmark in the research of Western Esotericism first in Soviet, and later in Russian Religious

Studies. This concept became widely popular after the breakup of the Soviet Union and resulted at its full extent in so-called “confessional Religious Studies”.

**Ullrich Kleinhempel:** The socio-cultural migration of Umbanda: challenges for interpretation

The recent major change in membership of Umbanda, from an Afro-Brazilian basis to a chiefly white middle class one, including its reception in German-speaking countries, requires a critical review of “functionalistic” interpretations of Umbanda as a phenomenon of cultural resistance and of symbolic cure for marginalized non-whites. It demands an interpretation in the context of current studies on trance and spirit possession as expressive of the quest for a wider concept of the “self” and “higher self”, which includes non-rational agencies beyond the subjective autonomous “ego”, including the body as medium. This transformative reception of Umbanda follows and unfolds a major theme of culture since Romanticism and depth psychology in the field of religion and esotericism. Hereby Umbanda’s African and Indian elements, doctrines and practices attain new symbolic meanings, as may be shown. The author has a background of long familiarity with Umbanda as participant observer in Europe.

## Ethnography of Contemporary Shi’ism

### Panel Chair: David Thurffjell

The last decade bore witness to massive changes within many Shi’ite Muslim societies. In Iran, the Khomeinist system is challenged in hitherto unseen ways and critique of the dominating ideology is articulated also within the Islamist establishment. In Iraq, the political influence of the country’s Shi’ite majority has drastically increased. In Lebanon, Hezbollah’s involvement in the country’s politics has changed as the organization became a member of the country’s government for the first time in 2011. The uprisings in many Arab countries and increasing sectarian tensions with Sunni-Muslim communities, furthermore, have also had great impact on the life of Shi’ites both in their traditional heartlands and in the West. Based on ethnographic research, this panel focuses on how Shi’ite Muslims on a grass-roots level negotiate, interpret and practice their religious tradition in these new religious, cultural and political environments.

**Oliver Scharbrodt:** Remembering “Ashura” in London: the embodiment and material culture of Shii rituals in the diaspora

The events around the murder of the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad Husayn in Karbala (680 CE) and their annual remembrance during “Ashura” have been crucial in forming and maintaining Shii sectarian identity. During

the period of “Ashura”, the first ten days of the Islamic month of Muharram, Shiis perform a number of rituals to remember, mourn and recreate the events of Karbala. Aspects of the mythico-historical narrative are re-created and the soteriological role of Imam Husayn’s martyrdom is articulated in a number of rituals. These distinct Shii rituals are also the result of various cultural influences, more consciously expressed in a diasporic context. This paper investigates how Shii historical narratives and poignant elements of Shii doctrine are embodied and translated into material culture in Shii rituals performed among male diasporic Iraqi Shii communities in London.

**Ingvild Flakerud:** Ashura processions as peace demonstrations

Sociological studies have demonstrated that public rituals are important for creating and maintaining identity within a religious community. The annual Ashura processions performed in many Shia Muslim communities around the world serve such purposes. Drawing on ritual practices developed since the 1500s, the localized performance of a procession is often shaped as a response to current local and international socio-political issues. In the present paper I examine five successive annual performances of Ashura processions in Oslo, to discuss how and why the commemorative ritual in this particular social setting is gradually being turned into statements on the issues of peace and terror, while simultaneously serving as an arena for carving out a space of belonging also outside the religious community, in the public space.

**Chris Heinhold:** The use of political context to legitimize sectarianism discourse among Shia communities in the UK

The sectarian division between Shia and Sunni Islam is an issue of global geopolitical importance. Daesh (IS) is spreading rapidly across Syria and Iraq, into post-“Arab spring” states, and online. Shia organizations have seized this opportunity to portray themselves as natural allies of the West. This paper will examine how the current political context allows for overt sectarian sentiment to be expressed in highly public spaces. In portraying themselves as sharing a common enemy with the West, Shia groups may feel justified in making highly sectarian claims against their Sunni counterparts. I argue that some Shia communities in Britain have seized upon the current crisis in the Middle East in order to convey their own, self-styled, position as the moderate face of Islam in the West. In doing so they are portraying Sunni Muslims as inherently violent; while occupying for themselves a dual position of victim and ally to the West.

**Yafa Shanneik:** Remembering the “women of Karbala” past and present: Shia women in London

Twelver Shia remember the events of Karbala when the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad, Husayn, and almost his entire family were murdered in Southern Iraq in 680 CE. This master-narrative (Wertsch 2002) of the “Karbala paradigm”

(Fischer 1980) is in turn de-constructed into several sub-narratives in which subjective understandings of historical events are connected to personal individual life circumstances producing various understandings and representations of historical events. This paper examines one of these sub-narratives and focuses on remembering the “women of Karbala” as articulated through the majalis al qiraya rituals among various Shia women communities in London. A particular emphasis is placed on the geo-political context of the development of this memory in the Middle East and Europe expressed in traditional and modern Shia lamentation poetry.

**David Thurffell:** The Heyyati-movement and charismatic Shi’ism in contemporary Iran

The heyhati-movement is a folk-religious movement in Iran circling around the practice of chest beating and ritual mourning of the martyred household of the Prophet. During the last decade, since the presidential period of Mohammad Khatami, the structure of this movement has changed. The heyhati-groups were mobilized in the campaign that led to the victory of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in the presidential elections of 2005 and since then what may be described as a new type of heyhati-culture has flourished in certain layers of Iranian society and it has frequently been a matter of controversy. Today, the movement can be described as a charismatic alternative to the religious authority of the clerical establishment. Based on interviews and ethnographic observations this paper describes and analyzes one heyhati-community in Qom.

**Sufyan Abid:** Recreating Karbala in London: contested expressions of commemorating Ashura among Twelver Shi’i Muslims of South Asian background This paper explains the contested nature of expressions and commemorations of Ashura among Shi’i Muslims of South Asian background living in London. The researcher explores how Shi’i Muslims in London are uniquely asserting their way of commemorating Ashura in the public sphere as “authentic and with the true spirit of Shi’i Islam”. The paper also presents the ethnographic accounts of the complex and often contested nature of the relationship between the expressions and practices of Shi’i Muslims from South Asian background with Shi’i centres of religious authority affiliated with Iran and Iraq. Shi’i Muslims of South Asian background constitute a numerical majority among Shi’i in Britain but lack representation in Shi’i leadership. The paper argues that Shi’i Muslims from South Asian background are not the passive recipients of reformist versions of commemorating Ashura as presented by individuals trained in Iran and Iraq, but they keep their version of practicing Ashura intact by contesting and often rejecting the reformist Shi’i trends.

## Evangelical and Charismatic Transformations: Tradition and Innovation in Contemporary Evangelical Christianity

### Panel Chair: Martin Radermacher

Considering revivalism, processes of institutionalization of churches and revitalization of traditions, Evangelical and Charismatic Christianity have been the prototype of both innovation and tradition from the start. This apparent paradox and interdependency will be in the center of this panel: How is it possible for movements and communities to flesh out an identity, encourage innovative methods, and still feel ingrained in religious tradition? What normative role do texts and re-adaptations of texts play? How does the body become a means of religious innovation and regulation? Evangelicals navigate between engagement and distancing – what Lynne Gerber (2012) calls (following Smith) the “evangelical dance of engagement and distinction”. This condition fosters cultural adaptations that include, e.g. media and new technologies which transform what they transport (Birgit Meyer 2010) and thus entail innovation. The panel welcomes papers on evangelical and charismatic practices and discourses from different regions in the world in a contemporary perspective addressing these questions.

**Justin Michael Doran:** American Pentecostals: charismatic innovations from Canada to Brazil

This paper follows a network of Pentecostal preachers and church planters from Toronto, to Rio de Janeiro, to Houston, Texas. Since the 1950s, these closely networked evangelists produced and disseminated one of the fastest growing segments of global evangelicalism and are significantly responsible for the transformation of Latin American Christianity. The paper begins with the arrival of Canadian missionary Robert McAlister to Rio de Janeiro and his adaptation of Canadian Pentecostalism to Brazil. It then follows McAlister’s conversion of Edir Macedo, who has become Brazil’s wealthiest and most influential pastor. It concludes with the arrival of Macedo’s son-in-law, Renato Cardoso, at a church in Houston – down the road from Lakewood Church, the United States’ largest congregation. Alternatively referred to as neo-Pentecostal, neo-Charismatic, or the “prosperity gospel,” this paper argues that these movements are better understood as local, institutional adaptations of an affective religious experience that is shared across global evangelicalism.

**Martin Radermacher:** Transformation of/through the body: the case of devotional fitness

When in the 1950s and 60s evangelicals began to develop and distribute biblically based fitness and diet plans, they promoted an innovative re-adaption of biblical texts, nonetheless reassuring their followers that what they did was

deeply rooted in the Christian tradition. In constant negotiation with wider societal trends of body perfection and “healthism,” these programs turned out to be among the most successful versions of evangelical life, luring believers and non-believers with the promise of good health, beauty, and – last but not least – eternal salvation. The paper addresses devotional fitness as a field of religious innovation and carves out mechanisms of transformation under the conditions of biblicism and traditionalism.

**Orivaldo Lopes Jr.:** Northeast Brazil: the last stronghold against Protestantism

During the twentieth century, Northeast represented the minus protestant region of Brazil. The monopoly of Catholicism in this region was prominent, and it represented an efficient barrier against the evangelical missionary entrepreneur. It composed the canvas that characterized the Northeast as an archaic, underdeveloped and traditional region. Nevertheless, evangelicals had greater success in Brazil and in Northeast in particular, not with the traditional Protestantism, but with its Pentecostal version. It was linked not to an anti-modern or modern tension, but to the breaking of a religious monopoly.

**Elisabeth Mareels:** Videira, a “new” way of being a cell church in Brazil  
In the Pentecostal field, it is generally assumed that South-Korean pastor Paul Yonggi Cho is the father of cell churches. This form of organizing church life – all church members must be part of a small group (cell) which meets once a week at home – aims to enhance church growth and to cope with the anonymity of megachurches. It is considered as a sign of the second coming of Christ, which gives it a specific place in Christian historiography. Nowadays, thousands of Pentecostal (and other Christian) churches all over the world have adopted this model. In Brazil, the cell church model entered in the 1990s, mainly from Colombia and the USA, creating a lot of criticism. Videira, founded in 1999 in Goiânia (Goiás), started from scratch “reinventing” the cell church into a model which links a historical conscience and Millenarianism to social control and recognition, distancing itself from other models by a “visible discretion”.

**Minna Opas:** Turning one’s back and turning back: negotiations of belonging among indigenous Amazonian Evangelicals

For the indigenous Amazonian Yine people, to be a Christian is by no means a static state of being. The Yine may simultaneously claim to be both Catholic and Evangelical and deny one of these denominations as false. They may participate in the weekly Evangelical meetings for months, only to suddenly stop practicing the religion, and then pick it up as quickly as they first dropped it. This paper examines the processes of belonging and being Christian among the Peruvian Yine people: how do they sustain several contradictory Christian affiliations at the same time, and what are the factors causing them to move back and forth

in regard to their religion/faith? With the help of the notion of the “inconstancy of the Indian soul” (Viveiros de Castro 2011) and the scholarship on the politics of belonging (e.g. Yuval-Davis 2012), the paper will focus in particular on the questions of intentionality and socio-technological change in the Yine practice of Christianity.

## The Evolution of Religion and Morality Project

### Panel Chair: Benjamin Purzycki

Evidence continues to mount to suggest that religion contributes to the persistence and evolution of cooperation and coordination. The international Cultural Evolution of Religion Research Consortium (CERC) based at the Centre for Human Evolution, Cognition, and Culture at the University of British Columbia executed a cross-cultural study in eight diverse societies around the world. Using a synthetic regime of ethnographic methods and an experimental economic game to detect cheating behavior, we tested whether or not certain kinds of gods (1) curb antisocial behavior towards other people, and (2) whether or not this effect extends to people beyond one’s immediate community. This panel consists of some of the highlights from specific sites, and presents overall results from our eight field sites.

**Benjamin Purzycki:** High gods and the expansion of sociality: the random allocation game in eight societies

Understanding the expansion of human sociality and cooperation beyond kin and allies remains a pressing problem. Religion contributes to this problem in a variety of ways including ritual, and commitment to omniscient, punitive gods. Building on this, recent hypotheses predict that this effect fosters the expansion of sociality beyond the local community and thus contributes to the development of highly complex social organizations. Using an experimental economic game designed to detect cheating, we tested whether or not individual models of moralistic, punishing, and omniscient gods (High Gods) curb cheating behavior better than Local Gods. Among a sample of participants from eight diverse societies – Fijians, the Hadza of Tanzania, Indo-Fijians, Mauritians, Tyvans of southern Siberia, Inland and Coastal Vanuatians, and Brazilians from Pesqueiro – we present cross-cultural evidence that the closer individuals approximate their gods to High Gods, the less likely people are to cheat in favor of themselves and their community.

**Rita McNamara:** Local favoritism modulated by Big and Little Gods in Fiji  
Conducted among villagers in Yasawa, Fiji, this study is an experimental replication of the correlational results of McNamara, Norenzayan, and Henrich

(2014). In Yasawa, supernatural punishment beliefs about the Christian God (“Bible God”) vs. deified ancestors (Kalou-vu) promote different expectations about distant, anonymous strangers. We compare random allocation game offers to strangers across primes evoking Christian, traditional, or neutral beliefs. Though the Christian prime did not produce offers that were significantly different from neutral, the traditional prime did promote significantly higher offers to local recipients over distant, anonymous recipients. This effect seemed to be particularly strong for men. These results help corroborate the effect of local ancestor spirits promoting local in-group favoritism indicated in previous studies. Further, these results further suggest that beliefs about different kinds of deities might promote prosociality towards some recipients at the expense of others.

**Quentin Atkinson:** Religiosity and expanding the cooperative sphere in Kastom and Christian villages on Tanna, Vanuatu

The island of Tanna is a kaleidoscope of religious variation. Waves of Christian missionary influence interact with traditional Kastom beliefs, as well as more recent “cargo cults” (themselves a mix of Kastom, Christian and nationalist ideas). This affords a unique opportunity to compare the psychological effects of a recently expanded world religion (Christianity), and indigenous religious beliefs and practices in a common cultural setting. Here, we compare results from survey data together with a Random Allocation Game and Dictator Game conducted across two sites on Tanna – a coastal Christian village and a cluster of three inland, Kastom hamlets. We investigate whether religious beliefs and practices at each location predict prosocial game behavior and the extent to which participants’ prosociality extends to those who share or do not share the same religion. We discuss the implications of our findings for theories of the cultural evolution of religion.

**Aiyana K. Willard:** Religion’s effect on in-group and out-group preferences in Fiji

Fiji’s ethnic and religious diversity makes it possible to test religious prosocial behavior within and between the three major religious groups (Hindus, Muslims, and Christians) and two major ethnic groups (Fijians and Indo-Fijians). This paper presents two versions of the random allocation game conducted in Lovu, Fiji. The first game used a prime condition (a shrine), but only female Hindu participants cheated less in the prime condition. However, in the second game without a prime, the religious and ethnic group differences of players had a far greater effect. In this game, Christian Fijian and Christian Indo-Fijians divided money between religious and ethnic in-groups and out-groups. I found that Indo-Fijian Christians readily cheated against same-ethnic Hindus and Muslims, but not other-ethnic Christians. This provides evidence that religious in-group preferences are stronger than ethnic in-group preferences.

## Examining the Religious-Secular Divide: Some Case Studies

**Douglas Pratt:** Secularism and the rise of anti-religion in Western societies: from antipodean “Godzone” to secularized “God-free” zone?

Secularization, as both an idea and a process, refers to a social contract enabling people of different religious identities and belief systems, or none, to co-exist peacefully. Whilst the specifics of Church-State relations vary across western secular nations, they arguably have one thing in common, namely that secularization, the initial context of allowability for religion within the public sphere, has yielded increasingly to secularism as an ideology of obviating religion from the public sphere. The notion and discourse of “being secular” has arguably shifted from a climate of acceptability of religion per se, together with tolerance of religious diversity, to that of being effectively synonymous with “non-religion”, even “irreligion”. Findings from a study of secularism in New Zealand, a western society that in 2013 recorded Christian allegiance of under 50%, raise issues and questions pertinent for considering the place of religion within western secular societies today. Is secularism obviating religious tolerance?

**Whitney Bauman:** Secular and religious dogmatism: globalization, climate change and the space for pluralism

As many scholars have pointed out, western secularism is itself a very faith-filled and religiously located concept. It forces other understandings of secularism (and along with it other religions) to adhere to the public reason/private faith distinction, which doesn’t work in many societies, all the while projecting such a distinction as reasonable, enlightened, or somehow progressive. This paper argues that two very important bio-historical factors are beginning to shed light on the faith-filled and culturally located concept of western secularity: globalization and climate change. The contemporary processes of globalization and climate change are forcing the hidden faith of secularism out of its foxhole. This happens in at least three ways: through the undoing of mastery, through the hybridity of meaning-making practices, and following these two through the undoing of the narrative of chronological progress.

**Jonathan D Smith:** Religious-secular partnerships for social change: the case of the Jubilee Debt Campaign UK

Amidst debate over religious-secular divides in Europe, instances of cooperation between religious communities and secular activists in global justice campaigns are often overlooked. Interfaith solidarity, defined as multi-religious and religious-secular coalitions unified around common goals, builds on social capital theory and Habermas’ concept of religion and the public sphere. In partnerships with a diverse range of civil society actors, religious groups provide mobilizing power and grassroots legitimacy to campaigns, and secular partners provide ac-

tivist expertise and political acumen. These striking coalitions gain attention from global powers precisely because they cut across expected political divides. This concept is exemplified by the Jubilee Debt Campaign in the UK. Based on a biblical concept of debt forgiveness, religious groups formed coalitions with secular activists and musicians which challenged the neoliberal consensus and gained notable political concessions. The paper details how partnerships were formed and how religious language was adapted for a political and technocratic audience.

**Anna-Konstanze Schröder:** Religion at sea: mapping the maritime field of research

History of Religion is a history of religions on terra firma. There can hardly be found any systematic theorizing or empirical research of maritime cultures by scholars of religion. In the fields of anthropology and maritime history, there are some case studies about sea-related cultures and their religion, especially for the Pacific and the Indian Ocean regions, about some aspects like gods (e.g. Matsu or Poseidon) and also about the material culture like seafarer churches in Europe. These data are lacking research questions from the Study of Religion like: How did the maritime trade interact with the expansion of Muslim, Buddhist or Christian religions? Which interreligious dynamics can be described for the international sailing crews? Which religion(s) were created among the seafarers on their vessels at different times and spaces? This presentation will give a raw structure to start a systematic research of religion at sea.

## **Experiencing Kṛṣṇa: Theophilosophical, Phenomenological, and Cognitive Dimensions of Religious Experience in the Caitanya Vaiṣṇava Tradition**

**Panel Chair: Kiyokazu Okita**

In Hindu traditions the role of religious experience is of central concern in epistemological debates about the *pramāṇas*, means of valid knowledge, and more specifically about the relative importance ascribed to *pratyakṣa* (perception), knowledge derived from the senses, and *śabda* (verbal testimony), knowledge derived from *śruti*, the Vedic scriptures. The authority of *śruti* is linked to the experiences of the *ṛṣis*, “seers,” who are held to have cognized the transcendent structures of reality and recorded their cognitions in the form of the Vedic scriptures. This panel will focus on the role of religious experience as a *pramāṇa* in the Caitanya Vaiṣṇava tradition, a Hindu devotional tradition that originated in sixteenth-century India and flourishes today throughout the world. Using scriptural, historical, and ethnographic data, the panelists will analyze from theophi-

losophical, phenomenological, and cognitive perspectives various practices that are aimed at attaining direct experience of the object of devotion, the deity Kṛṣṇa.

**Barbara Holdrege:** Replicating the experiences of the sages: Caitanya Vaiṣṇava technologies of meditation

Jīva Gosvāmin, one of the principal architects of the Caitanya Vaiṣṇava theological edifice, invokes the authority of the sage Vyāsa and other great ṛṣis (seers) who, while immersed in samādhi in the depths of meditation, attained a direct cognition of the deity Kṛṣṇa in his transcendent abode and recorded their cognitions in the scriptures. He declares the direct experiences of the sages (vidvadanubhava) to be the “crest-jewel of all pramāṇas” in that the records of their experiences preserved in the scriptures are authoritative testimonies of valid knowledge (pramāṇa) for future generations. He claims, moreover, that these experiences are not the exclusive prerogative of the sages of the past but can be experienced “even today” by advanced practitioners who incorporate meditation into their devotional regimen. This paper will examine the unique repertoire of meditative practices developed by Jīva to replicate the experiences of the sages and attain direct realization of Kṛṣṇa.

**Aleksandar Uskokov:** Scriptural perception and religious experience in the Caitanya Vaiṣṇava tradition

The two main branches of Vedic hermeneutics, Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta, understand śabda, revealed scriptural knowledge, to be a form of immediate apprehension. Such apprehension is viewed as similar to pratyakṣa, perceptual apprehension by means of the senses, insofar as it is immediate, but it differs from ordinary perception in that the objects of apprehension are beyond the range of the senses. In this paper I will examine how Jīva Gosvāmin, a leading theologian of the Caitanya Vaiṣṇava tradition, draws on these subtle exegetical understandings of perceptual and scriptural knowledge to develop an original account of what we might call “scriptural perception.” Applying the basic features of perception to scripture, he claims that these features are operative in the ways in which scripture presents knowledge of God. This paper will use these ideas, developed in the context of scriptural interpretation, to explore aspects of religious experience in the Caitanya Vaiṣṇava tradition.

**Hrvoje Čargonja:** Aesthetics of emotional expansion in Caitanya Vaiṣṇava religious experiences

The Caitanya Vaiṣṇava tradition emphasizes emotional expansion as a central feature of religious experience. Drawing on the ancient Indian theory of drama and poetics known as rasa theory, this tradition approaches aesthetic experience primarily through the optics of emotional aesthetics. In this way the tradition foregrounds an often neglected feature of the dynamics of emotions, sen-

sations, and feelings: their time-extended, periodic, and expansive nature. Employing the anthropological perspective of cultural phenomenology, I will use my fieldwork on the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, a modern branch of Caitanya Vaiṣṇavism, to show how the “embodied aesthetics” of emotional expansion evidenced in the practitioners’ narratives of religious experience can be described through aesthetic values of control, intimacy, and play. In this perspective the flow of emotional embodiment that engenders these three aesthetic values serves as a positive feedback loop that gradually increases the overall coherence and emotional intensity of the religious experience.

**Travis Chilcott:** Experiencing deities: the cognitive dynamics of perceiving Kṛṣṇa

Early Gauḍīya theologians make numerous claims that advanced practitioners have private experiences of perceiving Kṛṣṇa, but questions arise as to whether these claims are based on actual experiences that they or others had, exegetical ruminations developed on the basis of inherited teachings, or some combination thereof. In light of these questions, this paper investigates whether or not occurrences of private experiences of perceiving Kṛṣṇa can be plausibly understood within the framework of methodological naturalism. If they can, this offers support for the hypothesis that these theologians’ claims are based, at least in part, on experiences that they or others had. If they cannot, it suggests they may be better understood as the result of exegetical ruminations. This investigation combines humanistic and scientific approaches for the study of historical claims to facilitate a richer interpretation and explanation of such claims than what is possible through traditional humanistic approaches alone.

## “Experimental Religion”: New Paradigms and Revolutionary Patterns in Japan and North America

**Panel Chair: Elisabetta Porcu**

This panel explores “experimental” ways through which religious institutions, leaders, and lay followers have attempted to cope with secular society, both in a modern and contemporary perspective. Here, the term “experimental religion” indicates both a theoretical and descriptive approach to religious phenomena, one flexible enough to explain a broad array of dynamics and practices regarding diverse traditions. The panel, which is particularly focused on Japanese and North American religious landscapes, aims to address the following questions: How can the concept of “experimental religion” serve to contextualize global flows and institutional restructuring as well as their impact on religious practice and affiliation? What tensions and limits were involved in Buddhist “experi-

ments” with engaged – and particularly revolutionary – political activities during the modern period? And how are religious institutions, leaders and lay followers in contemporary Japan and North America experimenting with popular culture patterns as ways of increasing relevance within their social settings?

**John Nelson:** “Experimental religion”: a new paradigm for identifying religious practice and affiliation

In an age of new and “disruptive” information technologies, immigration flows, institutional restructuring and greater personal agency, the concept of “experimental religion” can serve to contextualize these dynamics as they impact religious practice and affiliation. Religions in liberal democratic societies are increasingly seen by practitioners as flexible applications to be approached, reconfigured, and then implemented experimentally, with a focus on tangible benefits (improved health, relationships, career, spirituality, or even political ends) in this world, not the next. Even the former archbishop of Canterbury wrote recently about employing Buddhist meditation to augment his religious devotions. And yet the concept also holds relevance for understanding how an individual turns to religious extremism. Using contemporary Japanese and American Buddhist temples, priests, and their surrounding communities as case studies, this paper identifies five factors that not only characterize “experimental religion” for the individual but which also create issues that undermine institutional and doctrinal stabilities.

**James Mark Shields:** Zen and the art of revolution: Japanese experiments in progressive and radical Buddhism

On 5 April 1931, Nichiren Buddhist layman Seno’o Girō (1889–1961) established the Shinkō Bukkyō Seinen Dōmei (Youth League for Revitalizing Buddhism), made up of several dozen young social activists who were critical of capitalism, internationalist in outlook, and committed to both a pan-sectarian and “rational and practical” form of Buddhism that would aggressively work for social justice and world peace – even to the extent of advocating political revolution. Their activities in support of poor farmers, striking workers and burakumin “outcastes” eventually led to the arrest of Seno’o and the League’s forced dissolution in 1937. This paper analyzes the views of the Youth League for Revitalizing Buddhism as found in the writings of Seno’o Girō with specific reference to the various tensions and limits involved in Buddhist “experiments” with engaged – and particularly revolutionary – political activities. What, if anything, is the legacy and lasting impact of “radical Buddhism”?

**Elisabetta Porcu:** Experimental religion and popular culture in Japan  
A noticeable expression of the historical tendency among Japanese religions to adjust to socioeconomic change is the contemporary use of popular culture formats, such as manga and anime, by religious institutions. In general terms, such

cultural formats have contributed to shape the contemporary image of Japan at the global level, and have been informed by transnational influences and dynamics. The use of manga and anime, the creation of original pop characters, as well as various entrepreneurial activities by religious institutions and individual priests, are not disconnected from the aim of softening a negative perception of religion among the general public. Manga and anime also serve promotional and proselytization purposes. In this paper, I will explore how Japanese religious organizations are experimenting with such popular culture-related patterns and analyze various diversified activities carried out by both institutions and entrepreneurial priests in contemporary Japan.

**Abdulkader Tayob:** Response

## **Experiments in the Field as a Bridge between Psychological Science and the Humanities**

### **Panel Chair: Radek Kundt**

Anthropologists have a tradition of documenting the practices of individuals immersed in a particular religious environment. Clinical and social psychologists also routinely study populations with long-term exposure to particular life circumstances, comparing them to the general population on some measure. In social psychology and other sub-fields, cognitive psychologists emphasize the value of objective measures regardless of whether the investigated groups were formed by life circumstances or experimental manipulation. This panel will make presentations and invite discussion on the theoretical value of collecting objective measures in the field (usually, from real existing religious communities). Rather than taking “subjects” out of context and moving them into sterilized laboratory settings, field experiments attempt to take the laboratory into context by moving it into the field. We argue that the integration of experimental techniques and participant observation may offer complementary insights that neither approach alone can.

**Dimitris Xygalatas:** Experimental anthropology: bringing the lab into the field

The integration of experimental techniques and participant observation may offer complementary insights that neither approach alone can achieve. Rather than taking “subjects” out of context and moving them into sterilized laboratory settings where they become “objects” of experimentation, an integrative approach attempts to take the laboratory into context by moving it into the field. Through this combination of anthropological and experimental techniques, experiments become for anthropologists a new form of obtaining data as well as

a new way of being in the field. At the same time, they may create new problems and raise new important questions, allowing us to problematize some of the standard methods used to study human social behavior and reflect on their merits, limitations, and ways to improve them. Based on a series of case studies, I will discuss the advantages, limitations, and problems of this “experimental anthropology”.

**Jakub Cigán:** Experimental study of prosocial behavior in cross-religious settings on Mauritius

The benefits and challenges of combining anthropological and experimental techniques are discussed in detail in this presentation of an experimental research project conducted in Mauritius in 2013. An economic game paradigm was used to explore prosocial behavior among religious people in various religious and non-religious environments. Environments can constitute implicit contextual cues guiding behavior. While there is evidence supporting the view that in-group religious settings induce parochial prosocial behavior among co-religionists, prosocial behavior in other people’s religious settings has remained largely unexplored. In this study on the topic, we surprisingly found that participants behaved more prosocially in other people’s religious settings. It is likely that the results reflect the relationship between Catholics and Hindus in Mauritius. The results, therefore, connect prosocial behavior in religious settings to broader sociocultural conditions.

**Jan Krátký:** Religious statues affect prosocial behavior

Decision-making in environments with agency cues is of interest to religious studies scholars because of the potential role of agency cues in inspiring a sense of awe and subsequent social coordination. In a series of experiments disguised as a promotional initiative by a well-known company, we compared the effects of agentic and non-agentic cues on prosocial behavior. More specifically, visitors to a university library were invited to make private donations to a cause in the presence of either an intentional agentic cue (statue of human face), a non-human intentional agentic cue (statue of an animal face), or a non-agentic cue (a plant). Results suggest that, while intentional agency cues might enhance prosociality, investigations are needed for potential parallel effects of crowds and of cue typicality in the chosen setting.

## Exploring Aniconism

**Panel Chair: Mikael Aktor, Milette Gaifman**

Aniconic objects together form a broad category of religious material sources – a category which in fact seems both too broad and incoherent. It includes clearly

recognizable depictions of wheels, fish, phalli, unmanufactured objects and elements in the natural environment such as unwrought stones, trees, rivers and mountains, fashioned objects, such as stelai and logs, as well as empty spaces, such as vacant seats, and empty rooms. While all of these objects are described as “aniconic”, they differ dramatically in their religious agency and manner of mediating divine presence. Based on empirical data from different traditions this panel discusses aniconism from three perspectives: classification (what are the criteria for distinguishing between different types of aniconic objects?); historiography (what are the historical relations between aniconic and iconic representations within single traditions or in general?); and mediality (how do the sensory properties of aniconic objects generate notions of ritual agency?).

**Robert G. Bednarik:** Aniconism and the origins of palaeoart

Contrary to the widely held belief that iconic palaeoart precedes aniconism during the early history of humans, palaeoart commences as non-iconic forms, and in most parts of the world then settled by hominins continues as such during the Pleistocene. The forms, development and global distribution of such palaeoart are presented within the framework of hominin evolution. Attention is given to the question of the continuation of aniconism after the introduction of iconicity and the apparent connection between the latter and youth. This coincides with the role of aniconism in the world of specific ethnographically studied peoples, such as the Aborigines of Australia and the Jarawas of the Andamans. The neuroscientific explanation of aniconism shows that it is cognitively more complex than iconic depiction. Based on these and other strands of evidence, a general hypothesis of the roles and significance of aniconism in the world’s pre-literate societies is developed.

**Jay Johnston:** Stone-agency: Sense, sight and magical efficacy

This paper will consider the materiality and mediality of sacred and “magical” stones in Northern European vernacular belief practices (especially Gaelic traditions). In particular it will examine their attribution to specific deities and metaphysical beings, their role in healing rituals and in enabling humans to perceive metaphysical realms. The paper will focus – via methodologies and theories recently developed in both religious aesthetics and “new materialism” – on the materiality and ontology of the objects, their associated visions and the “relations” such stones are understood to have produced. As “sites” of divine agency and efficacy the stones (including amulets and prehistoric flints) were imbued not only with spiritual agency, but also placed within an invisible network of relations that linked individuals, non-human animals, the landscape and the metaphysical realms. This panoply of relations will be demonstrated to be crucial to the aesthetic logic guiding selection and “attribution” to specific deities/spiritual beings.

**Jørgen Podemann Sørensen:** The real presence of Osiris: iconic, semi-iconic and aniconic ritual representations of an Egyptian god  
 In ancient Egyptian religion, images of the gods served to secure their presence in the world. Statues used in ritual were the *nfr.w*, the vital presence of the god, and when kings were called “the living image” (*tw t ʿnh* – as in Tutankhamun) of a god, this was really based on the role of statues in ritual. Gods could also be present through their sacred animals, kept in large numbers within the temple precincts, and they could also be ritually active in the form of aniconic and semi-iconic symbols. At the same time there was an idea that gods had a “true form” (*jr w m3ʿ*), independent of all kinds of iconic or aniconic representation. Particularly interesting are the many iconic and aniconic representations of Osiris. The contemporary currency of so many forms of ritual presence demonstrates the futility of any “theological” approach and calls for a broader theory of representation.

**Hans Jørgen Lundager Jensen:** Aniconism in the Bible  
 The Hebrew Bible promoted aniconism as a general rule for the Yahweh-religion: images of the god Yahweh were strictly prohibited. In the Ten Commandments aniconism follows immediately after the monolatrous rule not to “have” other gods than Yahweh. The reason for the prohibition against “idols” is not Yahweh’s inherent indescribability; in the Bible, there is no lack of literary images of Yahweh who is described as or compared with humans, animals, and meteorological phenomena. Among Biblical scholars, aniconism is often regarded as a local, “Israelite”, phenomenon. My own proposal will be to see it in the broader context of the religious revolutions (the so-called “axial age”) in the middle of first millennium BCE and regard it as an element in a general transformation from a “pre-axial” type of religion, based on cult, ritual and material culture, to an ascetic, and cognitively sophisticated, form of religion.

**Mikael Aktor:** Why would a god want to appear like this? Worshippers’ exegeses of the Hindu *Pañcāyatana Pūjā*

Many Hindu gods are worshipped both in their iconic, mostly anthropomorphic forms, and in aniconic forms, mostly as natural stones or simple geometrical shapes. There is even in some contexts the tendency that the aniconic forms, especially of *Viṣṇu* and *Śiva*, are seen as more apt representations of the indivisible, true aspect of these gods. But what do people say – people who perform aniconic worship today? This paper presents the results from interviews conducted on field work in Nepal and India where I researched the five stones used in the *pañcāyatanapūjā*. In this ritual five divinities are worshipped in the form of five natural stones from five different locations of South Asia. The field work was conducted on these five locations and at each place I asked worshippers how

they understand the aniconic appearance of the god, especially in its relations to the anthropomorphic image.

**David L. Haberman:** Drawing out the iconic in the aniconic Rivers, trees and mountains are often directly worshiped in northern India as natural forms of divinity. For the past couple of decades I have been researching Hindu worshipful interaction with three such natural phenomena: the Yamuna River, sacred trees of Varanasi, and Mount Govardhan. Although all three would be considered aniconic religious objects, they all have iconic forms as well, typically personified as various gods or goddesses. Religious conceptualization of and ritual interaction with these natural phenomena, therefore, are an ideal context in which to explore the relationship between aniconism and iconism. There is often a historical relationship between aniconism and iconism, but they often exist simultaneously side-by-side. A major aim of this presentation will be an examination of the devotional tendency to anthropomorphize aniconic objects as a way of manifesting their full being and bringing out their personality – in other words, to draw the iconic out of the aniconic.

**Richard H. Davis:** Icons and aniconism from a priest's perspective: manifestations of Śiva in a temple festival

“It is only to the extent that You possess a visible form that one is able to approach You,” states a medieval Śaivasiddhānta text. This idea provides the foundation for the many anthropomorphic manifestations of Śiva that we see in South Indian temples. The central icon in such temples, the Śivaliṅga, represents Śiva in an aniconic form. Thus a Śiva temple contains both iconic and aniconic forms, for Śiva to inhabit and for human devotees to worship. I will consider the varied forms that are transformed ritually into manifestations of Śiva during a Saiva temple festival, as spelled out in medieval priestly guidebooks. Apart from the aniconic Śivaliṅga and the anthropomorphic processional icons, these also include a flagpole, a sacrificial fire, a trident, a pot of water, a drum, and a temporary liṅga made of rice and yogurt. The festival provides a demonstration of Śiva's divine ubiquity.

**Klemens Karlsson:** Shifting meanings of “aniconic” signs in the Buddhist tradition

Meanings attributed to objects are not inherent to the objects themselves. Instead, meanings are the result of cultural and historical processes and are constantly changing. The same applies to “aniconic” objects. Early Buddhist cultic sites in South Asia were covered with signs that have been interpreted as “aniconic” representations of the Buddha. This study will focus on the shifting meanings of these signs from the early “aniconic” phase to the time when these signs exist side by side with anthropomorphic presentations of the Buddha and become symbolic signs that serve as vehicles for Buddhist doctrines. It will discuss

the varied significances of these signs during Buddhist history, in different cultural traditions and according to different interpreters (artists, sponsors and beholders). This will also lead to a discussion about the meaningfulness of using concepts like “aniconic” and “aniconism”.

## Exploring the Post-Secular

**David Westerberg:** Who benefits from the idea of the post-secular? A critical investigation of the fashionable concept of “post-secularity”

The term “post-secular” was popularized by Jürgen Habermas and generally refers to some form of resurgence of religion, as well as the more or less inevitable place of religion in politics. By critically examining several theorists and academic debates, this study looks at how different meanings are ascribed to “post-secular” and the interests at stake. “Post-secularity” varies from being about “secular sociological naturalism”, to doing “political theology”, to being about “living in the presence of God”. Since many of these writers tend to ignore (the problem of) defining religion all together, this study shows how superficial and inherently flawed the concept is, incorporating many of the theoretical problems within Religious Studies. The proponents of “post-secularity” uncritically reinforce essentialist ideas of “believers” and “non-believers”, as well as naturalizing “religion” and “the secular”, thereby masking any socio-political interests in using and redrawing the boundaries of these categories

**Mari Miyamoto:** Reconstructing religious spheres: religion and democracy in re-Buddhisizing societies in the Himalayas

The presentation aims to describe the recent transitions of value systems and religious practices in re-Buddhisizing societies in the Himalayas. While Bhutan is widely known as a Mahayana Buddhist society under the supervision of the central monastery of the Drukpa-Kagyü school in Bhutan, the religious sphere of Bhutan in fact has been constructed also by rich and plural religious actors and indigenous rituals. However, under the recent secularization of the political system, including the disfranchisement of “religious personalities” under the government’s democratization policy, Buddhist monasteries and monks are now trying to reconstruct the religious sphere as a unified entity through the integration of alternative religious practices into Buddhism. In this presentation, I aim to examine how people interpret new religious orders and reconstruct their value systems and religious spheres through their everyday practices in rural Bhutan.

**Marta Zajac:** Dynamics of tradition

“In the latter half of the twentieth century England was (...) the home of a distinctly non-metaphysical culture”, Aidan Nichols OP rightly remarks; still, one should also consider what historian Joseph Peirce names “a Christian literary revival which (...) represented an (...) intellectual response to the prevailing agnosticism of the age”. The paper confronts the problem thus suggested, namely, the undercurrent of religious thinking in the mainstream of secular culture. First, it takes into account a contrast between true religion and philosophical religion that J.H. Newman makes, together with G.K. Chesterton’s claim that “logic is not health” and the parallel he draws between the rationalist and the madman, to refer finally to Ronald Knox’s disapproval of Victorian “synthetic religion”. After recalling the views of these most notable English converts, I discuss their problematic (if not impossible) relation to current post-secular thinking.

**Extreme Diaspora: Global Buddhism**

**Eva Seegers:** Innovation versus tradition: the Buddhist ritual of stūpa worship performed at the Costa del Sol, Spain

Stūpas are among the most characteristic and widespread visual representations of Buddhism symbolizing the mind of the Buddha (Skt. dharmakāya). They have been built in Asia for more than 2500 years and over the past decades also in many other countries around the world. One of the largest stūpas in the Western world was erected at the Costa del Sol in Spain, highlighting the integration of Buddhism into Western society. The aim of my paper is to shine light on the basic questions which arise when such an exotic monument is transferred to a new cultural and religious context: when a stūpa is transplanted to Europe, is it likely that local new-interpretations influence the traditional meaning of this unique religious structure? How is the stūpa worshipped, and what are the diverse ways in which it is regarded by Western convert Buddhists and the local community? In this paper new data collected by field-work and critically analyzed textual sources will blend together. This will allow new insights into how cultural and religious transmissions take place.

**Marika Laudere:** Buddhism in the religious landscape of the Baltic States  
Buddhism is one of the fastest growing religions in the West. Even so, relatively little information is available about the history of Buddhism, Buddhist organizations or individuals in the Baltic region. In general Buddhism in the Baltic States (Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia) reflects many of the trends that have been identified in Buddhism’s growth in other Western countries; however, some regional differences also exist. Thus the goal of this paper is to provide in-

formation about the transplantation and development of Buddhism in the Baltic States since the beginning of the twentieth century. The current status of Buddhism will be also examined, particularly by identifying the main present Buddhist organizations and the main trends in their activity; the place of Buddhism in the religious landscape of the Baltic States will also be discussed.

**Veronika Mathe:** Finding their own unique voices: three “homegrown” Buddhist communities in Hungary

Most of the 25 Buddhist groups in Hungary (with their approx. 12,000 members) are branches of bigger international communities such as Diamond Way or Kwan Um. My paper however focuses on three fairly large Buddhist groups that were founded by Hungarians, taking very different approaches to introducing Buddhism within Hungary. Influenced by their temporal, geographical and social circumstances, (the leaders of) these communities have made choices in not only what they (re)present as Buddhism (e.g. teachings of a certain school vs. Buddhist ecumenism) but also how they integrate Buddhism into discourses and practices that are already well established in Hungary (e.g. psychology, Christianity, Neo-Paganism, Roma folktales). We will see how these choices have led to the existence of three popular Buddhist communities in Hungary, with very different aims and voices.

## Faking Asceticism: East and West

### Panel Chairs: Almut Barbara Renger, Tudor Sala

The ancient world was a culture of suspicion. The individual, whether stranger, neighbor, or kin, was under constant scrutiny in a face-to-face society in which rivalry, competition, and misgivings nagged at the surface of the self. The circumstance of being world-renouncers would not have placed ascetics in the blind spot of public mistrust. The performative, elitist, and counter-cultural aspects of ancient asceticism actually exposed it to a heightened scrutiny from outsiders, critics, and rivals alike. The papers of the panel thematize practices and polemics that constructed “ascetic deceit” in Mediterranean and Asian cultures, with a special focus on the processes of institutionalization, innovation, and change that initiated or framed the various normative dichotomies of “genuine” versus “fake” ascetics, and “true” versus “false” asceticisms

**Blossom Stefaniw:** Fake men and real ascetics: masculinity and the passions in Palladius’ Lausiaca History

In the “*Historia Lausiaca*,” Palladius recounts tales of monks estranged from their genitals. Pachon is so distressed by sexual desire that he attempts to force a snake to bite his penis; Stephanos continues weaving while a doctor re-

moves his cancerous genitalia; Heron's organs rot and fall off, and Elias is relieved of sexual feeling when held down by angels and castrated. Why such catastrophic talk about explicit organs? This paper will show that Palladius is arguing toward an ideal of true masculinity as *apatheia*, construed on a spectrum between suffering and repose, and for the validity of *evagrian* bodies as locations of true asceticism to a eunuch in the imperial court, thus attaching the religious capital of the desert to new locations as intimate as the empty space between the legs of the chamberlain, and as public as the forbearance of the emperor in a period of ascetic controversy.

**Christoph Kleine:** The “transferal of precepts” (*jukai*) in medieval Japanese Buddhism as symbolic asceticism

Being an ethical and a soteriological religion, Buddhism links liberation to a methodic regimentation of one's conduct of life, necessarily implying the renunciation of the fulfillment of basic human needs – i.e., “asceticism” in a broad sense. The methodic regimentation of one's conduct of life and the rationalization of a specific religious lifestyle are primarily grounded in codified behavioral norms for various status groups which become compulsory as soon as an individual receives them in a ritual called “transferal/reception of the precepts” (Jap. *jukai*). On the basis of various source materials from the Kamakura period (1185–1333) I will test the hypothesis that in medieval Japan this ritual did not actually signify the taking up and pursuit of an ascetic life but rather the transferal of a specific charisma that was supposed to purify the recipient of his sins and endow him with the same stock of virtue he would have gained by leading a moral life as an ascetic renouncer.

**Christof Zotter:** Who is a “true” Aghorī?

In India, the notion of the “fake” ascetic is probably as old as the idea of asceticism as a legitimate way to salvation. In order to indicate the range of arguments that can support such an accusation and imply different understandings of what a “real” ascetic is or should be the paper will concentrate on the example of the “Aghorī ascetics”. While in the colonial accounts these cremation ground dwellers are customarily accused of being imitators lacking any theological background or mere imposters who took the robe of an ascetic to extract money from the timid folk, modern scholars have explained the Aghoris' extreme practices as coherently fitting the logic of yogic asceticism. Furthermore, it will be shown that followers of the tradition have yet other ways to define who is a “true” Aghorī and who is a “fake” one.

**Oliver Freiberger:** Response

## Fantastic Religion: Esoteric Fictionality and the Invention of Tradition

**Wouter Hanegraaff**

The focus of this lecture is on the ambiguous interface between fiction and historical narration in literary, religious, and scholarly texts that are concerned with delineating “esoteric” traditions. The “invention of tradition” is a well-known and crucial dimension of esoteric identity-formation, from Renaissance concepts of a *prisca theologia* to Rosicrucian or Masonic narratives about secret brotherhoods, and from Theosophical accounts of fabulous lost civilizations to contemporary New Age visions of Sirius or the Pleiades as the cosmic source of spiritual wisdom. While such stories may strike us as obvious fantasies, it is by no means evident that influential academic narratives by *bona fide* scholars (for instance Frances Yates’ “Hermetic Tradition”, or Eric Voegelin’s tradition of “gnostic politics”) fall in an entirely different category: on the contrary, it is not very difficult to show that these authors likewise invented the very traditions that they believed they had discovered. All these narratives seem to have at least one thing in common: their power to persuade and convince is based not primarily on scholarly arguments or factual evidence but, rather, on their ability to speak to the imagination. It follows that in order to handle the interface between historicity and fictionality, we need to improve our understanding of how the human faculty of imagination functions in historical scholarship. What does it really mean to say that certain historical narratives about religious traditions “speak to the imagination”? What are the chief “affordances” that make it possible even for a partly or completely fictional narrative to affect the imagination of readers in such a way that they are likely to accept it as plausible and persuasive? Modern scholars of religion tend to be somewhat suspicious of the imagination as a focus of intellectual reflection and analysis, mainly because of the widespread reaction since the 1980s against neo-Romantic “religionist” perspectives and their apparatus of mythical archetypes, universal symbols, or a *mundus imaginalis*. But to neglect or ignore the imagination for such reasons would be a clear case of throwing out the baby with the bathwater. Instead, scholars who are working with critical empirical and historical methods need to reclaim the imagination from religionist discourse, and reconceptualize it as a crucial focus of investigation and analysis.

## The Figure of the Martyred Prince in the East Slavic Tradition in the Millenary Anniversary of the Death of Princes Boris and Gleb of Kiev

### Panel Chair: Enrique Santos Marinas

Princes Boris and Gleb of Kiev were the first East Slavic saints to be canonized after the baptism of their father, Prince Vladimir, in 988. Murdered by their half-brother Sviatopolk in 1015, their cult became a way to strengthen the Christian faith as well as the reigning dynasty. The works devoted to them were composed following the model of another Slavic martyred royal saint: the Czech Wenceslas. Many centuries later, the type of the prince martyr was embodied again by Tsarevich Dmitrij, the youngest son of Tsar Ivan IV, dead under mysterious circumstances in 1591 during the reign of his half-brother Fëdor I. It has reappeared strongly in recent years with the canonization in 2000 of Tsar Nicholas II and the imperial family by the Russian Orthodox Church. In this panel, we intend to survey the evolution of this relevant figure.

**Patricia González Almarcha:** The continuity of Czech and Russian traditions of martyred princes and princesses: the cases of Wenceslas, Boris, Gleb, Ludmila and Olga

The study of the Saints from the point of view of their historical development and the field of religious phenomenology represents nowadays a huge field for interdisciplinary analysis. In the context of Christianity, spirituality shares some common features and norms and differs elsewhere (Fedotov, 2011). The aim of this session is to analyze the conception of the Prince martyrria, begun in Bohemia and continued in Kievan Rus' as an example of cultural interaction between the Czechs and East Slavs in the Early Middle Ages. In doing so, we follow the perspective pioneered by Ingham (1984) about the question of Slavic cultural continuity of Czech-Russian Prince martyrria. Taking into account textual parallels found within Czech and Russian hagiography and proceeding by well established philological methods, we aim to discover a further common ideological pattern or conceptual framework for the overall affinities of these narratives. Thus, we will explore the hagiographical models of Saints Wenceslas, Ludmila, Boris, Gleb and Olga, trying to identify in their respective narratives the recurrence of themes and key words dealing with the concepts of righteousness and innocent death, the ruler's philanthropia, and kenosis or nonresistance, in order to determine whether there is a connecting thread in the tradition of the Bohemian and Kievan Ruling martyrdom. Besides, this could help us to understand how the Christian tradition in the newly converted kingdom of Rus' was established.

**Matilde Casas Olea:** The literary construction of the martyr and warrior prince in medieval Russia: the testimony of spiritual poems (*dukhovnye stikhi*) After the introduction of the hagiographic tradition of Saints Boris and Gleb in Kievan Rus' – acknowledging that problems about chronology and authorship of the texts have not yet been solved – the presence of the brother saints in literary works became widespread. This is partly justified by the fact that the literary figures of Boris and Gleb find their place in a wider tradition that adapts the model of the Byzantine saint warrior and martyr. The attributes and roles of the Byzantine St Demetrios of Thessalonika, St Theodore Tyron, and St George are transferred to Russian medieval literature through the divine patronage of Saints Boris and Gleb. This manifests in warfare episodes such as Alexander Nevsky's Battle of the Neva or the confrontations of Dmitry Donskoy against the Tartars led by Mamai. The identification of the holy warriors with the Russian princes has a clear legitimating function for the dynasty. The type of martyr-warrior in medieval Russia however emerges in popular religious manifestations, where it expands characterization, modes and contexts of veneration. The “spiritual poems” (*dukhovnye stikhi*) or “poems of pilgrims” can be interpreted as testimony of the influence of the literary type in popular traditions. In the spiritual poems' corpus there is an important group devoted to warrior saints, both Byzantine and national ones. The analysis of these texts adds to the literary patterns of the holy warrior new perspectives on their constitution and reception in Russian medieval society.

**Enrique Santos Marinas:** The type of the martyred prince in the East Slavic hymnography from Boris and Gleb to Tsar Nicolas II and the imperial family The type of the martyred prince has been one of the main models of sainthood within the East Church Slavonic literatures since their origin. The figures of princes Boris and Gleb in the eleventh century, as well as those of Tsarevich Dmitrij in the sixteenth century and also Tsar Nicholas II and the imperial family in the twenty-first century have been used as legitimating figures in times of troubles and political changes. The study of the biblical motifs and characters to whom they are compared can be very useful in order to determine the ideological contents of the hymnographical works. In this lecture we intend to analyze the survival of the type of the martyred prince in the East Slavic liturgical services, showing the traditional elements that have been preserved together with its possible innovations.

## Film and Religion: Adaptations and Transformations of the Passion Narrative in Film and Culture

### Panel Chairs: Natalie Fritz, Marie-Therese Mäder

The panel focuses on adaptations and transformations of the Passion motif in film and culture. Since the early days of cinema, this central narrative of the Gospels has continued to be retold, adapted to diverse cultural, social, and political phenomena. Furthermore, filmic explorations of the Passion have been received in varied cultures and combined with elements of other religious traditions. The panel chairs set up the topic by considering how the Passion narrative was adapted to the emerging medium of film in the silent era. The panel papers address the adaptation and transformation of the Passion narrative to cultural contexts and geographical spheres through analysis of Italian, South Korean, and Indian productions.

**Reinhold Zwick:** Passion, politics and theology: “Il Vangelo Di Secondo Matteo” (Pier Paolo Pasolini, IT/FR 1964, 140’)

The relationship of religion and politics in the early 1960s was shaped not only by Vatican II, which opened the Catholic Church to the modern world, but also by the intensive contemporary dialogue between Christianity and socialism. This vibrant atmosphere was the context for Pier Paolo Pasolini’s version of Matthew’s gospel, which, although at first glance close to the biblical text, was drenched with the artist’s political and social opinions. Pasolini’s Jesus of Nazareth proved to be the very first socially critical Messiah on screen, and in many ways this movie foreshadowed the “theology of liberation” that started in 1970 with Gustavo Gutierrez’s book of that title. With high cinematic artistry, Pasolini merged spirituality and politics, classical religious art and popular religion rooted in Italian Catholicism to create a unique masterpiece with timeless power.

**Davide Zordan:** Ruptures in continuity: the Passion of Jesus in “Su Re” (Giovanni Columbu, IT 2013, 92’)

Discussion of Jesus in film must avoid simply providing an account of how a particular film conforms to or redefines traditional views of Jesus that are based on the New Testament and church traditions. In the European context, Italian cinema offers significant material for investigating challenging variations to the century-old tradition of Jesus in film, with productions identifying and transforming modern religious forms and cultures. This paper will focus on Giovanni Columbu’s “Su Re” (2013), where the dramatization of the Passion of Jesus provides a productive exchange with (1) evangelical and biblical sources; (2) the traditional Jesus-film canon; (3) the mythic potential of the Sardinian context; and (4) Christian faith in resurrection.

**Daria Pezzoli-Olgiati:** Interpreting the financial crisis with a religious visual narrative: cinematic variations on a Christian motif in “Pieta” (Kim Ki-duk, KR 2012, 104’)

The *pietà* belongs to the repertoire of filmic representations of the Passion. Engaging the consequences of the financial crisis in a South Korean metropolis, Kim Ki-duk’s “Pieta” re-enacts this motif in a way that is both innovative and violent. The film assumes this central Christian visual narrative but also alienates it. The image of the mother weeping upon the body of her dead son is transformed into an allegory of abandonment, decay, and complete loss of confidence. In a collapsed capitalist system, material, moral, and emotional poverty dominates human relationships. The traditional religious motif becomes a lens for social critique. This paper examines the thick relationships of religious traditions and practices with art and film. Through complex transmission processes, a religious motif from a religious tradition is used within a global art-house production as a disconcerting visualization of economic and social decay.

**Freek Bakker:** Transfers between religions in Indian Rama and Jesus films  
Box-office success requires the audience to be carried away into the narration of a film. Identification with the main protagonist(s) is one vehicle for such emotional engagement. The Indian religious and literary tradition also aims to identify its audience, or readership, with the main protagonist, in particular when that individual is divine. A literary work that enables identification with the divine is itself a way to salvation, a message that can also be found in Indian religious films. This paper will analyze how the suffering of Jesus and Rama in film, as principal and divine protagonists, becomes the means by which the audience can form such an identification with the divine.

## Fluidity and Hybridity of Religious Innovation in Contemporary Japan

### Panel Chair: Takeshi Kimura

This panel proposes to examine the various contemporary expressions of religious creativity in modern Japanese society. While Japan is known for its secularism and its blurred divisions between sacred and profane, an innovative and socially adoptive religiousness has emerged from the deep dimension of historical traditions and beyond the limits of the institutional religions. In some cases, symbols laden with religious significance are created in secular form without acknowledgment of their religious aspects. Or, traditionally religious symbols are located not in the context of worship but in that of a different social concern. This panel also examines the fluidity and hybridity of these on-going religious

innovations by carrying out a comparative study of them in order to examine some specific features. Four papers will examine several aspects of such religious innovation in relation to traditional religion and to new forms.

**Ayako Kimishima:** The Maria Kannon of modern Japan: the image of the Kannon and the Virgin Mary as war memorial

In mid-seventeenth century feudal Japan, Christianity was officially prohibited. The outlawed Christians had to hide their Christian identity, and therefore created statues of the Virgin Mary disguised as the Buddhist deity Kannon Bodhisattva (Avalokiteśvara). It was their survival strategy. These images were called “Maria Kannon” after religious freedom was granted. Today, to commemorate the deaths and sufferings of the victims during WWII, bereaved family and comrades have erected statues of Kannon Bodhisattva as a form of Buddhist way of veneration. The statues are popularly called “Maria Kannon.” The statues are holding a child or standing in front of the cross as a symbol of Christianity. These statues were created from the Buddhist idea of “Onshinbyodo”(怨親平等 one’s foe and friend are equal). A comparison of the Maria Kannon and Pieta, housed in the Neue Wache memorial facility of Berlin, Germany, will also be made.

**Takeshi Kimura:** Near-death and out-of-body experiences as hybrid source of knowledge in place of traditional religion observing dying persons and death Throughout religious history in Japan, Buddhism functioned in close relationship to medical and pharmaceutical practice and developed complicated ritual observance of dying persons and of sending them off to the other world. Yet since the introduction of Western medicine to Japanese society in the early modern era, the medical and nursing practice has become secular. Buddhist monks are no longer present at the scene of dying, and medical doctors and nurses are taking their roles at the scene of dying as being without religious function at hospitals. Yet through my work with hospital nurses, these medical nurses have begun to take into consideration religious or spiritual aspects of nursing by attending to patients’ religions. On the other hand, the number of reports of near-death and out-of-body experiences have increased, proclaiming them as a source of deep and spiritual knowledge as if they fulfill a spiritual vacancy.

**Emilia Chalandon:** Spring blossoms and fire, Fuji-climbing, and religion Worshiping of spring-blossoms finds little place in recorded mythology, yet related rituals (Japanese o-hana-mi, British May Day) have survived till our day. I will compare the symbolic meaning of the Japanese myth about Kono-hana-no-sakuya-bime, in the context of yama-iri (spring “entering in the mountain”), with the Roman Floralia and the British May Day myths and festivals. Japanese o-hana-mi of today is hardly related with ancient myth and religion in anyone’s mind, yet the development of cherry blossoms’ symbolism in later times shows

features that can be associated with ancient mythological tradition. On the other hand, since medieval times, Kono-hana-no-sakuya-bime is worshiped at the bottom of Mt. Fuji. Climbing that mountain has long been felt as a ritual rather than a sport. Reflecting on its ritualistic meaning, I would search for the point where death/purified rebirth associates with fire and flowers.

**Kazuo Matsumura:** Yuru-kyara: modern manifestation of Japanese religious substratum

Although in modern day Japan not many people seem to be interested in religion, there are many yuru-kyaras (which literally means “loose characters”, representing places, events, or commodities today). In this paper I argue that in Japan a basic religious substratum has been persistent from the pre-agricultural period down to the present, and its present manifestation could be yuru-kyaras. In the pre-agricultural Jomon period, supernatural beings were represented as various figurines. In the next Yayoi period when agriculture was introduced, we cannot find such figurines. Probably the figurines were made with perishable materials such as straw and leaves. With the introduction of agriculture, the deity or spirit might be imagined in vegetation forms. With the introduction of Buddhism in the Asuka period, the situation once again changed. Buddhism introduced statues and people started worshipping statues of Buddha, Amitabha, and Kannon. In modern day Japan, not many people are interested in religion. Yet, there are many local yuru-kyaras which could be regarded as a new manifestation of traditional local protective spirits.

## Focusing Concepts and Theories for the Study of Lived Religion

### Panel Chair: Terhi Utriainen

The study of lived religion has become a prolific strand of scholarship within sociology of religion and religious studies. Research on lived/everyday/vernacular religion denotes an emphasis on religion as part of everyday life. It often involves an inductive approach to religion: the abandoning of pre-existing definitions as a starting point of analysis in favor of individuals' own interpretations of their activities. As such, the concept has helped shift the focus of inquiry away from normative forms of religion and towards new directions. While applications of the concept of lived religion have multiplied in recent years, it is often used in a relatively general sense, to describe the basic contours of the research. This panel, on the other hand, discusses more focused theoretical and methodological advances. It brings together scholars to present their suggestions for how the concept can be operationalized in analysis: for how to study lived religion.

**Marja-Liisa Keinänen:** Negotiating “religion as prescribed” in a Lutheran parish in Northern Värmland, Sweden

Dichotomies such as official/unofficial religion and religion as prescribed versus religion as practiced/lived have been heavily criticized during the past decades. This presentation seeks to supersede this dichotomy by focusing on the lived dimensions of the normative religion. I will examine the regulative activities of two local priests in a rural parish in Värmland, Sweden during the years 1765–1820 and the reactions of the parishioners to these activities. One of the duties of these clergymen was to impose on the flock the norm system defined in the Church Statutes and various decrees. However, their implementation was not a straightforward process. At the local level, religion as prescribed was to some degree the result of negotiations between the clergy and the parishioners. It is these negotiations that are at the centre of this paper.

**Helena Kupari:** Lifelong religion as habitus

In this paper, I present an application of sociologist Pierre Bourdieu’s practice theory to the study of lived religion. More specifically speaking, I discuss the lived religion of lay individuals as habitus. Studying religion as habitus means viewing individual religiosity as a system of embodied dispositions amounting to a practical worldview and way of life. Through examples drawn from my research on the religion of elderly Finnish Orthodox Christian women, I argue that Bourdieu’s concept of habitus is particularly useful in studies of lifelong religion: religion into which one has been socialized as child and that one has continued to practice, in some form, throughout life. The reason for this is that the concept aptly illustrates the long-term effects of practice on the self. It highlights the enduring effects of childhood socialization, while accounting for the evolving dynamics of religious practicing in the context of complex social changes.

**Kim Knibbe:** The theoretical consequences of the lived religion approach: reflections on the ontological turn

The body of work indicated by the term “lived religion” often uses ethnographic methods. In this field, sociologists of religion, “religious studies scholars” and anthropologists find a common ground. This paper aims to make a contribution to the body of work gathered under this umbrella by discussing a development that has been taking place especially in the anthropology of religion, namely the so-called “ontological turn”, to explore how different ways of being in fact create different worlds. This ontological turn seems similar to an earlier body of work in the anthropology of religion that developed a phenomenological approach to the study of religious experience. Both of these approaches are dedicated to understanding “lived religion” and can contribute to the science-theoretical implications of a focus on lived religion. However, both also seem to create blind

spots that detract from the holism that also informs both anthropological and lived religion approaches.

**Amy Whitehead:** Vernacular religion: a method of “things”

The “lived realities” of religions can be examined and understood through their material expressions. Religious materiality not only “visibly” mediates between a continuum of still productive dualisms that separate, for example, subject from object, immanence from transcendence, spirit from matter, or nature from culture; materiality also mediates between “official” and “vernacular” religion. As such it is also capable of inspiring co-creative methodological approaches which are dependent upon the account of “encounters” with religious objects such as statues, and are hereby argued as “relational” as vernacular religion is best understood through the intimate relationships and negotiations that take place between humans and religious artefacts. A relational methodological approach to religious materiality based on ontological understandings (different to epistemological understandings) assists qualitative research and aids in expressing lines of possibilities for understanding the volatile, relational phenomena that take place in the religious “worlds” of others.

**Terhi Utriainen:** Everyday realities and the ritual frame

Lived religion is often said to be such an integral part of everyday life that strict boundaries between sacred and secular or natural and super-natural would not hold as much as they may hold for more official religion (or theories on religion). I argue, however, that ways of making a difference to the quotidian experience are important in lived religion. My paper argues that making a (sometimes very small) difference to everyday reality may happen through artful and tactical ritualizing and enchantment. This would mean that ritualizing, and particularly ritual framing, should be understood as a dynamic communicative art of changing perspective in often delicate but sometimes also effective ways. The paper will explore the possibilities of the notion of ritual frame through the ethnographic case of women doing things with angels in present-day secularized but culturally still relatively Lutheran Finland.

## **Formation and Transformation: Modelling the Dynamics of Religious Traditions**

**Panel Chair: Ab De Jong**

Invoking the authority of Weber, Hobsbawn, and Shils, everyone agrees that religious traditions are dynamic entities. Even so, it is rare to find good analyses (not to mention general theories) of how religious traditions are formed and transformed. This panel helps fill this lacuna by raising two difficult questions:

Which mechanisms are involved in the formation, transformation, and maintenance of religious traditions? And can these mechanisms be combined into a general model? The panel begins with a short opening talk sketching the nature and the relevance of the problem. In the three papers that follow, we identify a number of transformative processes across various contexts, and each attempt to combine them into a general model of the dynamics of religious traditions. The papers deal respectively with contemporary death ritual in the Netherlands, Manichaeans in fourth-century Egypt, and the emergence of an international milieu of Tolkien religion.

**William Arfman:** Trajectories of tradition: a ritual studies approach to modelling (trans-)formation

In this paper I develop a tripartite model for mapping the dynamics of ritual traditions, based on my research into the recent emergence of a ritual field of collective commemoration in the Netherlands. First, I will identify two pairs of oppositional poles which together make up the tension field within which ritualizing takes place. The first of these poles concerns the opposing forces of innovation and repetition, the second deals with localization vs. generalization. Secondly, I will show how recurring trajectories of tradition within this tension field can be recognized. In particular, three consecutive stages can be identified: that of creativity, where elements of existing traditions are subjected to local innovation; that of stabilization, where a selection of these innovations comes to be repeated; and dissemination, in which these rites spread to new locations. Finally, I will argue for the relevance of this model for understanding religious traditions in general.

**Mattias Brand:** Negotiating a Manichaean tradition in absence of ritual specialists

The documentary letters from Kellis provide the very first opportunity to study the Manichaean tradition “on the ground”. This paper will highlight some of the transformations which set this material apart from other Manichaean sources. Among the alterations I will stress the absence of ritual specialists and will present the role of lay participation in the ritual dynamics and the formation of a Manichaean community. I will describe the formation of the “holy church” in Kellis from a socio-historical perspective, based on the Greek and Coptic material analyzed in my PhD-project. The transformations attested in this village reveal the mechanisms of creating a Manichaean way of life in antiquity; they problematize theoretical approaches which a priori designate Manichaeism as a coherent system whose Urform was designed by Mani himself. Systematization, agency and adaptation to the local context characterized the formation of this religious community in fourth-century Egypt.

**Markus Davidsen:** Towards a theory of religious rationalization: the case of the spiritual Tolkien milieu

Drawing on my PhD-thesis on religion based on J.R.R. Tolkien's fantasy books, I sketch a semiotic theory of the dynamics of belief in religious traditions. I identify four "loci of belief," and explore the dynamic relations between them. In particular, I focus on how folk rationalizations and theology emerge when elemental religious practice and religious narratives are made subject to processes of religious rationalization. Two aspects of religious rationalization, belief elaboration and ontology assessment, are distinguished and discussed. I then identify certain patterns of rationalization in Tolkien religion, for example that folk rationalizations gravitate towards a balance between fabulousness and plausibility. I refer to conceptual blending theory and the cognitive study of religion to explain these patterns. Pulls towards minimal counter-intuitiveness and compression of the human-deity relation are found to propel endogenous rationalization. "Exogenous rationalization", involving religious blending, is more loosely framed by processes of compression and pattern completion.

## Forms of Humanism and Religion

**Jimmy Emanuelsson:** What qualifies as a faith community? The state, the Swedish Humanist Association, and the category of religion

The Swedish Humanist Association, a member of the International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU), has several times applied for the status of a registered faith community in Sweden. The applications have been refuted with different motivations: the Humanist Association did not organize worship activities, nor could they be defined as a community for religious practices. Of interest are also the consequences of the application process; it caused tensions within the group between those in favor of viewing Humanism as a world-view and those who disliked this approach, because for the latter group, this was "no better than becoming a religion". As we can see here, different actors use the category of religion in different ways to forward their interests. Examining the material at hand gives us an opportunity to study discourses on religion in legal and political texts, as well as in social groups and their negotiation of identities

**Natalia Buryak:** Erich Fromm about humanistic potential of religion

Fromm distinguished authoritarian and humanistic religion. Authoritarian religion is created by an idea, according to which a human must obey an external force: the main virtue here is docility, and main sin is recalcitrance. In Fromm's view obedience to the external power gives a person chance to get rid of loneliness and own-boundedness. By the act of submission a human being loses inde-

pendence and integrity, which are inherent to him or her as an individual, but finds a sense of safety and security. Humanistic religion on the contrary is concentrated on a person and his or her capabilities: it orients an individual to independence, faith in self-reliance and self-actualization. It underlines the value of human personality, its right of fortune and freedom. The purpose of a person in such religion is the achievement of the greatest force, not the greatest powerlessness: not submission but self-realization is a virtue.

**Petra Klug:** The religious normation of nonconformist individuals: a blind spot in the study of religion

Religion is often defined by its meanings for adherents, as it is thought to unite “into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them” (Émile Durkheim). The religious normation of nonconformist individuals is often missed in this implicitly emic perspective. But religion has an impact on nonbelievers, too. In societies with strong religious populations or governments, religion influences many areas of public and private life. Religion creates power relationships, especially when it is implemented in political processes, or when majorities stand against minorities, be they religious or nonreligious. I refer to this as “religious normation”, and will illustrate this concept with some examples of discrimination against atheists in the United States. The US is a religiously pluralistic country and claims freedom of religion, but the American definition of religious freedom has not always included the right to not believe.

**Sarwar Alam:** In search of god, in search of humanity: Vilayat-e-Mutlaqa of Hazrat Delaor Husayn Maizbhandari

Bangladesh emerged as a nation-state in 1971. One of the fundamental principles of the Constitution of this nation-state is dharmanirapeksta or religious neutrality, popularly understood as secularism. Long before the country’s political adoption of this principle, Sayyid Delaor Husayn, the third Shaykh of the Maizbhandariyya tariqa, preached an ideal called jatidharmanirbisese, an ideal identical to the political concept of dharmanirapeksata in upholding the universal value of humanity in lieu of religious identity. Grounded in the Qur’an and other Sufi genres, Husayn elaborated this concept in a doctrine called tawhid-e-adyan or unity of religion. In this paper, I argue that Husayn’s understanding of Islam was counter-hegemonic against the exclusivist perception of Islam that was propagated by both the ruling elites and the ulama. I also argue that he searched for God, as one who not only transcends the conventional understanding as the Supreme Being, but who also manifests Itself in humanity.

## **Forms of Religious Communities in Global Society: Tradition, Invention, and Transformation**

**Peter Beyer**

Taking as its point of departure the idea that community refers primarily to the identification of groups of human beings, the presentation inquires into the changing relation of religion to collective identities in contemporary global society. A first part presents an historical analysis tracing the rise to global dominance of a peculiarly modern notion according to which there is a strong, but also contested, ambiguous, and incomplete isomorphism between state-centred and religious belonging, in particular between (nation-)states and religions: the “(national-)societal community” and the “religious community” are seen normally to be largely overlapping. A second part then considers how later twentieth century global developments especially have begun to strongly undermine the dominance of this assumption and its socio-structural correlates to yield an uncertain situation in which the very idea of religious community is transforming in directions that encourage much more diverse forms of collective religious identification, an increasing proportion of which are deemed to be subjective, chosen, and exhibiting fluid boundaries of religion, and relatively less inherited, attributed, kinship based, and exhibiting stable and clear boundaries. The presentation concludes with empirical examples of such transformation drawn from the author’s current research on religious identity in the Canadian context.

## **From Innovation to Transformation: Asian Religious Practices in the Shadow of Media Change**

**Panel Chair: Madlen Krueger**

The use of media has always been an important mechanism in religious communication. Specialized representatives of mankind, manuscripts, printed books, to the point of the Internet, all these serve as media for religious messages and further shape the characteristics of religious practice. Therefore, media change has an impact on its connected religious practices. This panel aims to broaden the theoretical understanding of media and particularly concentrates on media change in past and present Asian religions. Case studies from South and East Asia show how transformations of various types of media cause innovations in religious practices and even alter self-perceptions of particular traditions. Furthermore, in the panel media changes are not seen as isolated events. Rather, they are referred to social constraints which induce media change in religious

traditions. Finally, the purpose is to present media changes as a crucial part of the maintenance of religious tradition.

**Ekaterina Shchus:** “From text to the heart”: debates on the religious media change in eighth and ninth-century China

At the turn of the eighth and ninth centuries media change became a recent topic in intra- and inter-religious discussions in Tang China (618–907). Some Chan Buddhist traditions, Confucian scholars, as well as the newly introduced so-called Esoteric Buddhism advocated oral transmission of the teaching from teacher to student over the written text. Furthermore, these religious discourses on media change became prominent in a very critical and rebellious period when not only the social structures, but also the very establishment of the Tang state was briefly yet seriously threatened. This paper aims to investigate, firstly whether and how socio-historical constraints can trigger global intra- and inter-religious debates on media change; secondly, how these reformative ideas on media change were realized in practice, and whether they contributed to the maintenance of a particular religious tradition in a critical socio-historical situation.

**Ann-Kathrin Wolf:** From venerated manuscripts to scientific books: media change in nineteenth-century Sri Lanka

Through the centuries Sri Lankan Buddhist manuscripts played an important role for religious practice, especially for worship. Manuscripts were no bulk goods, but held decorative illustrations as well as other merit-related written affirmations. However, foreshadowing the Christian-Buddhist debate at Pānadura (1873), Sri Lankan Buddhists have increasingly started to use printing for the dissemination of Buddhist texts. With the increase of available copies the notion and function of texts and their content were then transformed. This paper investigates the impact of printing on the religious practice connected to Sri Lankan Buddhist manuscripts. The study focuses on the conceptual reshaping of public and publication in relation to the functions of written communication for religious practice.

**Madlen Krueger:** The effortless salvation: temple practice in twenty-first-century India

The Akshardham cultural complex in Delhi is one of the biggest temple complexes in India and was completed in 2005 by the BAPS Swaminarayan movement. The Akshardham temple complex is presented as a cultural and spiritual hub and authorized guardian of India’s cultural heritage. The temple complex offers a wide range of activities to pursue religious practices. In this regard, the life of Bhagawan Swaminirayan and India’s classical history can be experienced through visualization. Therefore, written texts of the founder are no longer the center of religious practice. Video shows, exhibitions accompanied by sound

effects, music and lights, and boat rides through “India’s Glorious Heritage” form a crucial part of the religious practice performed in this temple. This paper highlights the impact of multimedia applications on religious practice and the utilization of media change in alignment with claims to be entertained.

## From Jupiter to Christ

### Session Chair: Jeffrey Brodd

Sponsored by the Society for Ancient Mediterranean Religions (SAMR), this panel reviews Jörg Rüpke’s recent *From Jupiter to Christ: On the History of Religion in the Roman Imperial Period* (Oxford UP, 2014; translated from *Von Jupiter zu Christus: Religionsgeschichte in römischer Zeit* [WBG, 2011]). Consonant with the mission and interests of SAMR, the book applies a cross-disciplinary and innovative theoretical approach to the study of religious phenomena – categorized primarily by geographical and historical milieu (the Roman Empire) rather than by a more traditional classificatory scheme emphasizing distinctive religious groups. Drawing on globalization as a theoretical model, the book analyzes various media by which religion was manifested and communicated (inscriptions, calendars, priesthoods, literary works, et al.), considering how the function of religion changed over the course of the imperial period and assessing the extent to which there was a single “imperial religion.” This panel will bring together scholars with various disciplinary specializations and areas of expertise pertaining to religion in the Roman imperial period. Professor Rüpke will respond to the panelists.

Participants: **Frederick Brenk, Jörg Rüpke, Celia Schultz, Darja Sterbenc Erker**

## From Syncretism to Social Belonging: Retheorizing Tradition and Innovation in African Heritage Religious Cultures of the Caribbean and the Americas

### Dianne Marie Stewart

For nearly a century, scholars have argued or assumed that syncretism is a salient feature of African heritage religions throughout the Caribbean and the Americas. Often asserted to disrupt the notion that “pure” African beliefs and ritual practices were sustained across such religious landscapes, the syncretism theoretical framework is now a *fait accompli*, a conclusion and a starting point, in African-Caribbean and African-American religious studies. My paper revisits

and interrogates this dominant theoretical footprint in studies of African diaspora heritage religions by analyzing the mechanisms of “tradition” and “innovation” in the history of the appearance and transformation of one such lineage, the Yoruba-Orisa religion in Trinidad. Specifically, I argue that the cosmic-social imperative to belong – to sustain family/kinship within a wider project of nation formation – is perhaps the most enduring and authoritative precept of the common life and spirituality shared by Yoruba-Orisa devotees since their arrival in Trinidad during the nineteenth century. Giving some attention to analogous conventions and foci in other African diaspora heritage religions, I dispute the conceptual utility of a second-order category such as syncretism for failing to capture the religious orientations, cultural dynamics and epistemological assumptions at work in these institutions from the era of transatlantic slavery to the present day.

## Fruits from the Garden of Japanese Spirituality

### Panel Chair: Shin'ichi Tsuda

In his well-known work, *Japanese Spirituality* (Nihon-teki-reisei, 1944), Dr. Daisetsu Suzuki presented a model of the history of Japanese Buddhist thought. He posits that the historical circumstances of Japan during the Kamakura Period catalyzed the full flowering of Japanese Spirituality through which Mahayana Buddhism's full essence found expression in the teachings of the Buddhist masters of that era: notably Dogen's Zen, Honen and Shinran's characterization of compassion in the Pure Land teaching, and Nichiren's channeling of patriotic and nationalistic sentiment into promotion of Lotus Sutra Buddhism as essential for the well-being of the nation. These teachings continue to survive beyond the boundaries of Japanese Spirituality. This panel looks at Honen and Shinran's perspectives of the Pure Land teaching, and at the Lotus Sutra's characterization of Buddhist thought, from Nichiren's original perspective to the challenges it faces and its potential applicability within the dynamics of contemporary daily life.

**Shin'ichi Tsuda:** The “dialectical” relation of Honen and Shinran, the two greatest figures of Japanese Pure Land Buddhism, in their antinomic systems for attaining the Pure Land

In his noted book, *Japanese Spirituality* (Nihon-teki-reisei, 1944), Dr. Daisetsu Suzuki ranked Shinran, the founder of the Jodo-shin-shu sect of Pure Land Buddhism, at the top of the Buddhist thinkers of medieval Japan, exceeding his master Honen, the founder of the Jodo-shu sect. However, Shinran's idea of “realizing the Pure Land at the first chanting of the name of the Buddha Amitabha,”

and Honen's way of life-long continuation of chanting aiming to be born in the Pure Land are not antinomic with each other but co-existential "dialectically." Though he may not have grasped it in the sense of the term "dialectical," Honen himself was well aware of this situation.

**Gyokai Sekido:** Spirituality of Nichiren's Buddhism

Nichiren (1222–82) was one of the great Buddhist innovators of the Kamakura Period. He declared that the Lotus Sutra was the very teaching for the salvation of people in the Latter Age of Degeneration (mappo). Because he strongly insisted on the justice of the Lotus Sutra, he experienced persecution by the Kamakura Shogunate and was exiled to Sado Island. While in exile there, he composed one of his major works, the *Kaimoku-sho* (Treatise on the Opening of the Eyes), in 1272. In that thesis, Nichiren took up Shakyamuni Buddha's resolution to liberate people from suffering, and he declared his own "Three Great Vows," resolving to become "The Pillar of Japan," "The Eyes of Japan," and "The Great Ship of Japan."

**Tsugunari Kubo:** What Shakyamuni Buddha requires of people through the Lotus Sutra

What are the challenges set forth by Shakyamuni Buddha in the Lotus Sutra to those who would take up and follow its teaching? The sutra's fundamental proposal is individual action and experience –bodhisattva practice – and the establishment of communication between people can be said to be essential to that proposal. The first chapter of the sutra reveals the perspective that the sutra itself must take the initiative to create a framework of communication. The aim of the Buddha in the Lotus Sutra is to make up a world wherein all of its human beings are enjoying successful mutual communication. In the Sanskrit text of the first chapter, Manjusri Bodhisattva tells Maitreya Bodhisattva and others: "Oh you of good intent, it is the intention of the Tathagata to establish the great [plaza of] communication for learning the dharmas."

**Joseph Logan:** What you see (and hear) is what you get

With ever-growing contingents of lay-Buddhist followers around the world, language becomes a factor in their perspectives toward practice and faith. In the Lotus Sutra, the Buddha says to the bodhisattva King of Medicines in chapter 10, "...among the sutras I have already expounded...the most difficult to believe and hardest to understand is this Dharma Flower Sutra." Given this assessment, how are practitioners to grasp, make use of, and benefit from what is so difficult to believe and understand? To that end, the sutra challenges and exhorts its followers to internalize, recite, and expound it. This presentation will briefly examine how modern-day followers, especially those in English speaking cultures, approach the Lotus Sutra, how nuances of translation affect how the sutra's practices may be perceived, and how those nuances can facilitate one's ability

to internalize and more effectively benefit from what the Lotus Sutra intends to convey.

## The Future of Irreligion

### **Panel Chair: Rasa Pranskevičiūtė**

Nowadays, one regularly hears the assertion that the number of people professing irreligion has grown to become an important component of the population. This is, in part, a consequence of media attention given to spokespeople for the New Atheism such as Christopher Hitchens and Richard Dawkins. However, there are also demographic data backing up this assertion. In addition to the expanding memberships of groups like Atheist Alliance International and the various Humanist Associations, the irreligious can point to surveys like the Global Index of Religiosity and Atheism – and, in the U.S., surveys like the relevant Pew (2012) and Gallup (Newport 2009) polls – which indicate that large proportions of the world are not religious and, further, are becoming more irreligious. In fact, and perhaps paradoxically, irreligion is one of the claimants to the title “fastest growing religion.” This panel proposes both to gage the growth of irreligion as well as to discuss certain key demographic features of non-religious populations.

#### **Inga Tøllefsen:** A gendered approach to non-religion

In most ways in which religion can be measured, women predominate. However, this pattern of gender dominance is reversed in measures of irreligion and non-religion. Trzebiatowska and Bruce (*Why Are Women More Religious Than Men?* [OUP 2012]) hypothesize that a “lag” in secularization may explain why women are still more religious than men, and that in the future measures of both male and female religiousness might both approach zero. Looking at census data gathered between 1996 and 2011, we find a significant rise in the number of self-reported atheists, agnostics and “nones.” Perhaps surprisingly, it is mainly young adult women who account for these rising numbers; male percentages are surprisingly stable. In other words, it appears that the recent growth in the numbers of people who self-identify as irreligious/non-religious is being driven by women rather than men.

**Evelyn Oliver:** Education, irreligion and non-religion: evidence from select census and survey data

A number of different studies carried out in the twentieth century demonstrated a correlation between higher education and loss of religious belief. However, recent research seems to indicate that contemporary social changes have undermined this previously solid connection: it appears that the non-religious are no longer substantially more educated than the religious. The decline in higher

education represents an important component of an emerging consensus that, in effect, “normalizes” the non-religious. In the present study, this imputed characteristic is challenged via an examination of education data from the national censuses of Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom as well as select data from the World Values Surveys.

**James R. Lewis:** Growth and fertility: what census and survey data indicate about the future of the irreligious and the “nones”

In discussions of the irreligious and “nones,” no one has brought together census data from multiple nations. My presentation will examine the censuses of Australia, Canada and the UK as well as select data from the World Values Surveys, which together indicate that the irreligious and “nones” are growing rapidly. However, we also find that atheists, agnostics and humanists are having significantly fewer children, meaning their current remarkable rate of growth will most likely fall off in the near future. In contrast, “nones” are slightly more fertile than the population at large. However, because many nones hold religious beliefs, it is difficult to predict how the growth of this portion of the population will impact the future growth of irreligion.

**Jesper Petersen:** Educating the public: making sense of popular science television in Norway

Both Norway in particular and the West in general have witnessed an intensification of the sustained struggle between scientists, humanists and skeptics, on the one hand, and various religious and spiritual groups on the other for the right to represent reality. An important site of contestation has been the television screen. In Norway, several television programs on the oldest state channel NRK, most notably *Folkeopplysningen* (“Public Education”, 2012-) and *På Tro og Are* (a wordplay on the phrase “on faith and honor” and the presenter’s first name Are, 2010), have dealt with religious or spiritual beliefs and practices from a more or less explicitly skeptical viewpoint. Further, imported shows such as *Cosmos* (2014) and *Into the Universe with Stephen Hawking* (2010-) have used spectacle and speculation to argue that science can provide the sense of wonder that fulfills a quasi-religious role in a supposedly disenchanting society. Conversely, programs like *Den Andre Siden* (“The Other Side”, 2009–11), *Åndenes makt* (“Power of the Spirits”, 2005-), the game show *Jakten på den 6. Sans* (“The Hunt for the Sixth Sense”, 2008–11) and the more documentary-style *Underveis* (“En Route”, NRK 2011-) have shown how religious or “alternative” worldviews exist in and improve on modern life. This presentation will examine how these programs position themselves in relation to their chosen subject and its supposed other to discuss what they are saying and to whom. This will shed light on the current state of irreligion in Norway and the compartmentalized audiences to which television caters today.

## Gender in New Religious Movements

**Eriko Kawanishi:** How to invent, establish and expand an alternative spirituality: a case study of the Glastonbury Goddess movement

How is an alternative spirituality “tradition” invented, established, and expanded? This paper is focusing on a Goddess movement, a mixture of Neopaganism and feminism, and exploring the key to its success. More and more people in the West are attracted by the Divine Feminine in recent decades. Goddess worshippers usually worship the Goddess individually. However, there appear to be several Goddess centred organizations [cf. Salomonsen 2002]. One of them is the Glastonbury Goddess movement in England, which was founded by a woman in the 1990s. One of the unique aspects of this movement is the existence of the Goddess Temple, where anybody can worship the Goddess. Another attribute is that the founder disseminated her conception of the Goddess clearly and started a self-development course based upon this conception. I discuss how the temple and the course help to recruit new people and stabilize this movement.

**Johanneke Kroesbergen-Kamps:** Contested gender roles in testimonies of ex-Satanists

This paper looks at the dynamics of gender traditions. At the end of the 1990s, a novelty started in Zambian churches: testimonies by people confessing to have been Satanists. While the early, well-known and written testimonies were all produced by men, contemporary testimonies of Satanism are predominantly given by adolescent females. Children growing up in Zambia today are confronted with conflicting role models. Especially young women may find themselves at a crossroads between the submissiveness expected by traditional teachings, and personal autonomy, as reflected in Western movies, video-clips and soaps. How do testimonies of ex-Satanists address tensions surrounding gender-roles in contemporary Zambia? This paper argues that Satanists conduct themselves in a way that inverts traditional gender-roles. In the testimonies, this behavior is rejected. The churches where the ex-Satanists give their testimonies provide them with constructive gender-roles that are neither traditional nor suffering from the deficiencies rejected in the testimonies.

**Olena Panych:** Women and femininity among Evangelical Christians-Baptists in late Soviet time: memoirs of female believers

The presentation analyzes memoirs and narratives produced by female members of the Evangelical Christian Baptist community of the former Soviet Union. The memoirs focus on the late Soviet time and reflect the standing of females within the religious group and network. I will explore women’s life stories; the impact of family, local church and Soviet surroundings on female believers and their self-consciousness; the forms of representation of religious women’s personality and

femininity; symbols and markers of gender identities. My purpose is to discern specifically “women’s” outlook on the religious community; the way females developed their relations within this community and local congregations, and achieved authority and respectable positions; what they sacrificed for the community under repressions inflicted by the Soviet atheist regime.

## **The Genesis and Social Significance of Rituals and Memorials Honoring Victims of Mass Atrocities and Disasters**

### **Panel Chair: Herman L. Beck**

Mass atrocities and disasters often disrupt societies leaving them behind in trauma. Only by the performance of certain rites or the erection of memorials in memory of victims it seems to be possible to heal this trauma. One of the conditions of this healing process is the victims’ feeling of satisfaction of their longings for justice and redress. In an interdisciplinary research cooperation with the International Victimology Institute Tilburg of the Tilburg Law School, the Tilburg Research Group “Ritual in Society” is focusing on the genesis and social significance of rituals and memorials honoring victims of mass atrocities. In this interdisciplinary research four perspectives will be taken: the perspective of ritual studies, the legal and political perspective, the psychological perspective and the ethical perspective. In the current upsurge of memorial sites, memorial museums, and memorial days, victims of mass violence, atrocities, genocide, slavery and colonial régimes may find their way to worldwide public recognition – or may be denied, forgotten, obliterated.

**Martin Hoondert:** A “gypsy” Requiem performed by Dutch musicians: the impact of performance in practices of commemoration

The genocide of Roma and Sinti during WWII is one of the forgotten genocides of the twentieth century. Only recently memorials have been realized, for example the Holocaust Memorial to Sinti and Roma in Berlin (2012) and the Requiem for Auschwitz by the Sinti composer Roger Moreno Rathgeb. The premiere of this Requiem took place in May 2012, Amsterdam. The Sinti and Roma Philharmonic Orchestra from Frankfurt performed the Requiem and it was broadcasted on national TV the following day. Rathgeb composed his requiem for all the victims of the Auschwitz extermination camp, but the events organized alongside the performances in seven cities in Europe focused specifically on the genocide of the Roma. In May 2015, Rathgeb’s Requiem will be performed by a choir and orchestra not of Roma and Sinti origin. It will be performed in three cities in the Netherlands, alongside an exhibition and teaching material for schools. The 2012 performance by the Sinti and Roma Philharmonic Orchestra was apart

from a practice of commemoration also a practice of protest: protest against violence and war, but even more protest against forgetting a specific group of victims: the Sinti and Roma. The question is how the 2015 performance will be perceived by both performers and listeners. What is the role of performers in relation to the impact of a practice of commemoration? Is there still an accent on the forgotten genocide (and the protest against forgetting), or is there a shift in function and focus? These questions will be researched by participating in rehearsals and concerts, and interviews with the composer, performers and audience members.

**Menno Janssen, Albertina Nugteren:** Whose atrocity? Victim hierarchies in the global rush to commemorate: the Sinti and Roma Holocaust Memorial in Berlin

In the current upsurge of memorial sites, memorial museums, and memorial days, victims of mass violence, atrocities, genocide, slavery and colonial régimes may find their way to worldwide public recognition – or may be denied, forgotten, obliterated. Victim hierarchies may thus be indicative of existing imbalances of specific groups' access to political, socio-cultural, geographical and monetary power relations, but may also be subject to processes of retrospective recognition by the public. The complexity of the processes preceding the recent realization of Berlin's Holocaust Memorial to Sinti and Roma (2012) is a case in point. Whereas many of the "forgotten genocides" (Lemarchand 2011) took place at a safe distance from Europe – Congo, Burundi, Namibia, Tasmania, Tibet – the so-called "gypsy genocide", although long ignored, today comes too close for comfort. This paper investigates the relation between victim satisfaction – that their particular case has publicly been acknowledged and that they have now acquired a "place of their own" – on the one hand, and the rise of ritual culture on this central and emotionally charged spot, on the other. After "the process", there now is a "product": how is it perceived by local residents, tourists and visitors with a Sinti or Roma background? What ritual culture is emerging there? What are the relations between this particular place and the many other local memorials in Germany and elsewhere, both symbolically and in terms of ritual practices? How culturally specific are the symbols used with which the site is landscaped? What inside narratives does the design refer to, and does any of such group-specific imagery speak a universally understood language as well? What criteria define that this may be perceived a "successful" memorial? Rituals in memorial sites are cultural and social practices (Brosius & Hüsken 2010). Now that the monument has been realized, an examination of the complex process in which a ritual repertoire is being generated, may yield new insights into aspects of "ownership", visibility, narrativity, healing, and the dynamics of remembering and intended "forgetting" (Augé 1998).

**Walter Van Beek:** A contested ritual of unity: the Herero Red Flag Day (Namibia)

If anything reconstituted the Herero of Namibia as a self-confident and distinct cultural group, after the genocide by the German colonial army in 1904, it were the rituals of the Flag Days: Red, Green and White. Crucial in the history of Namibia as a young nation, after independence this yearly commemoration of the fallen heroes has taken on an increased weight in the definition of national heritage. This holds especially true for Red Flag Day, the largest of the celebrations, which is linked to the National Heroes Day of Namibia. On the other hand Red Flag Day has been the pivot of debates and conflicts within the Herero community, culminating in a recent court case, which has drawn considerable national press interest. This contribution zooms in on the dynamics between a ritual of commemoration and an internal struggle for the control of these symbolic resources: what are the effects of an intense internal debate and struggle for power on the commemoration ritual as such, and vice versa, how does this important “ritual of unification” feature in the social and political dynamics of the Herero group? A film will be shown both as a means of presentation and of analysis.

**Sandra Rios:** Uses of memory and ritual in political resistance and transition in Bojayá (Colombia)

Drawing on original ethnographical research, this paper analyzes the role of Afro-Colombian funerary rituals and the local Catholic Church in the construction of social memory after the massacre of Bojayá in 2002. In a confrontation between Marxist guerrillas and extreme right wing paramilitary 79 civilians died in a church located in a rural village of the Pacific lowlands of Colombia. The memory of this massacre has been a field of political contention but also of grassroots resistance to persistent and diverse forms of violence. Using literature on sociology and anthropology of emotions, and sociology of religion, this paper explores how religion contributes to the management of victims’ emotions and to supporting claims of transitional justice from a grassroots perspective in a context of thin political transition and continuous violence.

**Albertina Nugteren:** History rewritten: the Mutiny Memorial (1857) in New Delhi as a stone witness to changed perspectives

In the current upsurge of memorial sites, memorial museums, and memorial days, victims of mass violence, atrocities, genocide, slavery and colonial régimes may find their way to worldwide public recognition – or may be denied, forgotten, obliterated. Victim hierarchies may thus be indicative of existing imbalances of access to political, socio-cultural, geographical and monetary power relations, but may also be subject to processes of historical reinterpretation. Major shifts of perspectives over time have often resulted in the erasure of either the heroes or

the victims of one era when a new era dawned. Yet collective memory may also opt for a third way: history may be shown as layered in stone instead of being erased completely. One striking example of this is provided by the Indian Mutiny Memorial in New Delhi. Originally erected by the British (1863) as a monument to those killed on the British side – it bears 2163 names on its base of those killed or wounded on the spot – it survived the upheavals of Partition and Independence (1947). In a city with such a layered history as Delhi, it used to be merely one of the countless landmarks of local history. However, in 1972 the Indian Government renamed it Ajitgarh (“place of the unvanquished” or “invincible fort”) and simply added a plaque stating that the “enemies” mentioned on the memorial were, in fact, “immortal martyrs for Indian freedom”. Its stated enemies were thus turned into heroes who were the first to rise against colonial rule. This Mutiny against the British East India Company, which started with the religiously grounded refusal of cartridges greased with either pig’s or cow’s fat by the local soldiers, resulted in full-blown colonial rule. The material monument survived, and with its cathedral-like appearance on one of the city’s ridges it seems to be nothing more than one of the numerous religious buildings in a staggeringly multicultural city. But its heroes changed. This was accomplished not by radically erasing the past, but by subtle co-existence and engraved re-appropriation. History was not overwritten, it was simply rewritten in the same stone. Although this textual addition may appear as a mere footnote to an extremely bloody moment in time (which historian Amaresh Mishra rightly calls an “untold holocaust”, claiming around ten million people dead over a span of ten years) I argue that from a ritual point of view the place is a strong testimony of an organically growing act of remembrance.

## **Global History of Religions: Methodological Probing**

### **Panel Chair: Sven Bretfeld**

The recent terminological change from “inter-cultural” to “trans-cultural” points to the assessment of cultures as relational products continuously shaped and negotiated by encounter and exchange processes. This approach, commonly addressed as “Global History”, can fruitfully be employed in Religious Studies. However, a “Global History of Religions” yields special methodological problems. For example, how can religions be studied while comparative categories – cultures, nations, religions – no longer refer to entities but relationships and procedural dynamics? The panel probes into these methodological issues focusing on the history of “religions” in “Asia”.

**Karenina Kollmar-Paulenz:** Dancing in the middle of the market-place: negotiating “religion” through dance in seventeenth-century Tibet – and today  
 One of the most influential instruction manuals on Tibetan religious dance (/Cham/) written, among others, by the fifth Dalai Lama in the seventeenth century, admonishes its readers to practise the dance in the “true way” and not to consider it as a “show or play” merely to entertain people in the marketplace. The admonition is part of an intra-religious polemic discourse about the adequacy of publicly performing – and thus exposing – secret religious teachings to a broader uninitiated public. By drawing on Tibetan /cham/ manuals and field data from Tibetan exile communities and Mongolia, this paper seeks to explore how religious traditions are established and affirmed, but at the same time constantly challenged and negotiated through ritual performances in trans-regional settings.

**Sven Bretfeld:** Tantric Theravāda: maritime connections in the Indian Ocean and the scholarly interest of mapping “world religions”  
 Recent research highlights the historical role of Tantric Buddhism – sometimes called Vajrayāna or Esoteric Buddhism – on the maritime trade routes between South and Southeast Asian cultures. In many respects new findings and considerations challenge traditional historical accounts and force us to review “Indo-centric” and “Sino-centric” maps as the spatial framework in which Buddhist history takes place. This paper surveys the evidence for the assumption that during the eighth/ninth centuries Theravāda traditions belonged to the major promoters of Tantric Buddhism among the cultures of the Indian Ocean. It proceeds towards methodological reflections on modern history-writing and concept-building starting from the question why “Tantric Theravāda” sounds so weird to the modern ear. In the analysis due attention will be given to the triangular relationship between translocal entanglement, religious self-assertion and the construction of comparative categories in the Study of Religion.

**Raya Schifferle-Stoyanova:** Revolutionary Buddhist? Isidanzinvangjil: a critical Mongolian Lama on the eve of the collapse of the Qing Empire  
 Isidanzinvangjil (1854–1907) is an outstanding Mongolian Buddhist poet and physician at the turn of the twentieth century. Building upon the Tibeto-Mongolian gnomic and didactic literary tradition, Isidanzinvangjil’s teaching verses amplified the nature and the scope of the Buddhist moralizing poetry (/surghal shilüg/). His scathing criticism denounced not only individual behavior, but also burning socio-political issues and practices, especially those linked to the Buddhist clergy and the ruling elite. The paper explores Isidanzinvangjil’s Buddhist ethical views, expressed in his “Golden teaching” (/altan surghal/), in the context of his personal life history and in relation to his own moral agency. A special focus will be on the interactions with his Mongolian social environment that was

deeply entangled in the geopolitical and ideological dynamics of the waning years of the Qing Dynasty, thus going beyond the usual analysis of a bi-polar “Qing center-periphery” and “East-West” axes.

**Piotr Sobkowiak:** Mongolian “religion of the shamans” as a construct of a non-European discursive tradition

Taking as an example the discursive construct of a “religion of the shamans” (mong. /böge-ner-ün šasin/), this paper deals with the history of taxonomical and discursive processes, which re-shaped the objects of Mongolian religious reality. The act of singling out the agents of the traditional Mongolian beliefs in the Buddhist-influenced socio-political environment reached its peak during the Qing and Russian rule over the Mongolian peoples. The paper will give an overview of the thesis, which makes an assumption that “shamanism” should be understood neither as an emic phenomenon belonging to Mongolian culture, nor a post-colonial conglomerate developed in the Western academic environment, but rather as a construct of a discursive process taking place on the interface of the Tibetan, Mongolian, Chinese and Russian cultures. The importance of Asian epistemological traditions should become a meaningful aspect in the study of a “global history of religions”.

## Global Intellectual History and the Dynamics of Religion

### Martin Mulsow

There are currently strong efforts to develop a global intellectual history which is no longer centered on Europe. The lecture will discuss how this altered understanding of intellectual history will affect our conception of a dynamics of religion. It will focus on the early modern period and will give several examples. One such example concerns the relationship between language, religion and the “consensus gentium” that all peoples believe in a God. From the second half of the seventeenth century there was a veritable competition to discover and penetrate new languages and scripts; at some stage the Biblical number of seventy-two languages was dropped as the realization set in that there were far more idioms than the number posited in the Bible. This competition was closely linked to the business of missionizing: if one wanted to bring “heathen” people into contact with Christianity, then it was necessary to understand their language in order to translate the Christian message into it. In the reverse direction the missionaries supplied the linguists with their material. What was one to say, however, if difficulties arose in translating “Our Father”? If the word “God” could not be translated because the culture in question had no corresponding word in their vocabulary? Heated discussions about the alleged atheism of the

“Hottentots” or of some American Indians began. They stirred interest about what was really the mode of thinking among these peoples – but at the same time they fueled criticism of religion in Europe and contributed to the process of secularization.

## Global Spread

**David William Kim:** A Chinese New Religious Movement in modern Korea  
The East Asian country of Korea witnessed the emergence of foreign new religious movements in the middle of the twentieth century. The Japanese Soka Gakkai was introduced in the 1970s, but Yiguandao of the Republic of China (1912–1949) was transmitted into the Korean peninsula in the 1940s. The pre-communist new religion that has a syncretic perspective ideologically pursued the ethical and philosophical principles of Confucianism, self-cultivation practices of Taoism, moral teachings of Buddhism, and ancestral worship tradition. The historical figures of Dukbuk Lee, Sujeun Jang, Buckdang Kim and Eunsun Kim individually performed the pioneering work of the “Unborn Ancient Mother (Wusheng Laomu)” movement in the socio-politically insecure Korea that was under the initial conflict of the Cold War between democracy and communism. Nevertheless, the International Moral Association (IMA) was established by the leadership of Buckdang Kim in 1940–60s and became the most successful organization of the Chinese new religion, with membership of 1.3 million adherents in the twenty-first century. Then, who was the founder Buckdang Kim (1914–1991)? How did they survive in the post-Korean War society? What were the unique teachings of the Korean Yiguandao? This paper will not only explore the cultural change of Yiguandao in Modern Korea, but also analyze the social impact of the IMA in terms of morality reflected in the creeds of Doduck-Saejae, Jilli-Hawmin, Gujung-Saedo, Silchun-Kanglun, and Kuksi-Suneung.

**Edward Irons:** Yiguandao in the twenty-first century: a Chinese religion adapts to a globalized world

Yiguandao is in many ways a prototypical modern Chinese religion. It is syncretic, combining elements borrowed from Confucianism, Buddhism, and Christianity. It has always utilized the available routes offered by surging capitalism to expand, both in China in the 1930s and 1940s and in Taiwan from the 1960s. And it has remained largely within the Chinese cultural nexus, appealing in particular to Chinese communities in Southeast Asia and the Americas. On the one hand Yiguandao and related groups have expanded easily from their bases in Taiwan to new locations of Chinese investment. On the other hand many have run into issues of cultural adaptation in many host countries, such as Australia and the

US. This paper asks how such a distinctly Chinese religion can grow internationally in the current era. The paper uses interviews with Yiguandao senior leaders to describe the current spread of the religion from the perspective of globalization theory.

**Midori Horiuchi:** A unique expression of doctrine: the case of the Tenrikyo Congo Brazzaville Church

Tenrikyo came into existence in 1838, when God the Parent was revealed through Oyasama. Since then it has spread both throughout Japan and to other countries. By the chance visit of Shozen Nakayama, Head of Tenrikyo, to Brazzaville in 1960, mission work was started there in 1963. For the next two decades, Japanese missionaries engaged in missionary works there; however, the civil war made living there impossible. What followed was a period of absentee Japanese “professional” missionaries. During this period followers kept their faith and developed their expressions of doctrines in their own manner. For example, they joyfully sang simple words with gestures in chorus to feel Oyasama’s love. This appears to be a way of understanding the doctrines based on and mixed with their own indigenous culture. Here I would like to consider the presence of the “missionary” through cross-cultural contacts in the case of the Tenrikyo Congo Brazzaville Church.

**Petra Tlcmukova:** Religious transmission to/within Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic: the case of Soka Gakkai International

In this paper I examine the process of religious transmission of a specific Buddhist movement: Soka Gakkai International – Czech Republic (SGI-CR). As my research shows, the local presence of SGI, a global Buddhist organization of Japanese origin, can be well documented since the time of normalization of Czechoslovakia. The movement grows slowly on the national level, yet its transnational ties have been of rather significant influence from the beginning. The paper presents the outcomes of a long-term empirical research among SGI-CR members. Besides taking in account the memos of participatory observations and relevant documents, the narrative interviews were analyzed in order to reconstruct the so far academically unexamined reality of this movement. In the presentation I will offer an overview of SGI’s local history and will answer the question of how SGI has been transmitted to/within Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic.

## Harnessing the Power of Text Mining in the History of Religion

### **Panel Chair: Edward Slingerland**

Textual data generated, maintained, and transmitted by religious groups have always been central to the history of religion. The prototypical approach to textual data is a combination of qualitative methods and human synthesis, that is, we apply close readings, contextualization and theoretically motivated arguments with the purpose of interpreting those data. But with recent advances in data science, the study of religion at large is seeing new studies emerge that apply text mining methods to religious text databases. Because these studies are computationally intensive, quantitative and explanatory in scope, several methodological questions are immanent: How does text mining influence our representation of religious traditions? Can it add a qualitatively different or just a quantitatively more efficient layer to the interpretation of religious texts? To answer this, the panel will present several text mining projects and discuss the scope, status and future of text mining within the history of religion.

### **Carson Logan:** Topic modeling the ancient Chinese corpus

Our dataset is composed of 96 texts in the original language dating from the Warring States period through the Han Dynasty and beyond. Here we present and interpret topic models generated from this corpus. Topic modeling a corpus produces results in the form of clusters of words that reliably travel together through texts by a machine-learning process, and so offers an unsupervised source of information about semantic content. First, we survey the contents and proportional representations in the corpus of topic models with religious content. Second, we explore differences in religious content across Ancient China's three major philosophical traditions – Confucianism, Legalism and Daoism, with special attention to representations of high gods as opposed to mysticism. Third, we zoom in on the over twenty Confucian texts to discuss whether and how topic model results confirm or challenge conventional interpretations having to do with Confucianism and religion.

### **Justin Lane:** Semantic networks and texts: analysis and classification

Textual and linguistic analysis has been an integral part of religious studies since its inception. New computational techniques have greatly increased the efficiency of text analysis as well as our ability to quantify text data. Such techniques also open up possibilities for statistical testing. These analytical methods combine to open up new horizons in text analysis. This presentation specifically addresses how computational analysis can create more accurate, statistically based, understandings of text at the level of an individual text or corpus. The presentation defends the position that a network based approach to textual anal-

ysis allows for both the broad strokes of a corpus as well as the individuality of a text to be simultaneously represented. It also provides examples of how new statistical techniques can help support or refute earlier scholarship completed by historians. The examples drawn will come from the New Testament, Old Testament, and a multi-denominational corpus of sermons drawn from contemporary American religious congregations.

**Kristoffer L. Nielbo:** For Allāh or kin? Article-by-article macro-analysis of AQAP's Inspire

As C. Geertz, among others, has argued, religious and supernatural semantics do not only function as representations of the world, but also as cultural triggers and motivators for action (Geertz 1973). Recent cognitive and evolutionary theories do, however, question the motivational strength that supernatural concepts offer when believers have to perform acts of extreme self-sacrifice. Instead they argue for a kinship semantic in which concepts related to biological ties and common ancestry are superior motivators (Atran 2010). To investigate these theoretical claims at the level of discourse, we constructed a full text database of AQAP's (i. e., al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula) Inspire magazine and modeled it using hierarchical clustering and topic modeling. Inspire is written in English and known for its combination of militant Islamist ideology and present-day digital themes (e. g. "open source jihad"). Results indicate that religious and kinship semantics can simultaneously compete and collaborate in the construction of a radical discursive space. This space, we argue, can induce motivational priors that facilitate concrete militant action.

## Healing Practices and Modern Esoteric Currents between Japan and the U.S.

### Panel Chair: Ioannis Gaitanidis

This panel details four cases of productive interchange between American "metaphysical religion" and Japanese "psycho-spiritual therapies" (\*seishin ryōhō\*) in the first half of the twentieth century. We consider how traditional physical practices were updated by new ideas, diffused across the Pacific Ocean, and adopted as new healing methods in each of the two areas. By thinking of healing practices as the agents of religious and spiritual innovation, we demonstrate that the history of transnational exchange of bodily practices within modern esoteric currents can be a productive unit of analysis for religious studies research. For this reason, we have secured the participation of two experienced researchers who will act as respondents: Professor Helen Hardacre, an American authority

on Japanese religions, and Professor Yoshinaga Shin'ichi, an expert on esoteric currents worldwide.

**Philip Deslippe:** Yogi Ramacharaka and the transnational diffusion of modern yoga

This paper will discuss the writings of Yogi Ramacharaka, the penname of New Thought author William Walker Atkinson (1862–1932) who wrote thirteen books and numerous magazine articles as Yogi Ramacharaka in the first decades of the twentieth century. Combining New Thought, Theosophy, physical culture, mundane concerns, and medical science into accessible prose and numerous practical exercises, the Ramacharaka works were translated in numerous languages and became a powerful influence in the history of early modern yoga throughout the world. A full understanding of Yogi Ramacharaka not only offers clarity on one of the earliest and most important influences on \*seishin ryōhō\* in Japan, but also provides both a general framework and exemplar of similar types of transnational exchanges within metaphysical religion in the early twentieth century.

**Naoko Hirano:** American metaphysical religion in \*Seishin Ryōhō\* and Reiki Ryōhō in 1920s-1930s Japan

This presentation describes the characteristics of the seishin ryōhō 精神療法 (psycho-spiritual therapies) practiced in 1920s-30s Japan and analyzes the ways in which they were not only influenced by the bodily practices of Japanese religion and their contemporary medical science and physiology, but also by the words and thoughts of what Albanese calls “American metaphysical religion”. Furthermore, the presentation uses Usui Mikao’s Reiki Ryōhō 靈氣療法 (Reiki therapy) as an example of how esoteric discourses and practices were able to move from North America to Japan without the activity of any particular organization.

**Hidehiko Kurita:** Breathing methods as a crossroad between the localization of Western ideas and the acculturation of Japanese tradition

Various religious traditions use words that literally mean “breath” as synonymous with “life”, “spirit”, and “soul.” Some of these traditions use breathing methods to control the spirit. In early modern Japan, some Chinese ideas on breathing methods based on the concepts of \*yin-yang\* and \*qi\* contributed to people’s good health and peace of mind. After the Meiji Restoration (1868), Western ways of health seemed to replace previous Chinese medical ideas and breathing methods seemed to disappear. However, they returned at the turn of the twentieth century. In the background was the importation of a novel American trend called “New Thought”. In this paper, I will clarify how the tradition was inspired again by the movement coming from beyond the Pacific and how

breathing methods gained popularity and new meanings in modern contexts in Japan.

**Justin Stein:** Trans-Pacific transculturation: Usui Reiki Ryōhō and Reiki healing, 1936–1986

In the summer of 1936, a young second-generation Japanese American named Hawayo Takata returned to Kauai, where she established a small business practicing and teaching healing methods that she had studied in Tokyo for the prior six months. Fifty years later, in 1986, Takata's students in the Hawaiian Islands and the North American mainland numbered in the thousands, and they and their students brought Reiki around the world, including back to Japan. However, due to numerous adaptations that Takata made to Reiki over her teaching career, the practices that returned to Japan were quite different from those that had left a half-century prior. This paper uses printed materials, diary entries, and oral history to outline how Reiki was adapted for Hawaii Nikkeijin in the 1930s-1950s, North American Euro-Americans in the 1960s-1970s, and the Japanese in the 1980s, and how these changes illustrate historical dynamics, linkages, and discontinuities between these groups.

**Helen Hardacre, Shin'ichi Yoshinaga:** Responses

## **Hermeneutics of Language and Textual Practices: Continuity and Transformation in Hinduism and Theravada Buddhism**

**Panel Chair: Paolo Visigalli**

This panel explores the relation between changing beliefs and the emergence of new hermeneutic theories and practices. The significance of understanding the vital function of language and texts in the transformation and adaptation of religious traditions of Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism will be emphasized. By attending to the interrelations between belief and social change and the corresponding formation of diverse kinds of hermeneutic techniques, this panel investigates how different communities conceived of language and texts to convey a religious meaning. The language of religious discourse forms a bridge in religious traditions and communities by preserving and conveying the continuity of meaning and the conceptual framework of religious texts and practices. But it is also the site in which the dominant ideology can be questioned. By mapping the relations between hermeneutics and religious belief, this panel will illuminate the historical developments of religious traditions in their adaptations to cultural and social changes.

**Alastair Gornall:** Words and meanings in Pāli Buddhism

The Tipiṭaka, or the Pali canon as it is more commonly known in English, is the only surviving complete Buddhist canon in an ancient Indic language, albeit showing the influence of a variety of Middle-Indic dialects and some Sanskritization. Despite being preserved by cultures with vibrant vernacular literary traditions, whether Sinhala, Thai, or Burmese, for instance, the Pali canon has maintained its position in these cultures as the most authoritative source of Buddhist doctrine and ritual. Despite the importance of Pali in Theravāda Buddhist religious practice, there has been little research on how the tradition has viewed Pali, the language of their canon, through the centuries. In this paper, I postulate that there are two main philosophies of canonical language in Theravāda Buddhism that have been competing with each other from the early medieval period (c. fifth century) right up until the modern day. While providing an account of this scholastic debate on the nature of the Pali language, I also link these debates with the ways in which Pali is used in Theravāda Buddhist practice.

**Paolo Magnone:** Purā Navam Bhavati: the perennial rejuvenation of tradition in the dynamic canon of the Indic Scriptures

The comparatively late tantric embodiment of so-called Hinduism gives final shape to a conception the germs of which had indeed been present in the Indian religious world from the earliest times on – namely, that religious practices and the attendant prescriptive texts must constantly evolve and adapt under the pressure of the “heaviness of time” (kālagaurava) – by sanctioning in a recurrent strophe the partition of the Scriptures according to the declining world ages (yuga). Whereas vedic ritual as laid down in the “Heard” Revelation (śruti) was fit for the Perfect Age, new and less demanding forms of worship, with their corresponding Scriptures, had to be promulgated down the course of time to cater to the failing powers of the human generations: the “Remembered” Codes (smṛti) in the following Age of Triads, then the “Ancient” Lore (purāṇa) in the Age of Duality and finally the “Newcome” Tradition (āgama) in the present Age of Strife. Outside the tantric context, however, the Purāṇas have been regarded as the authoritative Scriptures also for the present age of degeneration, and they have fulfilled their role as custodians and upholders of the living tradition by various strategies aimed at striking a difficult and sometimes precarious balance between conservation and innovation. Indeed, the notion of constant adaptive evolution is built into the very name of the Purāṇas, which according to a long-established (para)etymology defines them as “from of old becoming ever new”. This paper will analyze some of the ways the authors of this remarkable class of texts have gone about their wondrous task of making for change while ensuring continuity.

**Paolo Visigalli:** “Etymologizing” in ancient India and its relation to religious beliefs

In ancient India, sustained concerns with Sanskrit, the language of religious tradition and intellectual pursuits, gave rise to sophisticated linguistic and hermeneutic disciplines. One of these disciplines is *nirvacana* or “etymologizing,” which purports to recuperate a word’s meaning by means of an etymological analysis. Although instances of “etymologizing” abound in Vedic literature, its rationale is still poorly understood by scholars, who still rely on old and inadequate categories, such as “mystical” ruminations or “magic” wordplays. By exploring its relationship to other Vedic discursive devices and to broader networks of religious beliefs, this paper shows that “etymologizing” is a complex rhetorical device, based on a specific vision of language, reality, and their interaction. In particular, inspired by recent repurposing of Western forms of etymologizing, this paper argues that Vedic etymologizing is utilized as a pliable and powerful tool for processing, codifying, and transmitting, as well as questioning and undoing, religious ideas and beliefs.

## **Herodotus, Historian of World Religions: How the Reception-History of the “Father of Lies” Can Help Move the Conversation Beyond “Orientalism”**

**Suzanne Marchand**

Biblical exegetes and historians of the religions of ancient Persia, Egypt, Assyria, and Syria know just how essential Herodotus was, and still is, in attempts to reconstruct the earliest practices and beliefs of these nations. And they also know just how complicated it is to figure out which bits of Herodotus – famous already in ancient times as both “the father of history” and “the father of lies” – one can trust. By no means is this a new problem; Herodotus has been enrolled in the project of writing the history of world religions since at least the fifteenth century. Since that time, European scholars have used his detailed accounts of “oriental” religions in a myriad of different ways: to prove the truth of the Bible, or the absurdity of Catholic rituals; to prove the origin of the Greek gods in Egypt, or to illustrate the ignorance of Egyptian priests; to reconstruct ancient “Aryan” forms of iconoclasm, or to pin down the location of the Tower of Babel; to show that the Greeks did believe in their myths, or that the true Greek religion was a secret cult, borrowed from the Egyptians. But something happened to Herodotus in the later eighteenth century, as he began to be enrolled in a nationalist and sometimes racist quest to establish the origins of religious symbols and ideas. Increasingly, the “father of history” was subjected to a barrage of credibility checks –

including philological critiques, and geographical and archaeological investigations – to determine whether or not he could be trusted. While post-Romantic secular historians and classicists generally took a skeptical approach, labeling all history before the Persian Wars “mythological,” orientalist could not do without his first four books, and set out on a series of campaigns to validate Herodotus, or even to deepen the timeframe for the Orient’s religious history. In this paper, I will illustrate and track the debates among orientalist about Herodotus’s reliability between about 1790 and 1890 in an attempt to document the bitterness and complexity of arguments about the relationships between “western” and “eastern” religions and the reliability of Greek testimonies precisely during a period of remarkable discoveries and decipherments and European hyper-imperialism. It has recently been argued that the history of world religions arose in a quasi-apologetic frame, and has been structured and tainted by its being practiced chiefly by western Christians. Although I fully agree that this is the case, I also believe that the study of world religions also generated out of itself – and out of Herodotus (who was, after all, admonished for being a “philo-barbarian” by Plutarch) – the foundations for the very critiques of Eurocentrism with which we operate today. In surveying the Rezeptiongeschichte of Herodotus, I hope to move beyond both the postcolonial and the purely apologetic portrayals of European “orientalism,” a tradition that was neither, in my view, fully yoked to Eurocentrism and imperialism, nor without its own ambitions, blindspots, and axes to grind.

## Historical Sufism

**Makoto Sawai:** The meaning of Adam in Ibn ‘Arabi’s theory of the Oneness of Existence

In Islamic mysticism called Sufism, Adam, the first man, has played an important role in speculating about the linkage between God and human beings. Adam, on the basis of the divine names, is the medium between God and humans and at the same time, the spiritual source of imagining various ideas. This motif of Adam is originally derived from the Qur’an and Hadith. In the Creation, for example, God bestowed privilege on Adam, because He taught him the names of the things (Q2:31) and made him a caliph on earth (Q2:30). Thus, Adam as an individual, was given the honorable position of caliph. Human beings, called “the sons of Adam” (banu Adam), inherit his various natures. This presentation is to clarify how Ibn ‘Arabi argues the Oneness of Existence (wahdat al-wujud) in relation to Adam.

**Mohamed Ahmed:** Sufism in Tunisia: features of stability and change

This paper represents an anthropological attempt to understand and reveal the features of stability and change within the Sufism phenomenon in Tunisia, and a trial to clarify the reasons for the emergence of Sufi movements in the North African region and to shed light on the public perception of saints and sites. It also shows the purpose of anthropological concern in religious phenomena in this particular time, and the need, more than ever, of the Tunisian citizens for a spiritual dimension in order to achieve their psychological and cultural balance under the influence of globalization and the structural changes known by Arab societies. A great part of this anthropological analysis is to focus on the challenges faced by the institution of the shrine in Tunisia through the contemporary period till the Tunisian revolution in 2011: Tunisia was the first country to be rocked by an Arab Spring uprising.

**Saeed Zarrabi-Zadeh:** Integrationist Sufism in the context of the modern West

As the major mystical trend in Islamic tradition, Sufism has entered the modern Western discourse in three major phases: first, during the Romantic era, when a few Sufi classics were rendered into European languages; second, around the turn of the twentieth century, when some spiritual teachers fascinated by Oriental traditions started to incorporate Sufism into Western esotericism; and third from the 1960s onward, when Sufism participated in the “resacralization” of Western societies and various Sufi orders became active in the West. Such long-lasting Sufi presence witnesses three different, yet overlapping, attitudes of Sufi movements towards their Western surroundings, namely isolationism, rejectionism, and integrationism. This paper offers a typological overview of these three approaches while paying special attention to the latter one, in which the transformation of ideational, practical and institutional aspects of Sufism through its contextualization into the modern Euro-American milieu can well be examined. The paper argues that it is particularly within Sufi movements having such integrationist attitudes that one can investigate the congruity between (Islamic) mysticism and modernity.

**Yuki Nakanishi:** Mystic unified with the first intellect: Šamsaddīn al-Fanārī's (d. 1431) anthropocentrism

The unification with the transcendent One has always been the ultimate goal for the mystic. Various attempts made to achieve this goal are also found among the Arabic-speaking Muslims in the Near East who were active in the late medieval and the early modern period. In this presentation, I will deal with the metaphysical anthropology of Šamsaddīn al-Fanārī (d. 1431), one of the most prominent mystic-scholars in the early Ottoman era. By examining his discussion on the unification of the mystic with the “first intellect” (al-‘aql al-awwal), as is exhib-

ited in a section of his metaphysical masterpiece *Miṣbāḥ al-uns bayna l-ma'qūl wa-l-maṣhūd* (“lamp of the intimacy between the intellect and the contemplated”), the present study illustrates anthropocentric features of this Ottoman intellectual’s mystico-philosophical theory of human perfection.

## History of Religious Studies

**Hillary Rodrigues, Chanda Siddoo-Atwal:** J. Krishnamurti’s critique of religion and religious studies

This paper will problematize traditional, dualistic, theoretical and methodological categories in the study of religion, such as “insider/outsider” and “emic/etic,” in relationship to the thought of the influential contemporary religious teacher, J. Krishnamurti. It will consist of two parts. The first, delivered by Chanda Siddoo-Atwal, Ph.D., President of the Krishnamurti Educational Centre of Canada (KECC), offers an “insider/emic” perspective on Krishnamurti’s teachings on religion. The second, by Prof. Hillary Rodrigues, will offer an “outsider/etic” perspective. However, it will deconstruct both orientations vis à vis Krishnamurti’s approach, which devalues scholarly work and poses a critique of all intellectual categories, including “religion”. As such, the paper will initiate an exploration of the theoretical and methodological challenges posed, for the discipline of religious studies, by a body of teachings on religion that appears paradoxically to undercut not only the value of the scholarly study of religion, but its very object of study.

**Johan Strijdom:** The senses in religion and religious studies: assessing David Chidester’s use of a critical term

The purpose of this paper is to illustrate and assess Chidester’s use of “the senses” as a critical term in the study of religion. Under “senses” Chidester includes the five ordinary senses, the visions and dreams of the mystic and shaman, and electronic media. Chidester’s analysis of the senses in Medieval and Renaissance European mystic visions on the one hand, and in colonial and post-colonial African religion and imperial religious studies on the other hand will be compared and assessed. Although he does not offer a systematic comparison of these instances, I will argue that his analysis lends itself to an explicit comparison of the senses as material aspects of religion and show how his contextualized and historically sensitive analysis of the senses in religion and religious studies informs a critical study of religion. Since “critical” assumes judgment, values need to be explicated in terms of critical theories, which in my view need further elaboration.

**Satoko Fujiwara:** Why the concept of “world religion” has survived in Japan: on the Japanese reception of Max Weber’s comparative religion  
 This paper deals with a hitherto unnoticed fact that the concept of “world religion (in the sense of universal religion as opposed to ethnic religion),” which is outdated in many Western countries, is still popular in Japanese academia and the educational field. Rather than simply arguing that Japanese scholars are “behind,” I will attribute the fact to the academic/educational/social roles of comparative religion in Japan, which are different from those in Western countries, with a special focus upon Weberian legacies.

## Homogenizing Hinduism: A Watershed

### Vasudha Dalmia

Nineteenth and twentieth century formulations of Hinduism differ in their dealings with pluralities: there seems to be a marked watershed at the turn of the twentieth century. Almost all nineteenth-century articulations of Hinduism feel constrained to deal with pluralities, to engage with them. And they do so from the perspective of belief, philosophical-metaphysical thought and ritual practices, modes that are linked with older ways of engaging with difference. From the early twentieth century on these strategies undergo major changes. They continue to refer to the same originary texts, the Vedas, as the fount from which Hinduism – now seen in the singular – springs, but the emphasis is now on all that is common to the multiple formations that exist on the ground, thereby entirely ignoring their differences. In my presentation I shall deal with the relevant chapter from Satyarth Prakash or the Light of Truth, the central text of the Arya Samaj, the most important social reform/religious formation of late nineteenth century North India. To offset its strategies from twentieth-century reformulation of Hinduism, now seen as a major World Religion, I will turn to a school text, the Sanatana Dharma Catechism of the Theosophical Society of India, which presents Hinduism in a newly homogenizing, integrative mode.

## Human/Civil Rights

**Joseph Prabhu:** Human rights in interreligious perspective  
 Human Rights (HR) have become a universal moral language. The fundamental document of HR discourse is still The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948. It, however, deliberately eschewed religion as part of its account of the foundational concepts “human,” and “human dignity,” which underlie it.

This paper revisits that debate in light of later cross-cultural and interreligious discussions, which serve to broaden its universal appeal. What conceptions of “religion” in East and West might help to move beyond the divisiveness often associated with religious affiliation? What might these suggested conceptions add to human rights discourse? This paper lays out a two-part dialogue to resolve these questions: (1) a secular-religious one about HR; and (2) an interreligious dialogue based on HR. The claim is that these discussions would render HR more effective and universal in practice.

**Leonard Taylor:** Catholicism and the structure of international law

The following paper seeks to address the overlapping and diverging concerns of two complimentary but also contradictory bodies of thought found in human rights law and Catholicism. Religions have come to the fore in international human rights debates – exhibiting the fault lines between the secular and religious, the church and state – but it is Catholicism, despite its peripheral status, that has contributed most to the way such debates are negotiated. The legacy of Catholicism’s interaction with the emerging nation state, its political institutions and the structuring of international law, presents an opportunity to inquire about the stances taken by this religion and offers reflection on its relationship to international law. It also provides the potential to enquire if international law and human rights law in particular have inherited a bias towards religions which are inspired by alternative resources than that of Catholicism.

**Yolotl González Torres:** Religion and human rights in Mexico

Mexico is passing through a sad and violent period in its history: social insecurity, murder, kidnapping, corruption, and so on. Much of it is due to drug trafficking and its infiltration in government. The government has not been able to control the violence; on the contrary, the police and the army have been accused of being part of that repression. It has been said that Mexico is a “failed state”. Curiously enough, although the Catholic Church has had an ultra-conservative history, there has lately been a group of priests, nuns and lay Catholics who have been very active against social injustice and have been fighting for human rights, criticizing the incompetence of government for its policies against violence. The attitude of this group of people has become more belligerent every day, to the point they are calling for a Constituent Assembly and a recasting of Mexico on the basis of a new morality.

## Iconic Religion in Public Space

### Panel Chair: Kim Knott

Within ongoing processes of pluralization across Europe religious icons are becoming increasingly important. Religious icons mediate between religious concepts and objects and materialize religion in the public space. We will consider to what extent such icons, in the form of sacred buildings and sites, clothing, public events etc., generate social imaginaries about different religions and their co-existence. In what ways do they invoke or feed into debates about the place of religion in “secular” public life, and the management of religious diversity? Do they stimulate positive or negative encounters? Examining religious icons in relation to the encounter between different religious traditions and between the religious and the secular, the panel will discuss how “iconicity” is denoted or generated, the extent to which icons express or encapsulate encounter, and how icons may impact on and shape public space. The semiotic contribution of Peirce will be examined in relation to the attribution and generation of the “iconicity” of religious objects. This will be followed by papers which investigate the geography, visibility and contestation of religious icons in diverse urban public spaces, and the discourses, representations and encounters they generate.

### **Birgit Meyer:** Iconic religion: an introduction

In this first paper we introduce the HERA-Cultural Encounters project “Iconic Religion”. We use a broad notion of icon. It serves as a generic term for pictures as material expressions of mental images as well as for any natural or artificial object that is visually perceivable and communicable. Conceived as such, icons impact upon communication and action, and participate in the structuring of urban space, thus requiring an approach that combines material-aesthetic, spatial, and semiotic-communicative theories and methods. Religious icons materialize religions – making the invisible visible – and offer inducements for encounter, between different religious traditions and between the religious and the secular. They stimulate both affirmation and conflict, as case studies on Berlin, Amsterdam and London will amply show. Although there are no religious icons *sui generis*, iconic religion, in our understanding, crystallizes imaginaries about the world, beliefs, actions, and experiences, and is at the core of personal and collective identities.

### **Susanne Lanwerd:** Investigating Berlin sites

Visibility and invisibility are key elements in the history of the dynamics of religion. What about in contemporary society? This paper will focus on two Berlin case studies. (1) The House of One (“Bet- und Lehrhaus”) will be built in the near future. Led by the Protestant parish of St. Peter and supported by Jewish and Muslim partners, its goal is “a new kind of multi-faith center built not by

a ‘neutral third party’ but rather by the cooperation of religious groups”. (2) The Fatih Camii in Berlin Kreuzberg is both a mosque and Kulturhaus. Outside it, visitors get an impressive view of the neighboring tower of Saint Marien/Liebfrauen, a Catholic church which offers space for Tamils as well as Polish Catholics, and which exists alongside the Protestant Tabor Community. I will analyze how local devotional or associational practices and objects forge transnational connections and support the visibility of religions.

**Daan Beekers:** Material conversions: iconicity and the politics of re-allocated church buildings in Amsterdam

In this paper I argue that the re-allocation of church-buildings in Amsterdam can be understood as an iconic process, in which politicized discourses become linked to concrete materialities. The religious landscape of Amsterdam has been shaped by the decline of operative churches on the one hand and the arrival of new houses of worship on the other. These developments converge in the phenomenon of converted churches: church-buildings that are re-allocated into office space, housing, theaters, “migrant churches” or mosques. Such material conversions are sources of heated controversy concerning the preservation of Christian heritage, the accommodation of diversity and anxieties about Islam. Indeed, converted churches can be seen to make these concerns concrete and palpable. I examine three cases of church conversion in Amsterdam: the conversion of a Reformed church into a Pentecostal “migrant church”, of another Reformed church into a mosque and of a Catholic church into a dance school.

**Steph Berns:** Bring out your dead: the role of burials in the making of iconic sites in London

This paper explores the role of human remains and the ways they mark the urban landscape within inner London. From a prostitute’s graveyard to the Southwark Martyrs, what is it about bodies that makes certain sites iconic? Iconicity is neither inherent nor permanent. It takes an ever-changing assembly of people and “things” to replenish and rescript the pasts, presents and futures of particular sites. Burials lie at the root of many London landmarks, and provide spaces for individuals and communities to memorialize their loved ones. However, they require continuous vigils, offerings, guided tours, signage and legislation to maintain and defend their iconic status. Employing principles from assemblage theory and drawing on original fieldwork, I consider how these dynamic assemblages elicit different forms of encounter. In what ways do these encounters shape the locality and one another? How do these interactions connect and fracture relations between the living and the dead?

**Volkhard Krech:** Iconic religion: reflections on a monistic approach to religious phenomena

Religion is usually considered a special kind of socio-cultural reality based on certain meaningful concepts. On the other hand, religion always refers to sensual experience and physical matter. The paper argues that these are two sides of the same coin. There is no socially constructed religious meaning without relating to psychic, organic and physical processes. Applying the threefold semiotic approach of Charles Sanders Peirce, it will be suggested that cognitive, content-related, and material approaches find their synthesis in what might be called iconicity. Religious icons mediate between objects and their religiously meaningful representation. Religious meaning materializes in objects and their perception, while at the same time objects as religious ones enter the sphere of socio-cultural reality by being attributed with religious meaning. The paper draws special attention to the two directions of materialization and attribution within religious icons beyond the alternatives of either idealism or materialism.

**Hew Wai Weng:** Sights and sites of inclusive Islam: Chinese-style mosques in urban Malaysia and Indonesia

Across cities in Malaysia and Indonesia, since 2000, there is a growing trend of building Chinese-style mosques. Viewing such mosques as both “sights” and “sites” of inclusive Islam, this paper discusses how and under what conditions, Chinese Muslim organizations and Islamic authorities aesthetically and spatially promote Islam as an inclusive religion. By “sights”, I refer to the architectural design and aesthetic formation of such mosques (e.g. the use of the Chinese pagoda style). By “sites”, I refer to the social activities and spatial arrangements in the mosques (e.g. Chinese New Year celebrations). Symbolically, such mosques are sights that make Chinese Muslim cultural identity unequivocally “real” and visible. Practically, such mosques are sites where Chinese Muslims practice and perform their identities. By mixing Chinese and Islamic elements, both “sights” and “sites” are often overlapped and interconnected to communicate a message to wider audiences that “there can be a Chinese way of being Muslim”.

**Christopher Cotter:** Seeing a secular space? Photo elicitation and the discourse on religion in Edinburgh’s Southside

Since October 2012, I have been engaged in doctoral research into the discourses on religion in a particular locality within the City of Edinburgh, Scotland. This research is built on the argument that “non-religion”, “secularity”, and related categories, are best understood discursively, as relational categories implicated in particular societal discourses on “religion”, and that locality is a refreshing and appropriate container for engaging with such discourses. This paper begins by introducing my theoretical framework, my discursive and spatial methodology, and my data sources – including in-depth interviews with individuals from a

variety of religious and non-religious identifications who consider themselves to have strong ties to Edinburgh's Southside. The paper will then address a photo elicitation exercise conducted during these interviews to illustrate the contested and entangled discourses surrounding visual manifestations of "religion" in this locality, and their implications for conceptualizing religious/secular public/private space.

**Irene Stengs:** The falling of an icon: the afterlife of the Anne Frank Tree, Amsterdam

This contribution will focus on the iconicity of the so-called "Anne Frank Tree", the chestnut tree that stood in the garden behind the secret annexe where Anne Frank and her family were hiding during WWII. The tree derives its special, "sacred" value from having been "touched by the eye" of Anne Frank, who mentions its comforting presence in her diary. The tree fell in an August storm in 2010. Yet, as an instance of the social memory of the persecutions of Jews in Amsterdam and the Netherlands, and by implication of the Holocaust, doing away with the tree may be equated with doing away with the memory of the suffering of Anne Frank, her family, and all other Jews under the Nazi occupation. The paper discusses how the tree, as a matter of local and international concern and contestation, continues to live on in a multiplicity of forms and places, and constitutes a sacred geography.

## **Imagining Sacrifice: Secular Politics and the Invention of a Religious Phenomenon**

**Panel Chair: Martin Mulrow**

Sacrifice traditionally has been accorded an important role in the constitution of society. Displays of wealth, and of the power of life and death – of a monopoly over violence – are common attributes of sovereignty. Sacrifice, however, is hardly the static and eternal manifestation of the sacred that some have taken it to be. This panel focuses on a few of the representations of sacrifice from early modernity to the contemporary era, and on how such representations have encoded visions of polity: of normal and abnormal religion; of the ties that bind a community; and of the constitution of sovereign authority. Responding to the IAHR call to examine the "Dynamics of Religion," this panel shows that ideas of a violent origin for society may not record an actual event in *illocutione*, but rather signal the vital and changing role that sacrifice plays, even today, in the social imaginary.

**Jonathan Sheehan:** Sacrifice and the origins of culture, 1625–1750

In 1744, the Neapolitan scholar Giambattista Vico offered a new science of human social and cultural institutions. At their very foundations lay two institutions: care for the dead and gifts to the gods. The first established basic relations of property, and with the second began the cultivation of land, and eventually the emergence of human civilization. Since the early seventeenth century, the relationship between sacrifice and human institutions – usually religious ones – had become a truism of sorts among European scholarly elites, including greats like Hugo Grotius and John Selden, as well as a host of lesser writers. This paper will explore the theological context for this seventeenth-century discussion, and explain how and why sacrifice would become one of the fundamental markers of human culture, and thus a cornerstone of nascent disciplines of both anthropology and comparative religion.

**Yvonne Sherwood:** The dynamics of sacrifice

The “dynamics of religion” is an intriguing concept that could only be thought in late modernity. Like “religion”, “dynamics” really only gets going in the nineteenth century. Named from the Greek δύναμις (from *dunasthai*, to be able) dynamics evokes capability, power, force. But it does so in ways that deliberately conjure the old gods and miracles that used to act so mysteriously and forcefully on human space. Dynamics presents itself as a secularization of dynamis. But it decentres the body, or agent, and seems (quite deliberately) not to try and escape from ideas of being acted upon, being overpowered, transcendence and excess. Dynamics is the branch of mechanics concerned with the effects of forces on the motion of a body or system of bodies, “especially of forces that do not originate within the system itself”. In this talk I want to study the dynamics of sacrifice by looking at how theories of sacrifice – often understood as a process of radical transformation – have changed. What fundamental changes have been attributed to the dynamo of sacrifice in ancient texts and modern polities? How have reconfigurations of sacrifice been used to think about, control and “secularize” the powers – political and religious – that we imagine to be acting on “social” space? For example, for many modern and early modern thinkers, such as Kant and the so-called English Deists (such as Chubb and Morgan), human sacrifice became an impossible transgression of natural and political law, akin to miracles. The gods (and sovereigns) who were forced to die were, above all, the gods who demanded blood sacrifice. Modernity and secularity were founded, in part, by the death of the gods who commanded sacrificial death. In this talk I look at how changing understandings of sacrifice helped to redefine spheres of energy and possibility. Which acts and objects and powers and forces were real (and legitimate); which were mere projection, dangerous, or fake?

**Robert Yelle:** The domestication of sacrifice: from arbitrary command to communal feast

Carl Schmitt famously contended that the rejection of sovereign absolutism and the foundation of the modern Rechtsstaat coordinated with the theological rejection of a sovereign God, one who interrupted natural law through miracles. He pinpointed this transition in the deist period. For many deists, sacrifice, as represented in the Hebrew Bible, was just as problematic as the miracle, as both appeared to signal the arbitrariness of divine command. For this reason, deists such as Matthew Tindal and Thomas Morgan therefore attacked the sacrificial prescriptions and narratives of the Torah, while also denying any sacrificial value to the Crucifixion. Over a century later, biblical scholars such as Julius Wellhausen and William Robertson Smith rehabilitated sacrifice as a spontaneous celebration of community that had become corrupted by Jewish legalism. My talk will consider the different visions of polity that have coordinated with these varying representations of sacrifice in the modern period.

## In the Context of Change: Approaching Emotions and Objects of Material Culture

**Panel Chair: Barbara Schuler**

Every text and every material object – from architecture to food – is directly or indirectly related to emotions, either being shaped by emotions, aiming to evoke emotions, or stimulating emotional memories. All religious emotions (take fear of polluted and polluting things as an example) are to a great extent constructs of societies and cultures, and as such subject to historical change. The panel will explore how emotions and material objects are observed, described, evaluated, assigned roles, and used in strategies of persuasion; and how the “regime”, appraisal, control, and display of emotions changes depending on context, communication strategies, historical period, and “emotional communities” (lay people, clergy, deities, members of specific traditions, elites etc.). Which material objects (iconography, clothing, religious art etc.) evoke which emotions in whom? Which emotions are encouraged (and at times exalted), and which are discouraged? These and similar questions will be asked all against the background of change.

**Anne E. Monius:** Loving Śiva’s Liṅga: the changing emotional valences of a beloved image in the Tamil-speaking Śaiva tradition

This paper examines the complex ways in which the most celebrated aniconic representation of Śiva – the liṅga – centers and generates an array of emotional experiences in the Tamil-speaking Śaiva tradition, from the earliest seventh-century devotional hymns of the great bhaktas or poet-saints through the twelfth-

century hagiography of those saints, the Periyapurāṇam, and the theological treatises (composed in the twelfth through fourteenth centuries) of the Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta. Particular attention will be paid to the ways in which emotions generated by and attached to Śiva's liṅga change dramatically in the textual tradition over time. While the earliest devotional poetry focuses upon the liṅga as inspiring the highest degrees of exultant joy, for example, the Periyapurāṇam often infuses such joy with rage and frustration. The Śaiva Siddhānta works, on the other hand, largely ignore the liṅga altogether, focusing instead on the living figure of the guru over the details of temple-based worship.

**Irina Glushkova:** From constant yearning and casual bliss to hurt sentiments: an emotional shift in the Varkari tradition (India)  
Poets from Dnyaneshvar (thirteenth century) to Tukaram (seventeenth century) who had eulogized the Hindu god Vithoba of Pandharpur are known for expression of their own psychological states including such polar emotions as talmal (yearning) and anand (bliss). With more or less intensity these feelings are aimed at/evoked by Vithoba, whose spatial separateness made their urges more acute. Nowadays, the images and temples of Vithoba erected here and there make yearning, however, unnecessary and bliss achievable. It might be this haunting visuality and easy accessibility of the divine object that have turned the flow of devotees' emotions from the god to the profane world and made them react to what other people think, say and do. This shift has also been substantiated formally by the establishment of such institutions as Varkari Sena, and by the latter's announcement to protect the "hurt sentiments" of millions of Varkaris.

**Kiyokazu Okita:** Salvation through colorful emotions: aesthetics, colorimetry, and theology in early modern South Asia  
In his article "The Concept of Emotion in Classical Indian Philosophy" in Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Joerg Tuske argues that classical South Asian religio-philosophical traditions commonly focus on the eradication of emotion. However, there exist in the subcontinent influential traditions that aim at transforming emotions rather than removing them. They might be called the school of devotion or bhakti, to use an emic term. Bhakti advocates argued that binding emotions can become soteriologically effective if they are directed towards God. By the time these ideas reached Bengal in the early modern period, they acquired sophistication through their encounter with cosmopolitan Sanskrit traditions. For example, Rūpa Gosvāmī in the sixteenth century presented an innovative analysis of devotion through the terminology of dramatology and rhetoric. In this paper, I shall examine the way in which Rūpa analyzes various shades of devotional emotions through the lens of color science that was developed in classical Sanskrit dramatology.

**Angelika C. Messner:** The logic of the concrete in Chinese emotion practices Sacred sites in Chinese history and the present have been investigated in their multiple identities: as part of imperial ritual (emperors throughout journeyed to sacred mountains in order to perform rituals to legitimate their political power); as part of mysticism; as part of life and fertility performances (women, as part of pilgrimage associations or with their family members, came to pray for baby sons); as part of death and purgatory sites (male villagers came to pray for departed ancestors); as part of Confucian, Buddhist and Daoist sites of worship and ritual; as sites for performing self cultivation and rectification of the mind. With a strong focus on practice and embodiment and by breaking away from a single discipline approach my paper is concerned with the question why people were supposed to achieve the Sacred. Here the idea of “inner pilgrimage” played a crucial role. This idea promoted the perception of a body-self (shen 身), seen as the intrinsic space where the Sacred “is located” and where it can be developed and lived with: this was impossible without a particular focus on the emotions.

**Irene Galandra Cooper:** Cose di casa: licit and illicit domestic piety in Cinquecento Naples

What did it mean to be a good Catholic in Renaissance Naples? Agnus Dei and rosaries were often recorded amongst the “Cose di Casa” listed in post-mortem inventories at the end of the Cinquecento. Verbs and adjectives that accompany these long-gone religious objects, such as “a corona da dire” or “la cara cona della nostra donna”, evoke the devotional nature of the object and emphasize the deceased’s piety. As practices related to these objects became signposts of new Christian vigor in the battle against heresy during the aftermath of the Council of Trent, these documents and objects tell the stories of devout Christians. However, Inquisition trials found in the Archivio Storico Diocesano of Naples convey another story. Focusing on case-studies, and combining a variety of sources, this paper will explore the licit and illicit use of small devotional objects at the pivotal moment of change following the Council of Trent.

## **Indigenous Religion(s): Local Grounds, Global Networks**

**Panel Chairs: Gregory Johnson, Siv Ellen Kraft, Bjørn Ola Tafjord**

Globalizing discourses concerning indigenous religion(s) exist today in contexts like academia, the art world, indigenous peoples’ activism, judicial practices, tourism, and the UN. They thrive on a flexible but fairly standardized repertoire of assumed similarities in religions of indigenous peoples: harmony with nature, sacred land, healing and holism, antiquity and spirituality, shamanism and

animism. Scholars like James Clifford (2013) and Ronald Niezen (2012) have referred to the increasing cultural and political importance of such formations. Yet we know little about articulations and implications on local indigenous grounds. Neither do we know well the dynamics and the reach of the networks through which these discourses travel. How are they performed, translated, and mediated? And how do they get related to claims of belonging and struggles for sovereignty? The case studies presented in this panel examine these questions from different geographical, historical, and methodological perspectives. Organizers of the panel are Greg Johnson (Colorado), Siv Ellen Kraft (Tromsø) and Bjørn Ola Tafjord (Tromsø).

**Gregory D. Alles:** Are adivasis indigenous?

During the course of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, many “tribal” peoples in South Asia have begun to self-identify as adivasi, literally, as “first inhabitants,” and eventually to embrace a global discourse of indigeneity, such as is found in the United Nations’ Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. While this self-identification is consistent with many formal accounts of indigeneity, which do not equate the term with autochthony, it is at odds with a common-language usage, according to which various other populations of South Asia claim indigenous status, among them the most privileged strata of the subcontinent. This essay will reflect on the usefulness and difficulties of applying notions of indigeneity in the South Asian context. In particular, it will examine what is to be gained and what is perhaps lost when we describe and analyze adivasi religious thought and practice in terms of a global discourse on indigenous religions.

**Bjørn Ola Tafjord:** Localized indigenous religions vs globalizing indigenist religioning vs globalized primitivist religionism

This paper argues that, for analytical purposes, it might be helpful sometimes to try to make a distinction between (1) localized indigenous religions, (2) globalizing indigenist religioning, and (3) globalized primitivist religionism. I will use examples from Talamanca, Costa Rica, to demonstrate what I mean by each of these categories, but also to show how hard it can be to make such distinctions in practice when confronting the complex, disputed, dynamic, embedded, fragmented, intersecting, multifaceted, real, reflexive matters and actors on the ground. Although the proposed exercise in classification necessarily simplifies and twists things quite brutally, its application on Talamancan materials and contexts still suggests that it might contribute to shedding critical light on things that too often have been confused in the study of religions.

**Arkotong Longkumer:** Towards a genealogy of the local: a spatial discourse of indigenous religions

This paper will examine the importance of spatial politics and its relation to indigenous religions in the Northeastern parts of India. Using the notion of territoriality (Sacks 1986), as it relates to the organization of space, I will argue that spatial politics are intimately related to the discourse of indigeneity and religion. Underscoring the relationship that exists between belonging and place, I will draw examples from indigenous religions in the region and demonstrate how identity is not only shaped by people's relationship to their "natural landscapes" but also by the tempestuous and "imagined" geopolitics that increasingly influence people's allegiances and practices.

**Graham Harvey:** Indigeneity on display

In international cultural festivals, national metropolitan museums and locally organized dance events, indigeneity is on display. But what is displayed? A range of tropes are variously promoted or contested in such venues, e.g. those of identity and belonging, tradition and entertainment, spirituality and relationality. In this presentation I consider the tensions between the essentialization of indigeneity as a singular phenomenon bearing the burden of ancient authentic spiritual belonging and the strategic deployment of indigeneity as a contemporary creation of fluidity, vitality and sovereignty. Principal examples will be the Sami-organized annual Riddu Riddu festival, the British Museum's marketing use of an "indigenous" pastiche, and the Conne River "traditional powwow". I will argue that a similar tension (between essentialization and strategic deployment) is evident in the increasing interest in "indigenous religions" within the academy.

**Claire Scheid:** Donyi-Polo's roots and routes: tracing "Sun-Moon" formalization among the Tani groups of Arunachal Pradesh, India

Donyi-Polo ("Sun-Moon") is the "common but flexible sacred frame" (Mibang & Chaudhuri, 2005) of the varieties of indigenous religion practiced among the Tani groups in Arunachal Pradesh, India (such as the Adi, the Apatani, the Nyishi). Since the mid-1980s, these ethnic communities have been restructuring their faith to fit the model of more mainstream religions via "institutionalization" processes. This paper explores the origins and transmissions of these changes in religious articulation through examining: (1) the participation of Adi community leaders in international "religious freedom" conferences in India and Germany, events that influenced the practical aspects of reformation; (2) the unifying nature of these movements among the Tani groups, encouraged by Adi emphasis on "shared mythological heritage"; and (3) the manner in which this "new religious blueprint" has sparked dialogue with other Northeast Indian indigenous

religious organizations and has led to secular, state-wide expressions of “indigeneity”.

**Greg Johnson:** Kingdom gone or kingdom come? Religious discourse in the Native Hawaiian federal recognition process of 2014

The United States Department of the Interior held fifteen heavily attended, dramatic public meetings on the topic of Native Hawaiian federal recognition during the summer of 2014. Taking these fraught meetings as its focus, this paper will explore the ways different groups of Hawaiians invoked religious idioms and quasi-religious discourses in the process of asserting a range of positions regarding Hawaiian sovereignty. My analysis attends to the rhetoric of the two most prominent and counter-posed camps that emerged in the course of the meetings, with special attention to the juridico-spatial reach of their claims. I will explore the ways some groups appealed to international entities (e.g. the UN and the World Court) as a means to position their claims beyond and against the state even while seeking to expand their localized authority within it. The paper will conclude with an analysis of the surprisingly faith-based rhetoric of some sovereignty activists.

**Cato Christensen:** Indigenous film: storytelling for a global religious identity

Filmmaking has become a vehicle of indigenous identity politics. Various called “indigenous film”, “native film” or “first nation film”, films by indigenous filmmakers on indigenous themes have become something like a genre of its own, and a global one as such. The growing corpus of films, film festivals, special tracks, and their discourses of reception also seem to outline a specialized language of mediated indigeneity. Film, in this context, is often presented as a continuation of indigenous storytelling traditions, and there is a marked tendency to promote spirituality as a core characteristic of indigenous communities, paired with strong bonds to the land and the past. This article explores the phenomenon of indigenous film with special emphasis on how it draws upon and influences broader discourses of “indigenous religion”. Empirical examples are drawn from Scandinavia, North America and Australia.

**Siv Ellen Kraft:** UN discourses on indigenous religion(s)

The UN publication *State of the World's Indigenous Peoples* refers in fact-like manners to “indigenous spirituality” as rooted in people’s relationship to the land, and central to all that they are and strive for: “For indigenous peoples, the land is the core of all spirituality and this relationship to the spirit of the earth is central to all the issues that are important to indigenous peoples today” (2007: 59). Similar claims to assumed religious commonalities and to a spiritual core of indigeneity appear to be widespread in UN texts and contexts. This chapter is an attempt to explore this discourse systematically, on the

basis of (primarily) published documents and official websites, in regard to content, extent, and links to other discourses, and with a focus on implied concepts of “religion” and “indigeneity”. Finally, I will explore the life of these texts among the Norwegian Sami, thereby to provide local examples of how they travel – how they are used, by whom, for which reasons, and whether they are discussed, negotiated and opposed.

**Takeshi Kimura:** The Ainu religion after assimilation and loss

Today the Ainu people develop their activities in locally different ways and in globally different ways by contesting for their views of their religion in their relationships to Japan and the global community. Due to the assimilation policy and the loss of some traditions since the mid-nineteenth century, the Ainu religious traditions have fallen into disarray. After the New Ainu Law of 1997, which promotes the Ainu culture but does not recognize Ainu sovereignty, the social conditions changed for the Ainu. At different social levels, different Ainu groups began to claim their own version of their religious traditions. With the UN as a backup, some Ainu activists attempt to claim sovereignty based upon their religious notion of the land. Some Ainu became more actively involved in constructing a global animistic connection with other indigenous peoples. A municipal government plans to construct a public Ainu natural park reflecting the Ainu view of nature as a tourist attraction.

**Suzanne Owen:** Unsettled natives in the Newfoundland imaginary

Wiped out through the impact of colonization, the Beothuk people in Newfoundland are the “absent other” who continue to be remembered and made present through the creative arts. In their book, *The Postcolonial Uncanny*, Gelder and Jacobs refer to the “unsettled settlers” in Australia in relation to “place” with issues of aboriginal land rights and anxieties linked to a changing environment. Likewise, in Newfoundland there is a postcolonial uneasiness that can disrupt a sense of belonging in a place where once dwelled the Beothuk. However, there are now competing claims to being “native” between people of Mi’kmaq (another indigenous group) and settler descent, affected by global discourses on indigeneity relating to land and heritage. This paper investigates how the theme of “unsettled natives” – referring to both the subject and the object – is depicted in literature and art where the presence of the extinct Beothuk haunts the Newfoundland imaginary.

**Jon Henrik Ziegler Remme:** Ethnographies returned: truth, completeness

and authenticity and the dynamics of Ifugao indigenous religion  
One important source for the globalized discourse on indigenous religions is the ethnography produced by academic researchers. By comparative and analytical concepts ethnographies enact similarities and differences between various cultural groups, which eventually gain significant political and cultural purchase

in issues related to identity, belonging and sovereignty. In this paper I examine how ethnographies on Ifugao (the Philippines) animistic religion through the 1900s have influenced the dynamics of Ifugao cultural self-awareness, particularly through the assumptions in these works regarding notions of truth, completeness and authenticity. I discuss how these assumptions have shaped Ifugao self-perceptions regarding ethnohistory, their relations to the Filipino national state, to national and international tourists, as well as inter-village political dynamics and relations between young and old ritual experts. The paper thus examines how ethnographies travel and return to indigenous people themselves and traces particularly the implications of the local reception of these ethnographic works.

**Trude Fonneland:** The indigenous festival of Isogaisa and religious meaning making in the present

The presentation will focus on the indigenous festival of Isogaisa held in Lavangen Northern Norway, which is presented as highlighting the spiritual traditions of an indigenous people. At this festival shamans from Norway, Russia, Greenland, Canada, New Zealand, and South America yearly gather to perform ceremonies and exchange knowledge. Isogaisa is but one of many examples of how shamanism is expressed in contemporary society; still the festival can be described as a major venue for shamanic religion making in the present. It also sheds light on how inter-cultural commonality between indigenous groups has become infused with notions of them as one spiritual community – notions, which it is argued, have increasingly become part of “the common terminology of indigeneity,” for instance in UN fora and international law. Concerned with sense-making on emic grounds, I focus on ways contemporary shamans anchor their practices in ancient indigenous pasts, or what they see and experience as common ancient pasts.

**Seth Schermerhorn:** Global indigeneity and local Christianity: performing O’odham identity in the present

By the early twenty-first century, both indigeneity and Christianity have gone global. As diverse Christianities are appropriated in indigenous communities, it has perhaps become harder to identify any putatively monolithic characteristics of Christianity. At the same time, as the category of indigeneity becomes more salient, the repertoire of articulations and performances of indigeneity remain somewhat fixed. One prominent example of this is hyperbolic valorization of the relationships between indigenous peoples and their land. However, if scholars of religion must denaturalize “Christianity” as a known quantity, the same must also be done with the category of indigeneity. Among the O’odham, who predominately live along the US–Mexico borderlands, contemporary articulations and performances of O’odham identity range from the folklorization of

indigeneity to the indigenization of Christianity. In particular, I have previously argued that some O’odham have indigenized Christianity by embedding, or emplacing, Christianity into the landscape.

**James L. Cox:** Global intentions and local conflicts: the rise and fall of Ambuya Juliana in Zimbabwe

In the mid-1990s, the Ambuya Juliana movement was hailed by eminent scholars, such as Terence Ranger, as probably the most important new religious movement in Africa. Ambuya Juliana had created a mass movement across southern Zimbabwe calling for a return to traditional patterns of life. At the same time, she had drawn on Christian symbols to convey her message. By 1995, she had extended her mission to Botswana and Mozambique, and reportedly even had a vision of carrying her message of traditional values to the United Kingdom. Almost as suddenly as her influence had spread, it waned and had virtually disappeared by the end of the 1990s. It is likely that Juliana had transgressed local indigenous protocols, primarily by ignoring the traditional authority of chiefs. This case demonstrates the power of the authority of indigenous traditions with respect to global movements, particularly when the global challenge to the local authority is regarded as illegitimate.

## Individualization

**Anna Haapalainen:** “I have to set them on the right path”: The problem of individualization in a Christian institutionalized religious community

Individuality, spirituality and religious experience are concepts used and transmitted in Christian communities. However, communities as well as members of Christian communities approach these concepts with ambivalence: individual religious experience is encouraged as a resource of “living faith” but in tandem it is seen as a potential danger towards “sound doctrine”. Therefore, in these communities a notable amount of effort is made to control individual spirituality and patchwork religiosity. In this paper, I shall scrutinize how the problem of individualization is framed and dealt with in one Finnish Evangelical Lutheran congregation. I shall approach the question from the point of view of power relations between pastors and laymen, and ask: How is the concept of individualization contextualized in the congregation? What possibilities do laymen have for influencing religious operations and substance? What are the circumstances in which individualization is considered to go too far and when is it acceptable?

**Elisa Heinämäki:** Proving the inner word: Radical Pietism and the changing semiotic ideologies in Lutheranism

One of the recurrent and often cited characteristics of Radical Pietism is the appeal to the “inner word” and the criticism of Orthodox Lutheran theology and practice as focused on “mere letter”. Yet, the appeal to the inner word is not simply a token of an increased attention to interiority and inner experience: it is often intimately linked to an intense engagement with the Bible, and entails a whole problematic of proving and testifying to the presence of the inner word in the community. This paper analyzes the cultural rupture occasioned by Radical Pietism in orthodox Lutheran, early eighteenth century Sweden-Finland by applying the concept of semiotic ideology, connoting an implicit, culturally specific understanding of how signs are supposed to be able to represent inner states and outside reality. The paper is a contribution to a deepened understanding of the role of and investment in language in Protestantism.

**Hermen Kroesbergen:** The dynamics of individual responsibility in religion  
This paper argues that a contextual view of religion obscures the individual’s responsibility in bringing about change. Ethicists have distinguished individuals who act applying their convictions, and others who act considering concrete situations (cf. De Villiers 2012). These two ways of acting for change can be accounted for by a contextual approach, investigating the influence of someone’s context of historical events and social processes (cf. Giddens 2009). Yet, the responsibility involved both in acting from conviction and in acting from responsible consideration, paradoxically, results in “irresponsibilization” (Derrida 1996): someone hides behind what everyone in that situation should have done. Individual responsibility in religion, however, goes beyond what either absolute principles or considerate policies would recommend. Luther’s alleged statement “Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise” will be used to illustrate this. Restricting oneself to analyzing the context, it will be argued, leaves out taking personal responsibility within that context.

**Frantisek Novotny:** Trial of the Templars and the thematization of physical devil-worship in the inquisitional investigations

This paper focuses on how the trial of the Templars contributed to the establishment of the concept of the devil’s physical interaction with the investigated heretics in the inquisitional records. My argument is based upon two statements: First, although the idea of bodily interaction between the devil and his minions emerged during the 1230s’ antiheretical campaign, it was rather a stereotype of the propaganda than a topic appearing in the records during the thirteenth century. Second, although the investigation of the Templars does not frequently concern this idea, it brought forth themes which contributed to the thematization of the devil’s physical action for later trials. The essential ones were the separation

of malpractices from doctrinal heresy, accusations of a physically dangerous conspiracy and the emphasis on idolatry. I will conclude that mainly those factors led to rare talks on the topic during the trial, and laid foundations for its further development.

**John Marshall:** Authority and anxiety: the circle of pseudepigraphy

Pseudepigraphic compositions were widely produced in the early centuries of Christianity. Letters, testaments, apocalypses, and treatises written under false names strove at a self-contradicting task: to invoke the power of tradition to condition change in their present, while simultaneously inventing that tradition in the process of pseudepigraphy, that is to say falsifying the past. In many instances, followers of Jesus in the first, second, and third centuries were painfully aware of this instability in their tradition. This paper examines early Christian expressions of anxiety over the integrity of their tradition, expressed in letters, heresiological treatises, controversies, and other genres. A key response to these anxieties was a discourse of apostolic heritage and apostolic validation. Perversely, this generated further incitements to pseudepigraphic composition. This paper sketches the contours of this tense dynamic of tradition and innovation.

**Wolfgang Spickermann:** Individual choice, Catholic resistance and conversion in vandal Africa

With the invasion of Roman Africa and the conquest of Carthage (439) the Vandals tried to erect a new Arian kingdom in a well-organized Catholic environment. The first kings Geiserich and Hunerich took strong action against the Catholic clergy to undermine the institutional church and to invite greater parts of the provincials to become Arians. But these attempts failed, because many individuals decided to stay Catholic and to be part of a better organized Catholic network. On the other hand we can recognize conversions of Arian individuals to Catholicism. The reasons for this are not so much to be found in a substantive departure from Arianism, but rather in the individual circumstances and the social ties of the converts. Pagan and Donatist groups also played an important role in these religious conflicts. The paper will discuss these religious conflicts from the perspective of network building and individual choice.

## Innovation and Tradition in the Field of Entangled Religion and Medicine – Questioning the Differentiation of Religion and Medicine

**Panel Chair: Dorothea Lüddeckens, Bettina E. Schmidt, Monika Schrimpf**

With the modern development of biomedicine and its scientific institutions, medicine and religion have been differentiated as distinct subsystems. However, religious and medical concepts and therapeutic practices are often intertwined, which indicates a process of de-differentiation. Furthermore, the etic distinction between medicine and religion does not necessarily coincide with emic perceptions, which do not necessarily differentiate between medical and religious “treatment”. With these perspectives in mind, we focus on innovations in religious practice and discourse that resulted from the entanglement of religion and medicine. Different to Europe and North America, the emergence of secular biomedicine in many regions has not led to a similar differentiation of religion and medicine. Often, biomedicine is only one healing system among others, including religious forms of healing. How are medicine and religion interrelated with each other in medical pluralism? Do interaction, competition and conflict between different healing systems lead to innovation? How can this field be approached from an anthropological perspective? In contemporary societies the boundaries between religion and medicine are constantly re-negotiated. Public discourses about health care reflect diverse ways in which therapeutic techniques are labeled by politicians, doctors, “healers”, patients etc. Often, reference is made to “innovation” or “tradition” in order to legitimize authoritative claims. This panel investigates how discourses create new conceptions of religion and medicine, or rather dissolve this distinction altogether. We investigate the growing presence of alternative healing practices and therapies in the health care sector in Europe and North America. Many of these innovative practices are based on religious semantics and concepts but in their offering devoid of their religious context. Do these developments indicate a process of dedifferentiation between religion and medicine? Or do they rather maintain the difference by “secularizing” religious praxis?

**Bettina E. Schmidt:** Wellbeing and mediumnistic healing: the relationship between biomedicine and religious healing in Brazil

Healing is a consistent feature of the practices of many religious groups in Brazil. Mediumnistic healing often even develops in dialogue with medical professionals. Therefore, Brazilian psychiatrists, Alexander Moreira de Almeida and Francisco Lotufo-Neto, propose special methodological guidelines for the study of ASC, which include a warning against pathologizing the unusual. They urge us to consider the cultural contexts as well as the cultural meanings of the

terms “normality” and “pathology” and hence to carefully consider the limitations of psychiatric classifications. Some Brazilian scholars even argue that the complementarity between science and faith is embedded in the culture in Brazil where healing is sought in both conventional and non-conventional institutions. This paper will discuss the relationship between medicine and religious healing in Brazil where the boundaries between the dimensions of religion and biomedicine are regularly crossed, thus engendering new therapeutic practices and epistemologies.

**Rebecca Lynch:** Beyond “religion” and “medicine”: Cosmological worldview and everyday practices in a Trinidadian village

The distinction between “religion” and “medicine” is hard to maintain when looking at everyday practices in a Trinidadian village. Concepts of the body, health and illness can be linked to both etic categories: spirits dwell within bodies and are crucial elements in the cause and treatment of illness and in maintaining health. To live a Christian lifestyle guided by, and in communication with, the Holy Spirit is to be healthy; neglecting this can cause devilish interference in the form of illness. Biomedicine, local bush medicine and spiritual healing are used separately and together in treatment, but all are only effective if God wills them to be. Such different medical systems cannot be easily separated from each other, or from “religion”. Drawing on ethnographic data of everyday practices in Trinidad, I suggest that such etic terms restrict analysis. Instead, studying broader cosmological worldviews is more productive in understanding illness and healing.

**Nasima Selim:** Ontologies in Sufi healing: beyond religion and medicine  
Sufi healing and other “oriental” practices of “family resemblance” have entered the everyday contemporary “West”. More than twenty Sufi networks inhabit the “multi-cultural” city of Berlin. My doctoral project explores how Sufism is enacted and experienced in urban healing practices, navigating three transnational Sufi networks during twelve months of sensory “praxiography”. This paper mobilizes three case illustrations: Heilritual, the absent healing ritual; Sohbət, spiritual conversation; and Sema, the whirling meditation – to show innovative ways in which these “material practices” assemble body techniques, things, images, discourses, history-place-making processes, and “technologies of the self” towards healing effects or unintended consequences. Beyond restricting healing to the a-priori fields of religion and/or medicine, I argue for an ontological approach in order to discuss what kinds of Sufism are enacted to create healing, as for example in “relation to a highest reality”, or in healing, when it “addresses the particularities of individual episodes of suffering”.

**Gabriele Alex:** “Whatever the doctor says is medicine, that is medicine”: notions of knowledge and belief in Tamil Nadu, South India

Whereas for states and academic institutions the differentiation into knowledge (science) and belief (religion) is a crucial instrument of classification and legitimization of knowledge, for people who are facing sickness or other kinds of misfortune this divide can be played out in various ways. Based on fieldwork in rural Tamil Nadu the paper presents different sickness episodes focusing on health seeking behavior, in order to analyze how different notions of health (such as individual health versus corporate health, or physical health versus spiritual health), knowledge and belief are negotiated in episodes of sickness, how these notions impact on each other and how these processes give room for innovation in different fields. The paper argues that seemingly secular or religious healing practices, once appropriated into individual sickness episodes, develop their own meaning within the respective contexts.

**Nina Rageth:** Siddha medicine between medicine and religion: religious communication as a means of authorizing a medical system

With the creation of the Department of Indian Systems of Medicine and Homeopathy in 1995, several so-called “traditional” medical systems like Ayurveda, Unani or Siddha Medicine got integrated in the public health sector in India. This integration meant a high degree of institutionalization and a reworking of their practices and discourses through modern modes of knowledge. This presentation will concentrate on Siddha Medicine, which is mainly practiced in the South Indian state Tamil Nadu. It will show how on the one hand Siddha Medicine recognized as a medical system participates in a medical discourse yet how on the other hand it applies a distinctively religious communication in order to gain and maintain authority in the medical field. This religious communication can be seen in the rhetoric of tradition and the emphasis on the divine origin of the medical knowledge as well as in its concepts of personhood.

**Philipp Hetmanczyk:** The notion of “qi” in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) in China and the West

The concept of “qi” is connected to Chinese cosmology and several religious traditions, including healing and body practices such as Qi Gong. Practitioners of TCM in Western countries commonly connect their practice to “qi” as “vital energy”, which makes TCM compatible with a market of spirituality and healthcare, where religion and medicine tend to dedifferentiate and “tradition” is often valued as innovative contribution to secularized biomedicine. Authorities in China (PRC) have tried to draw a clear line between religion and medicine to exclude concepts suspected of carrying religious (or “superstitious”) meaning, thus preventing medical innovation and “progress”. By separating “qi” from its cosmological context and defining it as purely somatic functions, Qi Gong became ac-

ceptable to TCM. However, since the conflict between officials and the Falun Gong movement, Qi Gong as well as the very notion of “qi” seem to have turned problematic again for TCM in China.

**Monika Schrimpf:** Buddhist medicine or medical Buddhism? Medical discourses in contemporary Japanese Buddhism

Since the 1990s, Japan has experienced a boom of healing practices in the field of the “New Spirituality Culture”, ranging from meditation and yoga to visiting power spots or Buddhist sculptures. In addition, New Religious Movements offer diverse ways of healing illnesses. This paper, however, focuses on the discourse about medicine and therapeutic practices in contemporary Buddhism. Currently, Buddhist temples, organizations or individuals offer body practices such as yoga, breathing techniques, meditation etc., as well as therapeutic consultations and spiritual care for terminally ill patients. Often, these innovative activities are presented in a way that links allegedly “traditional” knowledge to contemporary concepts of health and wellbeing. I will illustrate how Buddhist and other Asian medical knowledge is labeled in today’s Buddhist discourse by referring to the three semantic fields of medicine, spirituality and Buddhist erudition, and how these discursive strategies result in new concepts of religion and/or medicine.

**Jens Schlieter:** Buddhist insight meditation (*vipassanā*) in religious settings and Kabat-Zinn’s “mindfulness-based stress reduction”: an example of dedifferentiation of religion and medicine?

Mindfulness meditation attracts growing attention, transgressing the borders of a spiritual practice. Occasionally conceptualized as “mindful turn”, meditation techniques taken especially from Theravāda Buddhism were modernized, unified, and established as therapeutic practice for a wide range of applications: as a coping strategy for stress and anxiety disorders, psychosomatic treatment or addiction therapy, or ADHD treatments. So far, studies were mainly interested in clinical evidence for salutogenetic health effects, or its effects on alertness, or body awareness. In contrast, the presentation will explore the transformation process of the respective techniques. In Buddhism, mindfulness meditation originally serves spiritual goals (e. g. realizing impermanence, dis-identifying with a “self”, or liberation). The presentation will explore how Kabat-Zinn developed his “secular” technique, and how its Buddhist elements were brought into practice in medical environments. The example may provide a more precise description of recent innovative counter-processes of “dedifferentiation” between “religion”/“spirituality” and “medicine” (including somatically oriented psychotherapies).

**Barbara Zeugin:** In between religion and medicine: alternative religiosity at the end of life

Given that religion constitutes a main topic in the context of dying and death, the medical paradigm of palliative care provides a beneficial instance of the changing inter-relation between religion and medicine. In this field terminally ill and dying people frequently revert to alternative religious concepts (such as reincarnation) and practices (such as meditation). Even health care professionals are affected by such forms of religion, not only in their personal religiosity but also in their professional approach. A physiotherapist, for example, pays particular attention to his patients' feet since he considers them to be the exit spot of the soul after death. It is this sort of actions and the correspondent interpretations of the employees of a hospice that this paper focuses on. They illustrate how the alleged rigid boundaries between religion and medicine are dissolved by the provision of spiritual care that is informed by alternative religiosity.

**Dorothea Lüdeckens:** Complementary and alternative medicine within secular health care: examples of religious innovation and dedifferentiation of religion and medicine?

Due to the process of medicalization, religion in public secular hospitals in Switzerland is officially accepted as chaplaincy, while medicine is only related to scientific and not to religious knowledge and practice. This paper explores how religion enters the medical system through the integration of Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM), which sometimes is labelled or perceived as "spiritual". This process can be described as religious innovation in that religion re-enters an area restricted to science. Compared to biomedicine, the fields of CAM, alternative religion, and "spirituality" are decentralized and weakly institutionalized. By applying Ann Swidler's theory it will be investigated how and why actors in public healthcare pursue specific strategies of action that refer to the "tool kit" of alternative religion. As there is a growing institutionalization of CAM within public healthcare, it is interesting to further analyze whether those observations point to a growing societal process of dedifferentiation.

**Steven Sutcliffe:** Response

## **Inside Out? The (In)Visibility of Religious Communities in Contemporary Societies**

**Kim Knott**

Situated within the broader question of why religion is now so publicly visible within secular societies in recent decades is a more specific one about the motivations and tactics of religious communities in becoming more or less open to

wider scrutiny. What are the drivers that lead religious communities and groups to assert their presence in the built environment and in open public spaces? Why do they invite strangers in, publicize themselves, or engage actively with others in civil society? Are such tactics merely the consequence of effective state strategies of citizenship and diversity management or is there more to it for the religious communities and groups involved? And why do some pursue such tactics whilst others prefer to avoid the public gaze, and to operate beneath the radar? Some of the answers to these questions are highly contextual – historically, geographically and politically – and they are all the more interesting for being so. As Manuel Vásquez and I noted in our 2014 paper, “Three dimensions of religious place making in diaspora”, different spatial regimes “give rise to and regulate distinctions between the religious and the secular, the public and the private, the visible and the invisible, and the native and the stranger.” But religious communities and groups also have agency within the process, with their own theological, social and cultural logic and reasons for adopting particular tactics, however constrained. It is on these I will focus, drawing on examples from recent research projects in global cities.

## **Integrating the Material, Bodily, and Sensual into the Study of Religion: A Round-Table Discussion of Strategies and Approaches**

### **Panel Chair: Alexandra Grieser**

The scholarly neglect of the material, bodily and sensual aspects of religion, which has been widely critiqued in recent years, has initiated a wide range of responses: problematic terms such as “religious experience” have been revised and set in a new context; concepts such as materiality, mediation, and aesthetics have been developed to reach beyond text hermeneutics; modes of bodily and sensory knowledge have been scrutinized; and, instead of opposing text and body, or matter and mind to each other, the interplay between the sensuous and the semiotic has been moved to the centre of the debate. In an interactive round-table session, the speakers take stock of the vibrant activities of the last decade by briefly presenting different approaches in the field. They will explore the common ground, fathom the potential of the differences, and outline open questions to map future challenges.

Participants: **Ann Taves, Anne Koch, Birgit Meyer, Robert Yelle**

## “Intellektuellenreligion” Reconsidered: Systems, Adaptions and Recent Trajectories

### Panel Chair: Hidetaka Fukasawa

The concepts of religion or religiosity of intellectuals (Intellektuellenreligion/-religiosität) are still not widely used as analytical tools in the study of religions. However, it is undeniable that the phenomena designated by these terms can be observed extensively in the religious history of modernity in which both the growth of the intellectual class and the prevalence of religious knowledge as cultural resources led to the reinterpretation or new foundation of religions. Furthermore, we can find reciprocal and intrinsic relationships between the formation of religiosity of intellectuals and the rise of modern scholarship of religion. Based on the examples of modern Germany and of Japan today, the four papers in this panel attempt to discuss and clarify the religious imaginations of intellectuals in modernity.

**Hidetaka Fukasawa:** Georg Simmel and the paradoxes of the religiosity of intellectuals

For the early German sociologists such as Max Weber and Ernst Troeltsch, the problem of the relationship between religion and the intellectual stratum of society was one of the most important themes in their sociological analysis of religion. Unlike Weber and Troeltsch, Simmel was not engaged in the historical study of religions. Nonetheless, his sociological and philosophical analysis of religion, especially his diagnostic writings of the time (*Zeitdiagnose*) reveal his ideas about the problem of intellectual religiosity and the paradoxical character of his own engagement with the issue. Considering the situation among the intellectual middle class of the urban milieu, he points out the existence of the “wandering” yearning for the religious. Simmel rejects the religious new formations of the intellectuals of his day as vacuous “coquetry” and claims the return to the “metaphysical” character of life (*Leben*) itself, which paradoxically unveils the nature of his own intellectual religiosity.

**Hiroshi Kubota:** Intellectuals’ attempts to produce and popularize “Jesus of Nazareth” in modern Germany

In modern history of religions in German-speaking regions in the nineteenth and the first decades of the twentieth century, “Christianity” experienced a new sort of revival, despite its gradual institutional decline, in the form of intellectual imaginations of “Jesus of Nazareth”. Hereby, a wide spectrum of intellectual and imaginary religiosity can be discerned, ranging from quests for “historical Jesus” in the field of New Testament Studies to various esoteric, occult, or racist figurations of “Jesus” – such as “Jesus the mesmerist”, “Jesus the Aryan”, and so on. In this paper the analytical focus shall be directed to the mechanism that

produced and popularized certain religious knowledge, especially concerning “Jesus”, whether in academe or not, so that one can examine possibilities and limitations in conceptualizing these intellectual attempts to represent “Jesus of Nazareth” as manifestations of “Intellektuellenreligion”.

**Jeong-Hwa Choi:** Intellectual religiosity between Angst and optimism as reflected in avant-garde art in German modernity  
 Modernity with its belief in progress and its threat to existing religious institutions and traditions has been depicted conspicuously in German avant-garde art since the turn of the twentieth century. Expressionist circles like Die Brücke and Der blaue Reiter portrayed humans and their environment in an intellectualized and abstract manner, as some of the artists involved went on personal quests for spiritual meaning through their artistic creations. This presentation examines selected works and writings from German avant-garde art to consider the way in which this search for meaning and a new lifestyle were represented and how it can be linked with the study of religion as practiced at that time. Thereby this presentation aims at opening up a new way of interpreting the Zeitgeist of the scholarly approach to religion – being characterized by an ambiguous sense of anxiety and an optimistic belief in progress – under the catchword Intellektuellenreligiosität.

**Lisette Gebhardt:** Post-Fukushima-religiosity as anti-intellectual agenda  
 Throughout the 1980s, concepts of the religious were contrived by the Japanese publishing scene of the time, whose representatives were called “spiritual intellectuals” (reiseiteki chishikijin) by Shimazono Susumu. Today, in the post-Fukushima era, the concept of the intellectual and of intellectuality has to be re-evaluated; likewise the nature of religious argumentations in circles of Japanese scholars and artists. As an example for an almost anti-intellectual agenda, I would like to discuss the Fukushima-novel “Sweet Hereafter” (2011) of the well-known author Yoshimoto Banana: while dealing with topics of an older “spirituality boom”, like near-death-experiences and ethno-esoteric excursions, it also conjures up an ideal of a spirituality by conviviality which seems to be aligning with the conservative Zeitgeist after “Fukushima”. How the cosmology or “spirituality” of the conservatives will take shape in future literary representations and on the level of cultural discourses is an enthralling question for cultural sciences relating to Japan.

**Christoph Auffarth:** Response

## International Interreligious Dialogue Organisations: New Developments among Contemporary Actors – Aims – Activities

### Panel Chair: Patrice Brodeur

This panel aims to present and examine various aspects of both international and transnational recent dimensions of interreligious dialogue activities, with a special focus on organizational dynamics. By bringing together different disciplinary, gender, and worldview perspectives, this panel will showcase the results of up-to-date empirical research endeavors that study new developments among organizational actors in the most recent history of interreligious dialogue activities. In doing so, the proposed panel wants to discuss the following questions:

- What kinds of roles do international interreligious dialogue organizations play today on the global scene? Are they simply INGOs or Transnational Religious Organizations? Is Social Movement Theory useful to make sense of this new development in the global dynamics of religions today?
- Who are its main organizational actors?
- What are their principal aims and how different are they from one another?
- How are these aims translated into action, i.e., a variety of types of activities?

### **Patrice Brodeur:** Towards a New Typology of Interreligious Dialogue

Throughout the last two decades, interreligious dialogue has become an increasingly significant aspect of present-day religious dynamics. While the modern practice of organized interreligious dialogue goes back more than one hundred years, the latest period from around 1990 to the present has witnessed an unprecedented rise in new or expanded interreligious dialogue organizations and networks. For example, there is the establishment of a “Council for a Parliament of the World’s Religions” (1988), the foundation of “United Religions Initiative” (between 1995 and 2000), the latest iteration of the now named “Universal Peace Federation” (2005) or the establishment of the “Order of Universal Interfaith” (2010). At the same time, the notion of “interreligious dialogue” (often synonymous to “interfaith dialogue”) stands increasingly at the centre of much more general global discourses that link religion to conflict prevention and resolution (e.g. in the context of the UN Alliance of Civilizations (2005) or KAICIID – King Abdullah International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (2012)). These few examples confirm that the field of interreligious dialogue activities is characterized by the emergence of new dynamics, which calls for scientific study both within the interdisciplinary field of Religious Studies as well as from a transdisciplinary perspective. This paper will present a new typol-

ogy to make sense of this new development in global interreligious dynamics and will explore to what extent such new religious phenomena can be explained by a transdisciplinary social movement theory.

**Karsten Lehmann, Jana Vobecka:** Emerging stories from the new KAICIID International Interreligious Dialogue Database

The last three decades saw a dynamic growth of interreligious dialogue initiatives around the world. Against this background, our paper aims to present the first results of empirical research carried out within the KAICIID Peace Mapping Project (PMP) that maps the current landscape of international interreligious dialogue activities and organizations worldwide. The presentation will briefly present the main aims of the PMP project as well as the results of its first stage in a quantitative analysis of more than 300 international interreligious dialogue organizations and their activities. Our preliminary analysis shows that a majority of the international interreligious dialogue organizations focus on peacebuilding activities. Furthermore, a distinction can be made most clearly between those that focus on activities linked to the promotion of democracy and human rights and those that do not (i.e., focusing on a broad variety of other issues).

**Lucy Moore:** Islamic Relief and informal interreligious dialogue: a transnational case study

Discussions of interreligious dialogue can often focus on those organizations and actors that explicitly seek to interact across faiths or religions. However, much “dialogue” also takes place in less formal ways and lies within the practical realm of cooperation, collaboration or even service delivery. Islamic Relief, as an international humanitarian agency, frequently works with other faith-based organisations (FBOs). This presentation discusses the varied nature of this kind of “interreligious dialogue”; frequently informal, “faith” can alternatively represent an identity marker, or a focus for shared values. These different roles for faith can result in varied forms of interaction, opening up different opportunities for dialogue that may not be available to those with specific interreligious mandates. This presentation will draw on practical examples of cooperation between FBOs – including service delivery, shared advocacy initiatives and collaboration for working with religious leaders – to demonstrate these different roles and the implications this has for dialogue.

**Catherine Cornille:** Response

## Interpreting Form and Forms of Religion: Dialogue of Social Systems Theory and the Scientific Study of Religion

### Panel Chair: Moritz Klenk

In the past few years, the scientific study of religions shows a growing interest in Social Systems Theory (SST). Recent translations of several of Luhmann's books into English further revealed that this interest can be understood as a global fascination for strong theories in the field of the study of religions. Expanding on the results of a conference that will be held in May 2015 in Zurich, this panel reflects on the possible synergy between the scientific study of religions and SST. The papers address both classic receptions and recent developments of the theory, chasing up the most controversial questions of the contentious relationship between SST and the study of religion.

**Andrea Rota:** Religion as communication: the concepts of communication by Luhmann and Searle and their relevance for the scientific study of religion Following the reception of the linguistic turn within the scientific study of religion, several authors understand religion as a particular form of communication (Tyrell et al. 1998). Within this framework, this paper explores the potential of John Searle's philosophy of language and society for this discipline. Searle's theory of speech acts, meaning and communication provide fundamental insight regarding the role of language in the constitution of social, institutional reality. However, it falls short of a criterion to characterize communication forms defining different social spheres. To solve this difficulty, the paper explores the possibility of combining Searle's perspective with the social systems theory of Niklas Luhmann, who conceives religious communication in functional terms as a means to cope with the fundamentally contingent nature of communication itself. Drawing on this comparison, the paper discusses epistemological and methodological consequences for the scientific study of religion.

**Moritz Klenk:** Recent developments in Social Systems Theory (SST) and their possible implications for the study of religion The recent interest in Social Systems Theory (SST) within the discipline of the study of religion does not conceal the fact that our discipline has long been struggling with such strong theoretical approaches. This has led to a wider ignorance of recent developments of the theory. Today, long-standing pillars of SST are challenged, with far-reaching theoretical implications for further theoretical developments. "Is there still something that could be called society?" (Maren Lehmann) "Do social systems really exist?" (Dirk Baecker) "Are social and psychic systems really that independent when it comes to the medium of meaning?" (Peter Fuchs) It might turn out that not only the ideological suspicion against SST loses ground due to SST's recent developments, but also that the study of

religion can both profit from and contribute to SST, as it continues to be under “heavy construction”.

## **Interreligious Contact in the Roman World and in Colonial Mesoamerica: A Comparative Analysis**

### **Panel Chair: Francisco Marco Simón**

This project brings together specialists (historians, anthropologists, archaeologists) in the Ancient World (among them Richard Gordon and Greg Woolf) with others working in the Modern period (such as Félix Báez-Jorge and Celia Fontana). Considering comparison as a starting point for a better understanding of cultural specificity, we aim to analyze: (1) the use of the Classical World by the European colonizers as a model to conceptualize the conquest experience and to build the discourse on the Other according to established categories (barbarism and idolatry, human sacrifice, sorcery and magic); (2) the different responses of the natives in the Roman world and in Colonial Mexico, from violence and rejection, to selective appropriation, with special attention to the role of the Christian rhetoric and the “bricolage” in the religious systems of natives and colonizers. The panel will present specific goals of the project within the next three years.

**Celia Fontana Calvo, Gonzalo Fontana Elboj:** The Book of Revelation, a text for the defeated of both hemispheres

Belonging to the genre started by the Book of Daniel, the Book of Revelation constitutes the most violent and resentful allegation against Roman domination of the whole of ancient literature. It is, therefore, a unique case of what might be denominated “literature of the defeated” in the sphere of the Roman Empire. However, fifteen centuries after its composition, the biblical text was reused in order to understand the tragedy experienced in the New World. The development of the events in the second half of the sixteenth century predicted a mournful and painful end for both the indigenous population and culture and the Franciscans, who had hopefully initiated the process of Christianization. This disastrous atmosphere is essential to understanding the iconography of the paintings in the church of Tecamachalco (state of Puebla), where the depiction of the history of mankind includes abundant apocalyptic visions.

**David Charles Wright-Carr:** Persistence of native military iconography among the Otomí in New Spain

In traditional academic discourse, the military conquest of central Mexico was followed by a “spiritual conquest”, in which millions of Indians were assimilated into the Spanish political, economic, and ideological system. The study of indigenous visual expressions, as well as their alphabetic texts, reveals that the na-

tives, far from being passive subjects in these processes, developed various strategies to preserve their power, dignity, and collective identity. The Otomí, particularly, participated in the armed colonization of the territory of the nomads on the northern frontier of Mesoamerica, as allies of the Spanish troops. Native martial iconography, centered on the solar cult, is clearly manifest in the Huamantla Map, a cartographic-historical manuscript, and in the mural paintings in the former Augustinian convent dedicated to the archangel Michael, in Ixmiquilpan, Hidalgo. Both artworks were painted during the final third of the sixteenth century.

**Silvia Alfayé:** Hybrid images/Imágenes mestizas: ritual and visual dynamics in Celtiberia under Roman colonization

The conquest of Celtiberia by the Romans transformed the religious and visual dynamics of native communities whose reactions facing cultural contact and colonial domination were neither passive nor homogeneous. The Celtiberians had agency to select, reject and reinterpret the conquerors' cultural codes according to their traditional but changing ways of being-in-the-world, creating hybrid ceremonial forms and religious images (creole art) that were used as active artefacts to show and negotiate identity in a new provincial frame. This paper deals with three aspects of those mestize images: (1) the apparition of an anthropomorphic iconography of Celtiberian gods as result of the contact with Rome, and its impact in native visual theology; (2) the colonization of the imaginary of the Celtiberian animal sacrifice; (3) the use of religious images as celebrations of warrior ideology, supports of individual and collective memories, and expressions of communal survival against the colonial pressure.

## **(In)Visible Tantra and Afterlife Worlds: Tantric and Death Iconographies as Visual Religion**

**Panel Chairs: Gudrun Bühnemann, Xenia Zeiler**

It is well known that visual representations of Hindu Tantric deities and descriptions of afterlife/death worlds in South Asia employ dark and at times morbid imagery. While such features do in fact dominate the visualizations prescribed for certain deities and merit a detailed study, this panel highlights a much broader range of visual and iconographic subtleties. As such, for the first time, it opens up a discussion of the theoretical framework of Visual Religion within the setting of South Asian Tantra and afterlife worlds. Accordingly, the individual papers will focus on a range of themes within the field and discuss hidden portraits of Nepali kings on representations of Tantric divinities; the interface of image, imagination, and inner visibility in the Parasurama-Kalpasutra; the visualization of karman as bodily and environmental qualities in Hindu death rituals

and mythology; and the iconographically standardized visualization of dreadful and fearsome aspects of Hindu Tantric goddesses.

**Gudrun Bühnemann:** The king as a god: royal portraits in seventeenth-century Nepal

King Pratāpa Malla of Kathmandu (r. 1641–1674) is among the most important kings of the Malla dynasty of Nepal. He was an initiated Tantric practitioner who supported the arts and composed poetry. Portraits of him have been preserved in sculptures, paintings and line drawings. Especially noteworthy is a statue of him atop a pillar in front of the temple of the Tantric goddess Taleju on Kathmandu's Darbar Square. This innovative representation was modeled on pillars featuring a statue of the divine bird Garuḍa as a servant in front of Viṣṇu temples. In addition to straightforward portraits of the king, there are hidden ones which show his facial features on representations of Tantric divinities, suggesting an identification of the king and the divinity. This paper examines new developments in the royal portraiture of the late Malla period and shows how they reflect changing concepts of the relationship between king and god.

**Annette Wilke:** Image, imagination, and inner visuality in Tantric ritual, illustrated by the Parasurama-Kalpasutra

Image, in contrast to picture, means both the exterior icon and the mental representation. The connection is performed by imagination. Imagination can be defined as the mental capacity to represent, make the non-present present, convert sensory worlds into worlds of meaning, and worlds of meaning into sensory forms. All these aspects are made profuse use of in Tantric ritual which often applies also deliberate imagination as a powerful technique. The paper illustrates the interface of image, imagination, and inner visuality by the Parasurama-Kalpasutra (c. sixteenth century), an eminent ritual manual of Kaula Srividya. Examples will be the meditation (dhyana) of the iconographic features of the fierce goddess Varahi, the blending of the ritual diagram sricakra and the jewel island in the mental representation of the chief goddess Lalita, and pure inner visuality during the initiation rites – the guru's use of imagination to transform the disciple into a divine image.

**Johanna Buss:** The visualization of karman as bodily and environmental qualities in Hindu death rituals and mythology

The Pretakalpa of the Garuḍapurāṇa and related texts dealing with Hindu death rituals and the afterlife describe how the deceased is imagined to travel through the underworld during the first year after his or her death and then be reborn or further transferred into one of the numerous heavens or hells. These mythological and ritual texts contain vivid descriptions of the ghostly bodies and of the landscapes the deceased has to cross. The descriptions are linked to the liminal stage of the deceased during the first year after death, but also illustrate his or

her karman as well. In my paper I shall analyze how the notion of good and bad karman is translated into visualizations of bodily and environmental qualities.

**Xenia Zeiler:** Tantric and tantric influenced visual standardization: mainstream iconographies of fierce female deities

Goddesses associated with danger, inauspiciousness and fierceness are an essential part of South Asian and especially Tantric pantheons, and despite highly diverse backgrounds they share certain iconographical symbols in their representations. For instance, rather general and visually straightforward death imaginary like cremation grounds or skulls, but also more specific and subtle attributes like the winnowing fan and accompanying animals like the crow are almost exclusively connected to deities with fierce and dark representations. This paper points out how and why certain visual attributes dominate the iconography of fierce goddesses and analyzes their highly symbolic potential. It also argues that they serve as standardized visual markings and as such are established, mainstream visual characteristics for dangerous or fierce goddesses across various textual and historical contexts in South Asia, including Tantric traditions.

## **Islamic Interpretive Tradition and Gender Justice: Processes of Canonization, Subversion, and Change**

### **Panel Chairs: Omaima Abou-Bakr, Mulki Al-Sharmani**

Focusing on the question of gender, this panel tackles the interrelated issues of canonization and change in Islamic interpretive tradition (i. e., exegesis, jurisprudence, science of hadith, etc.). The panel addresses the following questions: How were particular discourses on gender roles and rights formed and made hegemonic in this tradition? What alternative discourses can be identified both historically and in contemporary interpretive knowledge that is being produced by Muslim women scholars who are concerned with the question of gender justice and reform of religious knowledge? What are the hermeneutical principles and methodologies guiding these scholars? What are their contributions? What are their limitations and gaps and how can they be resolved? The overall aim of the panel is to explore how the question of methodological reform in Islamic interpretive tradition can be better tackled through critical analysis of the contributions of contemporary Muslim women scholars producing new interpretive knowledge.

**Nevin Reda:** Tafsir, tradition and methodological contestations: the case of polygamy

The classical Islamic exegetical tradition classifies interpretation into two distinct categories: knowledge-based and opinion-based. While knowledge-based

interpretations are themselves ranked into varying degrees of desirability, opinion-based interpretations are categorically rejected. Islamic feminists, not wishing to have their interpretations fall into the inferior, opinion-based category must therefore tackle the methodological basis of the patriarchal interpretations they challenge. This paper explores Ibn Taymiyya's classical hermeneutics in conjunction with verse 4:3, which addresses polygamy. It proposes a new interpretation for this verse, showing how some of the methodological principles that Ibn Taymiyya so lauds are absent in traditionalist interpretations and how applying these principles will lead to very different exegetical results.

**Yasmin Amin:** Historical roots of gender justice: a reading in the Hadith and Asbab al Nuzul

The question of gender justice is not a new construct by Muslim feminists, but has a long tradition and was very much part of the discourse during the Prophet's time. This paper addresses this discourse that raised questions about certain gender aspects in Islamic jurisprudence, rituals and even the language of the Qur'an as witnessed by various dialogues between Umm Salama and the Prophet. Her own questions, but also those of the Muslim women, through her, were addressed by the Prophet and sometimes even in the Qur'anic revelation. This discourse is partially preserved in the Islamic canon such as in the asbab nuzul al-Qur'an (reasons for revelation) genre, hadith, and jurisprudence. This paper explores some of these questions, showing how some of the concerns of gender justice were dealt with during the Prophet's time and also in the Islamic exegetical tradition, grounding gender justice concerns in the historical tradition.

**Hoda El Saadi:** The canonization of Islamic jurisprudence and its implications for the gender question

Is law making based on sacred canons, foundational texts, or legal precedents? What relationship does law bear to social context and values? Comparing Muslim scholars' debates with historical descriptions of women's activities and visibility in the market and public space shows how over the centuries juristic arguments have often reacted to, rather than dictated, Muslim women's behavior. Jurists rarely encouraged women's activities in the public space and often deprecated them; however, sources of many periods and genres in the pre-modern Arab Islamic world demonstrate that women often had a significant presence in the public space in most regions. In this paper, through juxtaposition of legal and non-legal sources, I intend to explore the relationship between normative discourses and social practice with special attention being paid to the ways in which women's practices and scholars' legal constructs mutually influenced and informed each other.

**Mulki Al-Sharmani:** The ethics of hermeneutics in “Islamic feminism”  
 Contemporary Muslim feminist engagements with the Qur’an and Islamic interpretive tradition (often referred to as Islamic Feminism) have been criticized for: their hermeneutical approaches towards the Qur’an; their methods of deconstructing patriarchal interpretations and constructing alternative ones; their supposedly tenuous methodological linkages with the classical interpretive tradition; and their use of modern tools of textual analysis. This paper has two aims. First, we address some of the main methodological critiques against Islamic feminism. Second, we use our reflections on these critiques as a starting point for a larger inquiry that explores the relationship between ethics and Islamic feminist hermeneutics. Two broad questions we wish to investigate are: How can Quran-based ethical principles be identified and used to guide the interpretive processes of arriving at new readings and injunctions for egalitarian gender rights? What is the role of context (historically, politically, discursively) in the development of an ethical hermeneutics of Islamic feminism?

## Islamisms

**Douglas Pratt:** Reactive co-radicalization: religious extremism as mutual discontent

An increasing and widespread atmosphere of mutual discontent and antipathy in respect to a religious “other” is arguably found today expressed by, or from within, various religious communities, as well as wider society whether officially secular or not. For instance, Islamic extremism provokes a reactionary extremism from parts, at least, of the non-Muslim world whilst, at the same time, Muslim extremism is frequently advocated in response to the perception of an aggressive and impositional non-Muslim world. A vicious circle of mutual extremism is at play. “Reactive co-radicalization”, I suggest, appropriately names this mutual rejection and exclusionary response that is currently evident in many parts of the globe. In this paper I focus on two European cases – the 2009 Swiss ban on the building of minarets, and the 2011 Norwegian massacre carried out by Anders Breivik – to explore and illustrate reactive co-radicalization as a hermeneutical perspective on religious extremism.

**Etin Anwar:** Peace education in Indonesia: resisting youth religious radicalism

My paper examines how Muslim and Christian communities, secular and civic organizations and the state deal with youth religious radicalism and how they educate about peace among youth of diverse social, religious, economic and political backgrounds in Indonesia. I will study efforts to resist the religious radi-

calization of youth. The efforts to eradicate youth religious radicalism vary from character building by the Asia Foundation, the promotion of peace in schools by Peacegen, interfaith schools by Interfaith Dialogue Institute, character education by the Maarif Institute, and the youth radicalization by LaKIP. In my paper, I propose to integrate the virtue of co-existence into a wholesome youth worldview and to consider it as a civic, religious and moral duty for youth and individuals to have. The inclusion of coexistence as character will hopefully bridge the transition youth needs to experience in strengthening their roles as peacemakers in Indonesia.

**Innocent Oyibo:** International fraternity? Interrogating the ideological nexus between adherents of Boko Haram, Salafis and Wahhabis

Is there any rationale to assume any inherent nexus between Boko Haram, Salafi-Jihadists and Wahhabis? This question is at the centre of this research paper. The subject matter of Boko Haram has been discussed variously in many academic publications. Some have argued that Boko Haram is politically motivated; others adduce religious expansionism of Islam, while other scholars suggest socio-political reasons for its emergence. This paper argues that all three factors must be considered holistically when discussing Boko Haram and its impact on Nigeria. However, it strongly supports the view that Boko Haram has a religious agenda, which consists in the Islamization of Nigeria and the establishment of the Islamic umma all over Nigeria or a section of it. This agenda had hitherto been nursed by Othman Dan Fodio. This paper argues therefore that the religious ideology of Boko Haram is strongly aligned with the ideologies of Salafis and Wahhabis, who in their struggle strive for the restoration of puritan Islam and the establishment of an Islamic State. Hence, Boko Haram is part and parcel of an international fraternity. Thus, in order to put an end to this insurgency, the ideology must be identified and tackled; its spread among the youth must be countered by requisite education and concerted effort of all and sundry.

## **ISSRNC/REDO – When Rocks and Plants are Persons: Ritual Innovation and a Reassessment of “Animism”**

**Panel Chair: Sarah Pike**

This panel is a collaboration between the International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture and “Reassembling Democracy: Ritual As Cultural Resource,” an international research project. The panel will build on sessions about animism and ritual that Harvey, Seamone, Salomonsen and Pike participated in at the AAR Meeting in 2014 and will include ethnographic research in the United States, Canada, India and Norway. Our cases explore the dynamics

of animistic practices in both innovative and traditional contexts while critically evaluating the meaning of “animism,” a central category in the history of religions. Do pagan environmentalists, for instance, practice animism in different ways than Hindu pilgrims in India? Re-theorization of “animism” has encouraged scholars from many disciplines to reconsider ontological and epistemological issues. The panel will foreground questions of intersubjectivity, relationality and ritualization in the “new animism” debates and will explore their relation to issues of innovation and tradition.

**Sarah Pike:** Animism and biophilia in the rituals of radical environmentalists

The emotions that motivate radical environmentalists often develop through powerful, embodied experiences with non-human beings during childhood. These experiences involve the blurring of boundaries between human and tree bodies and the projection of human emotions onto forests. Various factors shape activists’ rituals, such as embodied memories of childhood, including speaking with and climbing in trees, and contemporary pagan beliefs in nature as sacred and animate, which borrow from traditional indigenous knowledges in the context of a new religious movement. Ritualized actions such as creating sacred space at forest action camps and sitting in trees with nooses around their necks both construct and reinforce earlier emotional and physical relationships with trees as sentient beings. This paper analyzes activists’ constructions of nature as animate and sacred in order to understand the ways in which bodily and emotional experiences of childhood shape adult ritual performances in the spiritually charged context of radical environmentalism.

**Graham Harvey:** Indigenous cultural events in an animate world

Riddu Riddu is an annual indigenous cultural festival organized by a Sami community in arctic Norway, attracting international performers and audiences. It could be conceived of as an aspect of efforts to reassert indigenous sovereignty and pride. Entertainment is an attraction of the festival but education and exploration of alternatives are also evident. The “new animism” provides one lens through which to reflect on aspects of the cultural curriculum of the festival. Based on ongoing fieldwork, this presentation considers expressions of indigenous knowledges that might be labeled “environmental” or “shamanic” but may be better understood as relational interactions between human and other-than-human persons. Examples might include greetings mediated by headline Maori performers between Oceanic mountains and rivers and those of the festival venue; workshops and seminars offered by “shamans” and other ritualists; and responses to wider regional acts (including the violence perpetrated in southern Norway in July 2011).

**David L. Haberman:** Ritualized means of negotiating the human-nonhuman boundary

I have been researching Hindu worshipful interaction with natural phenomena in India that are considered to be essential forms of divinity: sacred rivers, specifically the Yamuna; trees, specifically the pipal, neem and banyan; and mountains, specifically Mount Govardhan. Although there are distinctive features in the worship of these three phenomena, they also share the following: they employ strategies of personification in negotiating the boundary between these nonhuman phenomena and human worshippers. I am particularly interested in the devotional tendency to intentionally anthropomorphize the nonhuman as a way to cross this boundary to more powerfully honor and establish deeper connections with the nonhuman world. I will focus primarily on the ritual practices of worshippers of Mount Govardhan, who decorate stones from this sacred mountain considered to be living forms of divinity with eyes and other facial features, dress them, and sometimes add arms and legs, thereby creating a humanlike divine appearance.

**Donna Seamone:** Eco-agri-pilgrimage to the corn maze performance: an exercise of cross-species sociality?

This investigation engages the “New Animism,” a performance approach to ritual – especially efforts to account for active, agentic subjects – and eco-ethnography by focusing on a particular ritualized performance read here as a ritual assembly amongst humans and other-than-human persons. Ethnographic focus is on annual corn maze festivities on a family farm and farm market in Nova Scotia. Emerging as a small-scale effort five years ago, this corn-as-maze now draws hundreds of visitors per day. Farmers invent and perform acts of engagement and self-display. Urban dwellers act as pilgrims/tourists, seeking out rural experience of life-ways and food-ways. Corn, usually regarded as food, for either persons or animals, becomes agent and host to “eco-agri-pilgrims” who make the journey, meet, discover, visit the plants. How do these meetings create new cultural conditions for identity, habitation and community building? Or, what possibilities does this ritualized intersection/assemblage create amongst human and more-than-human persons?

**Paul-François Tremlett:** Response

## J. Krishnamurti's Apophatic Mysticism: Its Implications for Religion, Creative Insight, Spirituality, and Individuality

### Panel Chair: Theodore Kneupper

J. Krishnamurti's highly publicized break from Theosophy in 1929 inaugurated an influential body of teachings. He is a major exemplar of an individual agent of change. Although he made no claim to being a "scholar," his views raise serious questions and offer important perspectives for academic consideration. Is there anything distinctive about Krishnamurti's approach? The panel will consider how his apophatic approach entails a "via negativa" (path of negation) to a direct encounter with absolute reality/truth. This is consistent with a number of schools of spirituality in Eastern and Western traditions, particularly that of Advaita Vedanta and Madhyamaka Buddhism. The particular papers will examine how this approach is central to Krishnamurti's observations regarding the core meaning of apophasis (negation), its relevance to our understanding of religions and creativity, especially the meaning of "individuality" vis-a-vis institutionalized religion, and the relationship of his views to those of neo-Vedanta.

**Hillary Rodrigues:** Krishnamurti and the Neo-Advaita movement: an inquiry

The modern global spiritual movement termed Neo-Advaita is often critiqued by followers of traditional Advaita (non-duality) Vedanta. Neo-Advaita emphasizes attainment of a pivotal insight that purportedly liberates individuals from isolating notions about the self through the realization of a unified wholeness. Attainment of non-dual realization has a long tradition in Indian religious philosophies from the Upanisadic period, via Madhyamaka and Yogacara Buddhisms to classical Vedanta as put forward by Gaudapada and Sankara. Neo-Advaita is distinctive because it typically negates the value of spiritual teachers and organized religiosity, including traditional practices such as devotionalism. While the sage Ramana Maharsi is often identified as its patriarch, in this paper I wish to problematize the neo-Advaita label and shall argue for the significant role played by the Indian-born religious teacher, Jiddu Krishnamurti. Krishnamurti's unconventional teachings are extremely difficult to classify, leading their influence to be overlooked by scholars of this contemporary spiritual movement.

**Theodore Kneupper:** J. Krishnamurti's critique of religion

We consider the three phases of J. Krishnamurti's critique of (critical inquiry into) religion. Phase I focuses on psychological and social problems central to "actual" (institutionalized) religions, especially their concern with personal identity. This hinders participants from understanding truth and generates the negative consequences of fragmentation. Phase II focuses on what is called "true religion," centering on recognizing the actuality of the mind's fragmenta-

tion and its liberation therefrom, particularly a shift from personal/social identity to world/cosmic identity. Phase III fully develops II, focusing on “living meditation,” or the continuous gathering of attention to understand “what is.” This is the essence of “radical revolution,” involving the negation of limiting thought which discloses the sacred, leading to action directed by intelligence expressing creatively through love and ultimately the transformation of society. Finally we offer critical observations about these views, particularly in relation to our understanding of the meaning of “individual” vis-a-vis institutionalized religion.

**Gopalakrishna Krishnamurthy:** Krishnamurti’s view of attention as negation of thought

This paper will examine the notion of radical negation of the sort implied in the Zen tradition and Nagarjuna’s Madhyamaka Buddhist philosophy. It will begin by briefly sketching traditional philosophical notions of negation, which include the radical questioning of logical formalism, epistemic certitude, metaphysical ontology and ethical theory. However, by drawing substantially from implications within the philosophy of J. Krishnamurti, I will submit that the notions of negation analyzed in the afore-mentioned categories nevertheless remain within the domain of thought. Therefore, attempts to characterize radical negation (and other religious insights) through conventional means are intrinsically flawed, and radical negation eludes final characterization. Instead, radical negation’s value appears to lie in its function as a pointer to a particular notion of attention. And thus, while utterances about radical negation are often revelatory of profound religious insights, paradoxically, they are simultaneously illuminating and misleading.

**Alastair Herron:** Creative emptiness: absencing Jiddu Krishnamurti?

This paper critically contrasts the influential, contemporary religious teacher J. Krishnamurti’s teachings on “creative emptiness” to other religious and cultural apophatic perspectives. In particular, it shall investigate whether or not there is anything unique about Krishnamurti’s approach, which is centred on personal enquiry underpinned by choiceless awareness. Within traditional religious perspectives, apophasis is implicitly related to concomitant creative artistic expression evident for example in Daoist and Japanese Buddhist visual arts. One certainly can discern such religious apophatic features, related to artistic exploration and expression, in Krishnamurti’s notion and presentation of creative emptiness. However, I will suggest that Krishnamurti’s creative emptiness can move beyond traditional religious features of apophasis in that it encompasses or elicits a profound observational awareness. Creative emptiness presents questions manifest to resisting authority or interpretation, while sustaining a compassionately shared open-ended and potentially insightful enquiry.

## Japanese Religions under Globalization

### Panel Chair: Ugo Dessì

Despite the growing interest in religion under globalization, attempts to engage the interplay of Japanese religions and globalization have been unexpectedly few. The only monographs to date dealing with this subject are Cristina Rocha's *Zen in Brazil* (University of Hawaii Press 2006) and Ugo Dessì's *Japanese Religions and Globalization* (Routledge 2013). Most recently, a special issue of the *Journal of Religion in Japan* (Brill 2014) has been devoted to the same topic, but within the field of religious studies the inclination to reduce the globalization of Japanese religions to their expansion is still apparent, and there is often resistance to the application of contemporary globalization theories to concrete case studies. This panel intends to address these existing gaps with papers on *Seichō-no-Ie* in Brazil, the translation of western occultism in Japan, *Sōka Gakkai* and Zen in Cuba, and a theoretical perspective on Japanese religions and globalization in Japan and overseas.

**Ioannis Gaitanidis:** Translation and interpretation of Western occultism in contemporary Japan

Translation of religious texts has been a core component of the ways religions choose to react to globalized trends, and most research on this subject has focused on the cultural adaptations that become necessary in this process. However, cultural translations cannot happen overnight and it often takes several editions for core texts to be deemed appropriate by the receiving culture. Revised translations often also seek to renew local popular interest and in that case tend to differ greatly from original texts. This paper looks into two such cases. More precisely, the paper provides an analysis of consecutive Japanese translations of two popular texts of Western occultism that have been published in the last ten years in Japan – Eric Pearl's *The Reconnection* (2001) and Stylianos Atteshli's *Esoteric Teachings* (1990) – and explains the degree to which translators seem to have been conscious of the ever changing occultural interests of contemporary Japanese audiences.

**Girardo Rodriguez Plasencia:** Japanese religions abroad as resources for representing other cultures: reflections on the case of Cuba

This paper explores the potentials of Japanese religions abroad, or elements of these, in providing symbolic resources for the representation of local particularisms in non-Japanese cultures. Focusing on the examples of *Soka Gakkai International* (SGI) and Zen in Cuba, some glocal forms and functions which these Japanese religious proposals have in the Caribbean island are discussed. Through cultural exchanges, SGI contributes to the incorporation of Cuban culture into global flows. The second instance turns to the work of a Cuban artist

who introduces elements of Zen and “Oriental” spirituality in his painting, not only for artistic self-expression, but also for representing local natural images and national political symbols. In the multidirectional interactions involved in the globalization process, Japanese religious organizations abroad can cooperate with local institutions in the promotion of particularisms, while Japanese religious elements can be creatively appropriated for individual reinterpretations of local identities.

**Cristina Rocha:** Response

## Japan’s Religious History

**Alexandra Curvelo:** Dialogues and misunderstandings in the Japanese Catholic Mission in the early modern age

One of the main features of the Catholic Mission in Japan since its very beginning in 1549 was the establishment of direct contacts between the European missionaries, the Japanese military and religious elites and the people, leading to distinct misunderstandings for both sides. These crossed dialogues, misinterpretations and misconstructions are known through factual episodes that had important impact on the way both the European and the Japanese reacted to each other in terms of strategies of power, communication, representations and ceremonials. Focusing on these responses, I aim at analyzing the process and the motifs that led to the expulsion by the Japanese authorities of the Religious Orders from Japan in 1614 and of the Portuguese presence in 1639 after some decades that presaged one of the most fruitful experiences within the scope of action of the Portuguese Patronage of the Orient (“Padroado Português do Oriente”).

**Jin Jonghyun:** The development of Japanese new religions in South Korea: a case of Tenrikyo

Tenrikyo is the first Japanese new religion that has expanded in South Korea. Due to a deep-rooted anti-Japanese sentiment informed by Japan’s prewar colonial rule, the religious group in this country has faced considerable difficulties in its efforts of propagation. In this paper, I will discuss the development of this religious group in South Korea by paying specific attention to the strategy of propagation it has adopted in this socio-cultural climate as well as the ways in which South Korean followers have sought to negotiate Japanese cultural elements in Tenrikyo in the course of pursuing their faith in the religious teaching.

**Sentaro Tomizawa:** Non-church movement and Emperor system in Meiji Japan

This paper aims to clarify distinguishing features of Emperor system in Meiji Japan. I focus in particular on the thought of Uchimura Kanzo (1861–1930), who was known as an advocate of the non-church movement which has been referred to as the transformation of Christianity in Japan. Meanwhile, Uchimura can be understood as a Christian who thoroughly devoted himself to the theology of Protestantism. In this sense, the non-church movement inherited from Protestantism a belief not in the Church, but in the Bible alone. In brief, we can recognize a coexistence of ambivalent factors in his thought and can understand them as representative of Christianity and the Emperor system sociologically. This feature can be perceived also in his soteriology. He believed in “predestination” but later this transformed and became akin to “universalism”. Through this change, I clarify the social and cultural influences the Emperor system had under which Uchimura Kanzo and the non-church movement developed.

**Vladlena Fedianina:** Shinto-Buddhist syncretism: the first work of historical philosophy in Japan

In Medieval Japan historical and political thoughts were developing in the framework of the religious complex today named Shinto-Buddhist syncretism. Authors of historical studies were trying to understand history, appealing to the willpower of supernatural beings that were in the foundations of world order. The historiographical treatise “Gukanshou” (about 1221), written by Jien, the head of the Tendai school, is exceptional. Jien piloted using a system-rational way of interpreting history on the basis of traditional religious views. We analyze Jien’s concept of Japan’s historical development. The concept was a projection of values created by Japanese religious thinking. Building on works of European and Japanese scientists with our own textual studies of “Gukanshou” we examine how Jien put Japan into the world’s time-space context (Buddhist conception) and how he understood changes in forms of governance (based mostly on indigenous beliefs).

## Journal Presentation “Die Zeitschrift für junge Religionswissenschaft” (ZjR)

**Organizer: Stefan Schröder**

The ZjR is an international academic online-journal in the field of the academic study of religions. The main aim of the journal is to provide a platform for today’s and tomorrow’s young scholars of the discipline as well as to promote challeng-

ing, maybe unorthodox, thought-provoking, new (and therefore: young) theories, methods, perspectives or ideas on religion and religions. It offers the opportunity to publish articles and book reviews to both undergraduates and postgraduates, who thereby become acquainted with the academic publication process. The ZjR is a fully peer reviewed academic journal and all articles are available open access under a Creative Commons license. Since 2006, thereby, the ZjR can be considered as a network and platform for the future of the discipline and its young researchers, ideas, theories and methods. For more information see: <http://www.zjr-online.de/> – This open session will be a short presentation of the journal, our mission, as well as the review and editorial processes and provide information for both interested (younger) scholars as well as mentors and teachers, looking for academic platforms for their protégés. Please come and get in touch with us!

**Participants:** Anne Beutter, Moritz Klenk, Stefan Schröder

## Journalism and Religion: Critical Terms in Public Discourse

**Panel Chairs:** Kerstin Radde-Antweiler, Xenia Zeiler

Academic concepts and terms concerning religion, so-called critical terms, are dynamically applied in public journalistic discussions and contexts. To demonstrate and discuss their public and journalistic use, comprehension, and development, this panel analyzes four case studies. To integrate a broad and comparative perspective, each term will be discussed on three levels, contrasting (1) emic and etic use, (2) different media genres, and (3) European and non-European discourses. After a short presentation of the concept of the panel we analyze the critical terms “authority” and “community”, linking each term to different case studies, before turning to critical terms secular and sacred.

**Kerstin Radde-Antweiler:** #Tagleforpope. The papal election as a marker for shifting authority constructions

In the last years, the Catholic Church has been increasingly addressed in various journalistic media worldwide. The papal election brought about heated discussions on the possible successor of Pope Benedict XVI. Especially in so-called Third World countries the press discussed the capability and efficiency of a Pope from countries with a growing Catholic population as the new religious authority. An example was the Philippine archbishop Tagle who was considered as an example for a “fresh”, “young” and “authentic” new leading figure. Dichotomies such as the “old European authority structure” with decreasing memberships versus “the authentic and charismatic leadership” in African or Asian countries were stressed – in European as well as in the non-European press cov-

erage. So the question arises: Can we observe a changing authority in the Catholic Church, as press coverage as well as millions of websites, twitter contributions etc. suggested? And who is responsible for such a change: the journalistic media?

**Anna Neumaier:** Community-building at Christian interactive web pages: strategies, outcomes and the users' perceptions

Much has been written about online communities, often with a critical or skeptical attitude. In this paper, I will present some empirical findings about the emergence and perception of communities on Christian web pages. Based on research on religious websites from the German-speaking area, two different perspectives and kinds of data are considered: First, the news sections of those websites are explored, asking for possibilities and strategies of community-building in these journalistic works. Second, the users' perspectives on and perceptions of the online community are taken into account: Drawing from qualitative interviews and a quantitative survey, findings regarding the relevance of religious online communities for Internet use as well as the modes of their realization will be presented. While it can be shown that online contexts have a particular potential for community-building, at the same time quite different kinds of communities take shape, ranging from traditional, parish-like types to the postmodern forms of translocal and fluid communities.

**Anja-Maria Bassimir:** Evangelical print publications as a forum for community-building in the 1970s

Early accounts of the reemergence of Evangelicalism often portrayed the movement as a monolithic bloc, while newer studies stressed the internal diversity and sometimes focused on one subgroup to the point of divorcing it from the larger movement. Neither approach does justice to the movement as a whole. Evangelicalism, indeed, is a puzzling phenomenon: Evangelicals can be found across a wide spectrum of Protestant denominations, non-denominational congregations, and para-church organizations. And yet, they are regarded as a uniform group and also try to represent themselves as a coherent community. Evangelical scholar George Marsden coined the term "card-carrying evangelicals" for those who choose "evangelical" as their primary identity over denominational lines. How, then, is it possible for diverse people to conceive of themselves as a community? During the 1970s, a vibrant Evangelical book and periodical market existed that was used by religious entrepreneurs as a forum and repository for their community-building activities. I argue that print-publications were one arena where Evangelicals struggled to define and prescribe what it meant to be evangelical.

**Judith Stander:** The Holy City and the Holy Family: sacred themes in German newsmagazines Stern and Spiegel

In the secular field, as in advertising or mass media, pictures and language referring to “sacredness” can often be found. They produce discourses that address and strongly influence the reader on an emotional level. Thus, this paper focuses on how issues concerning “sacredness” are linguistically and visually transformed in the mass media. For instance, in Germany’s largest magazines Stern and Spiegel the term “sacred” first appeared on the covers during the 2000s, for example in relation to Jerusalem or the Holy Scriptures. Which issues are further referred to as “sacred” and how are they received in the magazines? Based on the theoretical approaches of (image) linguistics, the term “sacred” as used on title pages and in selected articles will at first be described in order to answer the question how “sacred” issues are linguistically and visually presented in the secular media discourse.

**Xenia Zeiler:** “Displaced Hindu Gods”: press releases on the “trivialization” of Hindu deities in the USA

The understanding of what is “sacred” and needs protection from profaning or trivializing is obviously diverse, and especially in cases of severe dissent it is also negotiated in public journalistic contexts. For instance, Heidi Klum dressing up as the Hindu goddess Kali at a Halloween party or the deity Hanuman being included in a video game may result in press releases criticizing “displaced Hindu gods”. This paper discusses criticism of “trivialization” of Hindu deities in the USA made public through a specific journalistic genre, press releases. For this, it contextualizes and analyzes press releases by the Nevada based Universal Society of Hinduism which refer to the group’s understanding of how Hindu deities should be held sacred, and to their accused profaning in diasporic contexts.

**Tim Karis:** Secular voices on air? Western debates on religion, secularism and Public Service Broadcasting

Regulatory frameworks of public service broadcasters (PSBs) across Europe are full of references to religions. In Germany, for example, the Catholic and Protestant churches as well as the Jewish communities are legally provided with air time on PSB television and radio. In times of increasing religious diversity as well as growing secularization, criticisms of such regulation is spreading as many consider it to run counter to the principle of separation of state and religion. Others argue that existing privileges for religions should be extended to secular groups who have hitherto often been excluded from direct access to PSBs either by law or by common practice. In this paper, recent examples of such debates from the German, British and Dutch contexts are presented. As it is argued, an analysis of such debates reveals how different and often ambig-

ous notions of religion, secularity and the public space are competing in Western discourse.

**Johanna Buss:** Debates of secularism in Nepali papers and blogs  
Nepal is currently undergoing a substantial political change after it was declared a secular republic. The new Nepali state, which formerly proudly presented itself as the only existing Hindu kingdom, has now to cope with the challenge to act as a secular state and establish regulations. The public debate about secularism focusses mainly on questions of national identity and the inclusion of different ethnic, linguistic and religious groups. Moreover it is strongly influenced by events where old and new understandings of the stately functions and responsibilities collide, such as the curious situation of Maoist ministers replacing the former king in Hindu state rituals. In my paper I will analyze the debate about the concept and restructuring of the Nepali state as secular in the main print media between the two elections of the constituent assembly in 2008 and 2013.

## **Karma Tuners: Historical Transformations of Envisioning the Future in Buddhist Traditions**

### **Panel Chair: Esther-Maria Guggenmos**

This panel emerged from joint research trajectories at the Research Consortium in Erlangen (Germany) that deal with “Fate, Freedom, and Prognostication” (see: [www.ikgf.uni-erlangen.de](http://www.ikgf.uni-erlangen.de)). Chinese, Tibetan, as well as Theravada Buddhist traditions explored and established distinct ways of coping with personal and shared futures. We intend to shed light on single historical transformations and innovations across Buddhist traditions. Caring for one’s karma through sūtra recitation and, in consequence, bettering one’s outlook upon future liberation is discussed in the context of Tibetan Buddhism (Scheuermann). The Chinese Buddhist tradition developed concepts of time in which future Buddhist liberation is endangered by the age of the degenerate dharma, in which divinatory tools receive legitimation as appropriate for freeing adherents from dwelling in “the web of doubts” (Guggenmos). At the end of the nineteenth century, this perception of future decline is met by Burmese Buddhist reformatory efforts through a new focus on meditation techniques (Nehring). The last contribution leads us to the popular Buddhist tradition of Zhaijiao (“Vegetarian Sects”) in late imperial China and discusses how sectarians envisioned alternative readings of Buddhist practice that, in many respects, anticipate the so-called “modern Buddhisms” (Broy).

**Rolf Scheuermann:** Purifying Karma by reciting sūtras? A Tibetan perspective

The Tibetan Buddhist tradition is particularly rich in practices dedicated to purifying one's karma, that aim at both bettering this and future lifetimes as well as improving one's development towards Buddhahood. A popular one from among these methods is the recitation of sūtras. This paper questions whether it is sufficient merely to recite texts in order to make these practices successful or if there are further aspects that need to be incorporated, thereby aiming at producing a better understanding of the underlying mechanisms and concepts. The study focuses on a hitherto little-researched section of the 'Phags pa rtogs pa chen po yongs su rgyas pa'i mdo, which only partially survived in its Tibetan translation within the Tibetan canon, and seems to have been instrumentalized by the influential Indian master, Atiśa Dīpaṃkāra Śrījñāna (980–1054), to propagate the Bodhisattva-conduct in Tibet.

**Esther-Maria Guggenmos:** Tracing the concept of “dispelling the web of doubts” in the Chinese Buddhist tradition

This paper takes its start from the observation that the argument to “dispel the web of doubts” (jueyi) is repeatedly occurring as a legitimatory argument to justify divinatory practices in the Chinese Buddhist tradition. Firstly, the term is located in its cultural context and traced back to classical Chinese sources such as the passage from the oft-quoted Zuozhuan: “One is divining in order to dispel doubts. If one has no doubts, why should one divine?” (Zuozhuan, Huangong, eleventh year). Secondly, the term is identified in the context of Chinese Buddhist sources and analyzed in the context of time concepts that envision the future as the age of the degenerate dharma. Thirdly, it is shown how the idea of “dispelling one's doubts” functions as a legitimatory bridge to connect divinatory interests with Buddhist concepts of future and respective practices.

**Andreas Nehring:** Prognoses of decline – coping with the future: reforms in nineteenth century Theravada Buddhism in Myanmar

Since the early twentieth century, mindfulness has become gradually accepted as a philosophical concept or meditation exercise in the west to such an extent that, without any exaggeration, it can now be called the most popular buzzword when it comes to the education of consciousness. How this modern phenomenon occurred is, however, only explored to a certain extent. This paper analyzes how Vipassanā-meditation first spread among laypeople in Myanmar. In Burma, Buddhist modernization, associated with the introduction of the meditation of laypeople, is to be considered as a collective expression of a new awareness of the “fear of influence” and of new strategies for coping with contingencies. Predictions that Buddhism would decline, which had become virulent under colonialism, facilitated the establishment of meditation practice as a mass movement

in Myanmar which was then transferred to other countries of South Asia and finally to the west at the beginning of the twentieth century.

**Nikolas Broy:** Modern Buddhism without Modernity: the case of Zhaijiao (“Vegetarian Sects”) in late imperial China

This paper takes up the evolution of religious practice among the popular Buddhist tradition of Zhaijiao (“Vegetarian Sects”) in late imperial China. It will discuss how and why sectarians in sixteenth and seventeenth-century southern China envisioned an alternative to the conventional readings offered by monastic Buddhism. Their iconoclastic and ritual-critical program helped to create a consequent inner-worldly “religious conduct of life” (Weber) that rejected traditional practices of coping with one’s future. Furthermore, this interpretation is characterized by the rejection of various other popular habits, such as the consumption of meat, smoking, or gambling. Only by observing this rigid “inner-worldly asceticism” prescribed by the sect can salvation be attained. I will show that this “fundamentalist” approach to Buddhism, which came into being well before the arrival of Western modernity, may very well be considered an original Asian contribution to what has been variously labeled “modern”, “Protestant”, or “Humanistic Buddhism”.

## **Kingship and Religion in the Modern World**

### **Panel Chair: Michiaki Okuyama**

Studies of king, kingship, and kingdom tend to be seen as part of history or anthropology, rather than contemporary religious studies, especially when one takes for granted the secularization of modern society. Some modern democratic countries, however, have maintained the status of king or queen under their own particular conditions, as illustrated by Northern or Western Europe or by Asian countries, and in some cases the relations between kingship and religion have provoked debate. The notion of king, kingship, and kingdom can therefore be looked at from the contemporary perspective of religious studies. This panel will present four case studies, taking up the historical or contemporary situations of Japan, Thailand, Russia, and Norway, to consider in comparison the relationship between kingship and religion, and to rethink the relationship between religion, state, and politics in the so-called post-secular modern society.

**Michiaki Okuyama:** Religious dimensions of the Japanese imperial system in the post-secular society

A Japanese version of kingship, usually called the imperial system, has sometimes been characterized as lineally hereditary from time immemorial. The system contains the architectural space and ritual performance of the emperor,

which were both manufactured anew in the late nineteenth century. This newly constructed imperial system functioned at the core of the modern Japanese religious polity until Japan's defeat in WWII. After the war, the imperial system changed into a so-called symbolic polity, under a newly introduced democratic regime. The public side of the contemporary imperial system has functioned in a secularized way under the postwar Japanese constitution that prescribes the separation of religion and the state. The private side of the imperial system, however, has maintained and possibly strengthened its ritual connotation. A question addressed in this paper is what the religious meaning of the Japanese emperor has been, particularly in the postwar secularized society.

**Hidetake Yano:** The religious nature of the king in modern Thailand

Since the Thai kingdom's rise in the early thirteenth century, the Kingship of Thailand has established a close relationship with religion, especially with Theravada Buddhism. The King has supported the Sangha organization and the dissemination of Dharma. Furthermore, the King has been obligated, during this time, to govern the Thai Kingdom based on the ethical codes of Dharma to ensure social order and give his reign legitimacy. Sometimes, the King has been worshipped as a preeminent sacred person related to Hindu deities. In modernizing Thailand, since the mid-nineteenth century, Thai Buddhism has adjusted its teachings and organization, and the word "religion" has been conceptualized as a result of this transformation. In 1932, the monarch's rule changed from absolute to constitutional. This paper addresses transition in the religious nature of the King within the transformation of Thai society in terms of morality and social order.

**Anne Stensvold, Erik Thorstensen:** How to make sense of a constitutional monarchy

During the memorial service held in Oslo cathedral after the massacre at Utøya on July 22, 2011, the Norwegian king had no ceremonial role to play, but sat crying silently amongst the crowd. Evidently, the Norwegian monarchy is secularized – like the rest of society. Present-day constitutional monarchy in Norway has evolved from absolute monarchy (1660) with the king as sole head of church and state. Interestingly, there is one constant: "The king's person is holy." Even the constitutional reform of 2012 which removed the king as head of the national church, kept the formulation unchanged. The present king, however, insisted on adding a clause which dictates that the ruling monarch shall be a member of the Norwegian church, thereby redefining what used to be a formal relationship by turning it into a personal one. But even if the monarchy has been stripped of its religious role, does it mean that it has lost its religious function? But what is the meaning of a king who is like everybody else? This paper attempts to address these questions.

## Leaving, Losing and Switching Religion: Disruptive Dynamics of Past and Present

### Panel Chair: Teemu T. Mantsinen

This panel addresses questions about apostasy and processes of leaving, losing and switching religion and religious faith in both past and present times. People construct their identities from the wide range of alternatives now available. This is partly due to an increased global migration and a new mediatization of religion that has changed the landscapes of religion globally. In our research projects we analyze how people construct new religious, non-religious, and ethnic identities by leaving or switching religion. Also we focus on dogmatic texts that could be related to the challenge of deconversion. Followers of a religion might question social stories and individual identities in new circumstances, time and locations. The aim of this panel is: (1) to examine theoretical perspectives on the dynamics and processes of leaving and switching religion; (2) to pose questions about the causes, processes, and the social responses to apostasy, to the disruption of past and present.

**Teemu T. Mantsinen:** Leaving family religion: apostasy from Pentecostalism in Finland

In this paper I will present my research on Finnish Pentecostals leaving their family tradition, and analyze the social aspect of this deconversion. I will approach the subject from the theoretical perspectives of social and psychological contract and embodied cognition. My interviewees all share an experience of disruption between social story and personal experience. This disruption may be a feeling of hypocrisy, unwanted control, loss of plausibility, or other experiences of interference in the balance between traditional and personal life. If there are no sufficient compensating aspects in their religion and social life to balance the negative experiences, the contract is broken. The aim of this paper is to present a theoretical explanation why socialized members of a religious community leave their tradition, Pentecostalism. Furthermore I will discuss if the explanative model can be applied to the other religions addressed in this panel.

**Daniel Enstedt:** Leaving Islam in contemporary Sweden

This paper will address issues concerning religious apostasy, deconversion and disaffiliation in present-day Sweden in relation to Islam. The aim is to outline new theoretical perspectives that enable a better understanding of the religious change that leaving religion is, or can be, a part of. My critique of the dominant trends in the contemporary research on leaving religion shares some of Linda Woodhead's sociologically informed discussion of the shortcomings of the prevailing concepts of religiosity in religious studies. Instead of understanding religion as a mind-set, cognitive script or a world-view, that many previous studies

have done, Woodhead highlights other concepts of religion (i. e., religion as culture, identity, relationship, practice, and power). I will take these aspects into account when discussing leaving Islam in present-day Sweden. Besides theoretical evaluations and considerations on apostasy, deconversion and disaffiliation this paper will also discuss empirical material in relation to Muslim communities in contemporary Sweden.

**Göran Larsson:** “They turned apostate as renegades after you left”: the problem of apostasy in the hadith-literature

The first aim of my paper is to give an overview to how the problems of apostasy, apostates and renegades are discussed and addressed in the hadith-literature: to be more specific, in the collection of Bukhari. The overview will give a picture of the frequency of how often the question of apostasy and people leaving Islam is in focus in Bukhari’s collection. Which Arabic terms are used, and in which contexts are apostasy, apostates and renegades discussed? The second aim is to tentatively discuss and analyze why the question of apostasy is of such an importance in the hadith-literature. Even though this paper is focused on historical aspects and classical texts it is clear that the question of apostasy is still a relevant topic in Muslim discourses.

**David Belfon:** Leavetaking among Toronto’s Hasidic Jews: the role of narratively constituted identity change

My project examines leavetakers from Hasidic Judaism in Toronto, persons who have ceased altogether or substantially lessened the degree to which they perform the normative modes of religiosity expected of them. Many exiters leave alone, and experience various social and practical difficulties adjusting to the non-Hasidic world, facing a complex system of adjustment during their transition to new lifestyles among the general population and apart from that which had been familiar. A new leavetaker generally has limited exposure to mainstream Canadian culture and possesses a consequently narrow social and secular educational toolkit. Questions of identity and narrative are central, as readily available scripts with which leavetakers may tell their stories are scarcely available. I explore the narration of loss of faith, and how one negotiates self-expression and identity formation as a leavetaker, especially regarding leavetakers’ self-perception (and their communication to others) of their religious identities before, during and after leaving.

## Lived Ancient Religion

### Panel Chair: Jörg Rüpke

The concept of “lived religion” had been developed in a book published in 2008 by Meredith McGuire, in order to describe and analyze contemporary religion, even if the term has been coined earlier, in particular in the context of practical theology. It is the attempt of the panel to employ this concept within the field of ancient religion. “Lived religion” does not ask how individuals replicate a set of religious practices and beliefs preconfigured by an institutionalized official religion within their biography – or, conversely, opt out of adhering to a tradition. Instead, “lived religion” focuses on the actual everyday experience, on practices, expressions, and interactions that could be related to “religion”. Such “religion” is understood as a spectrum of experiences, actions, and beliefs and communications hinging on human communication with super-human or even transcendent agent(s), for the ancient Mediterranean usually conceptualized as “gods”. Ritualization and elaborate forms of representation are called upon for the success of communication with these addressees, a communication which, at the same time, implies the forging or – at times – rejection of human alliances.

### Rubina Raja: Lived ancient religion and archaeology

Studying religion through an approach taking a “lived ancient religion” perspective, where focus is on the lived experience of the individual, has taken center stage within archaeological research projects connected with the Lived Ancient Religion project based at Erfurt University. Within this framework among other things the study of priestly representations in the Roman Near East has been a focus. Such representations are known from a variety of media, including public and private monuments, as well as the funerary sphere, which in many cases was a sphere bordering the public as well as the private sphere. Through a study of such representations within their societal, hereunder also local religious, contexts, we might learn about the individual priest who was represented and through a comparison of the material across these spheres it becomes clear that imagery and depictions were adjusted according to the situation and the presumed viewer; priests in action performing rituals in visual representations are more common in the public sphere, depicted on public monuments and showing the experience of lived religion, whereas in the funerary sphere emphasis was put on depictions of the priestly office itself. This paper will discuss examples of such representations within a lived ancient religion framework.

### Jörg Rüpke: Lived religion and the history of the Roman Empire

This paper presents a program of research on ancient religion that draws on the concept of “lived religion”. For antiquity, we use the term to denote an approach which focuses on the individual appropriation of traditions and embodiment, re-

ligious experiences and communication on religion in different social spaces and the interaction of different levels facilitated by religious specialists. Combining the starting point of individual religious agency with research on religion and empire, that is the largest aggregate of the period, such an approach offers a basis for a review of the history of religion in the Roman imperial period. The paper offers a series of hypotheses, which might guide further research.

**Christopher Smith:** Lived ancient religion and archaic religious practice This paper will reflect on the relationship between ideas of “lived ancient religion” and archaic practice as we see it in archaeology. What new insights does LAR bring to the practice of prehistorians, and how might this affect our understanding of the evolution of Roman religion? How do we fit politics into this conception of ritual activity? The paper will focus on some relatively new material from the city of Rome and central Italy.

## Looking at Change: Perspectives on Mapping and Measuring Religion in Local, Regional and National Settings

### Panel Chair: Marie Vejrup Nielsen, Marianne Qvortrup Fibiger

The session will include papers from members of the international CARD-network (Critical Analysis of Religious Diversity) and representatives of the Danish Pluralism Study-research group. The panel will in two sessions examine the issue of how we study change and continuity in contemporary religion through projects that map religion through quantitative and/or qualitative approaches in relation to a specific city, region or nation. What is the role of understanding religion and/or religions when we examine change? How does Hinduism change in a Northern European context? How does Christianity transform in response to modern, western consumer society? And what are the challenges to our concepts of religion when boundaries between religion and wellness-cultures become blurred? How can we examine the question of religious diversity from a scholarly perspective? We are interested in perspectives on both theoretical and methodological dimensions of mapping projects.

**Andrew Dawson:** Religious diversity and the shifting sands of political prioritization: reflections on the UK context

This paper examines religious diversity in the UK by relating organizational developments on the ground with overarching changes in political prioritization. The paper identifies four key components which influence typically late-modern socio-political engagements with religious diversity. Two of these components, societal diversification and universal rights, form a general backdrop to such engagements; while the other two are specific state emphases respectively compris-

ing a “soft” agenda of social cohesion and civic inclusion and a “hard” agenda concerned with the delivery of goods and services through non-state media. Taking the state-sponsored Inter Faith Network (IFN) as a case, it explicates the impact of the progressive prioritization of a “hard” agenda upon organizations originally established to pursue “soft” aims through “religious diversity” practices. The paper concludes by suggesting that IFN’s recent relaxation of full-membership criteria reflects not so much a victory for previously excluded minority groups as an indication of a diminishing strategic importance within a changing UK context.

**Marie Vejrup Nielsen:** Mapping motivations: new activities and old churches

This paper examines one case of a historical church responding to societal changes and thereby focuses on how historical church religion is changing in a contemporary setting. The paper will present a study of the motivations of the participants in new church activities in light of current theories of individualization, patterns of consumption of religious activities, and religious socialization. This will enable a discussion of the motivations of both the organizers and the participants in the activity in light of questions of how institutional religion is being transformed in this context. Through the last ten years new initiatives have emerged in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark (Folkekirken), such as baby hymn singing. The paper will present the development of this specific initiative in a process from a bottom-up activity in the hands of music professionals to a top-down activity in the hands of pastors or other church professionals.

**Lene Kühle:** CARD: A critical analysis of religious diversity

The use of the concept of religious diversity is booming. Yet, the potential and consequences of this new interest in religious diversity remain under-considered and under-developed. In 2012, the Danish Council for Independent Research provided funding for the Critical Analysis of Religious Diversity Network (CARD network). The goal of the network was to bring together scholars with expertise within specific areas to develop new approaches for studying the emerging field of religious diversity. The aim of this paper is to present the work which has taken place within this network with particular emphasis on how to map, critically analyze, and constructively improve the currently disparate scholarly field.

**Kimmo Ketola:** Mapping religious communities: what can local studies of organizational change tell us about contemporary religiosity?

In most Western countries, the religious field has diversified considerably in recent decades due to immigration and also due to new forms of spirituality. The nature and impact of this change is nevertheless not so easy to characterize in

clear and unambiguous terms, as different forms of measurement often yield quite different results. The measures that can be used include (1) formal adherence to religious organizations, (2) participation rates in religious activities, (3) quantity and nature of religious organizations, (4) quantity and nature of religious places of worship/gathering, and (5) survey measures of religious self-identification and beliefs. This paper will focus especially on the picture that emerges from mapping religious organizations and places of gathering in a particular locality and it examines how such studies can complement other indicators concerning contemporary religious change.

**Marianne Qvortrup Fibiger:** What are we actually mapping and measuring when looking at religion in a contemporary context?

In our quest for mapping and measuring religion in contemporary time, we are – once again – confronted with the basic problem within religious studies: What are we actually looking for? Are we using the right point of departure when categorizing and measuring? Are we using the right etymology? Do we address the right questions both to ourselves and to the ones we are categorizing? How much religion, and according to whom, is needed before being taken into account? With examples from our experiences of mapping religion and spirituality in the municipality of Aarhus, Denmark – in 2003 and again in 2013 – and also with a critical analysis of the questions asked in the on-going European value survey, this paper invites discussion of how to measure religion in contemporary time.

**Lars Ahlin:** Religion or “feel good”?

A precondition for studying religious change/continuity in any religious mapping project is the validity of the investigations. The essential question is therefore whether we actually study what we are supposed to be studying? Do we study religions and adherents to religions? Today it is possible to find techniques on offer almost everywhere with their origins either in Buddhism or in Hinduism, e. g. meditation, yoga and mindfulness. Are all the providers of these techniques to be considered religious groups and all attending the offered courses considered to be members of a religious group, either Buddhist or Hindu? Or are other needs than religious at stake when attending such a course? This issue will primarily be discussed on the basis of experiences from investigations made in Aarhus, Denmark.

## Looking Back into Religious Futures: Dynamics of Resilience and Mutation in African Religionscapes

### Panel Chair: Afe Adogame

The historical and cultural significance of African religious traditions can be partly discerned in their dynamism, plurality and multivocality in Africa and the African diaspora. Religious vitality and revitalization are very pronounced, just as African religiosities negotiate resilience, transformation and change in a quickly globalizing era. The internationalization of African religions and spiritualities therefore opens new challenges about their nature, scope and identity: issues of terminology, originality, and authenticity; but also renewed contestations of resilience, continuity and change between local/global contexts. This panel interrogates how the sustained mutual encounter, influence and interaction between indigenous and exogenous religions including Christianity, Islam, eastern and western-related spiritualities that characterize Africa's religious landscape, continue to (re)produce old and new religious constellations. The panel will also explore how and to what extent the global dimension of African religions and spiritualities, introduced to new geo-cultural contexts through migration and media technologies, is manifesting in varied forms.

**Ignatius Swart:** Making a contribution? Africa and African scholarship in the new debate on religion and development

In the broad field of development studies, new conceptual spaces are opening to advance a sociological debate about the potential and actual significance of religion and religious actors in realizing the ideals of development. Against the backdrop of this identification and my own interest in exploring the theoretical and conceptual relevance of the newly flourishing scholarly debate on religion and development for my own South African and African context, in this paper my aim will be to more closely examine how and to what extent a focus pertinent to the African continent and its multiple societies features in and is making a contribution to the larger debate. In particular, through an exploration of the existing literature and in view of my overall aim I will address questions about: (1) actual authorship (in the light of the current domination of the overall debate by scholarship from the global North); (2) pertinent themes, concerns and approaches that are emerging from the African contribution to the debate; (3) the way and extent to which such themes, concerns and approaches are related to key issues and themes in the broader religion and development debate; and (4) the way in which such themes, concerns and approaches are in turn acknowledged in selected key contributions in the broader debate.

**Danoye Oguntola Laguda:** Interrogating the dynamic nature of African religion in the age of globalization

The pristine African traditional religion seems to have witnessed various evolutionary trends due to globalization. In this paper we seek to argue that the pristine African traditional religion that was handed down from one generation to the next is no longer “visible” on the continent and even in African diasporas in this era of globalization wherein adherents as well as the leadership of the religion are now more interested in economic gains at the expense of the spiritualities that are the basic focus of the pristine African traditional religion. Further we seek to demonstrate, using both historical and analytic methods, that globalization as well as the influx of “foreign” religions into the African continent are twin factors that destroyed the pristine fabric of the religion.

**Bettina E. Schmidt:** African religiouscape in Brazil: A discussion of the dynamics of resilience and mutation of Africa in Brazil

Religious vitality and resilience are clearly recognizable when looking at the Brazilian religious landscape. However, the question who represents Africa in Brazil highlights a complex and dynamic situation. On one side we have a range of religious traditions such as Candomblé, Xangô and Tambor da Minha that are often combined under labels such as the African Matrix. For a long time they were portrayed as the true African heritage in Brazil. But this view overlooks that Brazilians of non-African descent have been involved in these religions for at least a century. The globalization of African spirituality has only accelerated this development. On the other side we find a growing number of Evangelical churches which recruit mainly in socially deprived areas and claim to represent the black voice in Brazil, the Afro-Brazilian population today. In this paper I look at the challenges that arise from this complex landscape. I argue that Candomblé and the other religious traditions offer the ritualistic continuity to Africa. They embody in their rituals Africa’s past, present and future. However, these rituals are not limited to a racial group, but open to Brazilians of all colors while Evangelical churches become indeed the new voice of Afro-Brazilian people.

**Babatunde Adedibu:** Can a leopard change its skin? Space contestation, creativity and ritualization of African Pentecostal-led churches in London

The emergence and proliferation of African Pentecostalism in the urban cities across Britain and North America attest to the role of religion in migration. In spite of their religious subscriptions, African Pentecostals also travel with their socio-cultural values to the West. This has resulted in the emergence of Christianities that are reflective of African cosmologies. In light of the migration experiences of members of these churches, a great deal of space contestation, creativity and repackaging of religious ideals have evolved in the diaspora. However, the fluidity of religious practices amongst these churches in diaspora

has generated questions on the extent of the contextualization of their religious creativity and ritualization in a new cultural frontier. This paper aims to make use of ethnographical research methodology to explore issues of space contestation amongst African Pentecostal-led churches in London, and their creativity and ritualization when introduced to new cultural frontiers through migration and media technologies, manifesting in various expressions.

**Corey Williams:** Interreligious encounter as innovation: the case of the Ogbomoso Society of Chrislam

Nigeria is among a handful of countries in which no single religious tradition commands a dominant majority. Its unique multi-religious composition includes not only the largest Muslim and largest Christian population among African countries, but also an important substructure of African Indigenous religions that, while routinely obscured in quantitative surveys, continues to play a disproportionate role in Nigerian culture and society. Within this milieu, sustained interreligious encounters are inevitable and although not without tension, often reveal the heterogeneous quality and mutability of religious communities and traditions – at times even resulting in innovative forms and movements. This paper will consider this latter phenomenon with an exploration of a new group in Nigeria known as the Ogbomoso Society of Chrislam (OSC). Born out of a dynamic appropriation, conflation, and reinterpretation of Christian, Muslim, and indigenous Yorùbá traditions, OSC's existence confronts the essentializing of religious traditions and the limitations of discrete religious typologies.

**Ngozi Emeka-Nwobia:** Religious rhetoric in Nigerian presidential discourses: a study of two Presidential inaugural speeches

This work examines how Nigerian presidents Goodluck Jonathan (incumbent) and Shehu (Aliyu Usman) Shagari utilized religious rhetoric in their presidential inaugural speeches. Working within the framework of critical stylistic and critical discourse analysis the work seeks to address the following questions: In what way does language function in the performance/expression of religious rhetoric? To what extent does religious belief influence one's acceptance in the society? In what ways did President Goodluck Jonathan (a Christian) and Shehu Shagari (a Muslim) utilize religious rhetoric to achieve their political goals? The data were purposively selected from selected newspapers and internet sources and were analyzed descriptively. The study situates language as a tool for expression and performance of religious acts, and also a veritable tool used by politicians as well as other religious fundamentalists to manipulate the minds of the adherents into taking a similar stand with them.

**Benson Igboin:** Aid and corruption in gay discourse: the resilience of African culture in a globalized world

The tensions created by the pressure from the West on African governments and the resistance from the latter to anti-gay law across Africa except in South Africa provide a serious philosophical discourse on African culture. The positions are clear: while the West conceives homosexuality as a human phenomenon which is not peculiar to them alone, Africa posits that it is not part of its cultural phenomenon. Thus, African nations outlaw it, an action that brings forth threats of withdrawal or denial of aid. This political strategy has been suggested to be an attempt to corrupt African culture, which has largely been unsuccessful. This cultural resistance/resilience challenges the omnibus conception that globalization has conquered every other culture, and even religion, other than the West's. This staunch display of resilience, it is argued, should be viewed as a challenge to, and further basis for, the reconstruction of globalization.

**Grace Adasi:** Redefining gender roles in the Presbyterian Church of Ghana Among Ghanaian communities roles are assigned based on gender disparities and decision making positions are centered on socio-cultural considerations. The under-representation of women who are playing contemporary roles has created a gender gap that exists not only in the PCG but in many areas of the workplaces in Ghana. In the PCG, women were fully ordained in 1979 after resistance against their ordination; yet, they were not assigned to congregations as leaders. The very issues raised against their ordination have become road blocks to their role performance. It is discovered in the field that women do not get access to some of the top hierarchical positions at the PCG like the clerk and the moderator of the General Assembly. The paper argues for a re-examination of criteria for assigning roles in our contemporary institutions rather than limiting to gender differences.

## **Making Sense out of Individual Crisis: Votive Offerings and Narratives**

**Panel Chair: Antón Alvar Nuño**

This panel will focus on the importance of social and institutional mediation in the transfer of individual experience (i.e., a concrete personal event that needs an account) to a collective narrative that is shared and fixed through pre-established cultural codes. The study case for this panel will be the use of votive offerings in the Mediterranean Basin from the Graeco-Roman period to modern times. Institutional behavior guarantees coherence when individuals have to cope with the infinite variety of personal daily events. Individual experience

that may seem extraordinary, unexpected or unusual can be translated and classified into collectively shared narratives. Social pressure plays a determinant rôle in the negotiation of such narratives that make sense out of individual experience, especially in crisis situations, and stimulates the personal choice of institutionalized dispositives such as votive offerings. In order to encourage comparative methodology, the participants will present as study cases: (1) a new analysis of the so-called orphic tablets; (2) the change of collective patterns of behavior regarding votive offerings in the Sanctuary of Athena in Roman Athens; and (3) fresh ethnographic evidence with regard to votive offerings in the modern sanctuary of Saint Matthew in Gargano (Apulia, Italy).

**Paolo Scarpi:** From the expectation of beatitude to the research of immortality: reflections on the so-called “Orphic Tablets”

A limited number of thin, gold-leaf tablets from Ancient Greek tombs of Crete and Thessaly have long been ascribed to the Orphic tradition – they are the so-called Orphic gold leaves or Orphic gold tablets. These documents have a funerary character and come from all areas on the fringes of the Greek world, almost defining its borders. The tablets are engraved with formulas – sometimes instructions – guiding the deceased on the journey to the underworld. The texts are not consistent with each other in that in some groups we report the expectation for a destiny of beatitude in the afterlife; in others the overcoming of death through “rebirth”; yet in others, the promise of deification or the deification itself.

**Elena Muñiz Grijalvo:** Votive offerings as a way to approach religious change

Based on the central idea of the panel – that personal experience is socially mediated, both when being experienced and when put into words –, this paper will focus on votives in ancient Greece. To make sense out of personal experience, one needs to assume that it partly deals with common human feelings, but also partly with the general framework of meaning in which that personal experience was embedded. My aim will be to study Greek votives from a historical perspective, in an attempt to show how changes in votives (in their frequency, in the type of gods who received them etc.) may be related to changes in the more general religious framework. Within the panel, this study will try to provide a case study against the all too frequent definition of religious feelings as universal.

**Chiara Cremonesi:** Crisis, narratives and sacred spaces: the votive tablets of Saint Matthew’s Sanctuary (Gargano, Apulia) as a case study

During the twentieth century the reflection on the sacred and on sacred space has been in many ways a reflection on: being human; what it took in certain historical moments to make some places denser than others; making those places

capable of tying lives back together; proposing new beginnings or on the contrary destroying them; questioning and challenging relational systems. The sanctuaries of Gargano constitute an extraordinary example of a sacred network as the possible horizon for building relational systems producing individual and collective identities. Here, we focus especially on Saint Matthew's sanctuary and its collection of votive tablets (nineteenth to twentieth centuries) as a case study from an historical-religious perspective. Indeed, they provide exceptional glimpses into the lives of individuals and communities, showing the role of religious dispositives in tempering the impact force of the crises that the individual periodically experiences, as an entity taking decisions and making choices.

**Laura Carnevale:** Pilgrims, sanctuaries, objects: the case-study of St. Matthew's sanctuary

A sanctuary is a sacred place where the memory of a persistent past is celebrated, often linked with specific objects of veneration, such as relics. This memory, as an identity feature of the sanctuary, is preserved, narrated, sometimes reshaped – in a word, mediated – by the pilgrims. Travelling to/from a single sanctuary, in fact, pilgrims carry not only “material” luggage but also “ideal” luggage: they mediate cultural, historical, social and economical stimuli. A dynamic relationship can be thus established between pilgrims' itineraries (territory), narratives (hagiographical legends, accounts of pilgrimage), sacred objects and the history of the sanctuaries. Many of the above-mentioned patterns are recognizable in the case-study of the famous St. Matthew's sanctuary in Gargano (Apulia), a former Benedictine abbey located on the Southern branch of the Via Francigena where, since the sixteenth century, “St. Matthew's molar tooth” has been worshipped by pilgrims.

## Mapping Islamic Proselytism (Da'wah) in National and Transnational Perspectives

### Panel Chair: Jamal Malik

Research on the global phenomenon of resurgent Islam has focused so far on Islamic states and movements that strive to establish an ideal Islamic state. However, emphasis has been put on the militant, jihādī, aspect of Islamism, which has led to considerably biased representations of the phenomenon and, correspondingly, biased policies. In contrast, this project aims at taking a complementary perspective by examining the discourses and practices of Islamic resurgence, centred on the concept of da'wah, mission, for it is rather da'wah (invitation) than jihād (struggle), we argue, that forms the backbone of the modern Islamic state and collective action. Hypothesizing that religion is being reas-

serted in the post-modern secular world, we consider the various discourses, practices and organisations of da‘wah to be epitomes of the transformation of Islam that takes place in the face of Western and missionary challenges and puts it on the secular age’s cultural market. Thus, this project will shed light on redefinitions of the Islamic Self and Other, on the reformation of gender relations and youth culture, and on the interaction of Islamist political theology with the modern notions of civil rights, democracy and social justice.

**Thomas Gugler:** Da‘wat-e Islami and Sufislamism: practice & politics of preaching in Pakistan

Being the only Islamic state founded as a refuge for Muslims, Pakistan has the world’s largest numbers of Islamic missionary movements. Like Israel, its Muslim twin is an ideological state, claiming to defend the rights of coreligionist non-citizens beyond its borders. Under Zia ul-Haq Islamization became the main political project of Pakistan. The dynamics of Islamization focused increasingly on questions of conformity and external observance: how to dress, how to practice gender segregation, Islamic ways of eating, fasting and speech etc. The Dawat-e Islami was founded in 1981 as the Barelwi counterpart of the Tablighi Jamaat and has become by now Pakistan’s largest and by far most visible organization for the propagation of Quran and Sunnah in the country. Revolving around piety and self-improvement it promises a revitalization of Muslim solidarity. It runs its own chain of madrasas and jamiats, Islamic shops, Mufti hotlines, Dar al-Ifta offices and airs its own TV-channel “Madani Channel”. Due to the transnational character of the movement, with centres in about a hundred countries, young Muslims in Pakistan consider Dawat-e Islami a specifically modern and cosmopolitan way to practice Islam. With the attitude of “learning Islam by preaching”, its lay preachers are requested to regularly participate in missionary qafilas (caravans) – one evening each week through the neighborhood, once a month for three days to a different city and once a year for 30 days preferably to a foreign country. All members have to fill in daily a monthly madani card to mark their progress in their individual implementation of the Sunnat al-Nabi in their everyday life. This card is a set of 72 questions or achievements for Islamic brothers, called “Medina rewards,” paradise points. There are 63 of them for Islamic sisters, 92 for male madrasa students, 83 for female madrasa students, 52 for prisoners in jails, 40 for children, and so on. Following this program on a daily basis enables one to experience the result of discipline – and the pleasures of minor victories leading to larger triumphs against one’s nafs.

**Nina Wiedl:** Da‘wa and Islamic law in minority contexts: On the interrelation between Salafi Da‘wa and Salafi legal opinions in Germany  
 This paper examines how Islamic law and religious verdicts (fatāwā) by ‘ulamā’ from Saudi Arabia may shape and restrict da‘wa, and how Salafi preachers in Germany react to these constraints. It aims to demonstrate that Salafis are able to act rationally and strategically and adapt to minority contexts. Drawing on an analysis of fatāwā and publications on religious law and jurisprudence, the Salafi approach to Islamic law related to da‘wa is investigated through an analysis of four areas of regulations that are central to da‘wa in Germany: interactions with non-Muslims, interactions between males and females, methods of da‘wa, and the process of conversion. The results reveal that the challenges of effectively practicing da‘wa to non-Muslims prompted some preachers to develop new and more pragmatic interpretations of Islamic law for the German context and to adjust fatāwā by Saudi ‘ulamā’ without transgressing the scope of the orthodox methodology of legal reasoning.

**Jamal Malik:** Fiqh al-da‘wa or the juridification of Islamic mission in the context of globalization

Globalization is made responsible for different sorts of (re)invented traditions: from hyper-culture to individualization. Probably this is right, but the fact of the matter is that there is a marked trend towards a new religious foundation in and of societies. Some call this the deprivatization of religion; others describe it as the return of the gods. Obviously, religion has become an important factor in politics and society. Law and proselytism seem to play a major role in negotiating this complex situation. With Islamic proselytism (dawah) having gone global the invoking of empowerment has also pluralized, and religious authority disenchanting. It may look like religious resistance when piety-minded Muslims instigate homogenizing dawah activities and endow them with legal superstructure. The entanglement of proliferation of law and the process of legal framing may be traced in what is called fiqh al-dawah, the legal reasoning on Islamic proselytism. The paper will reconstruct the genealogy of this rather new genre, its social constructiveness, its ideational grounding and its normative potential. It is argued that though juridification of dawah is not yet complete, some of its aspirations and promises are visible in the context of the global reassertion of religion in the public sphere, its ability to compete with other systems in the secular market, and the grasping of hegemony and agency.

## Mapping the Civic Engagement of Immigrant Religious Groups

### Panel Chair: Martin Baumann

This panel is based on research conducted by the Religion, Immigration, and Civil Society Project in Chicago, one of seven Gateway Cities projects funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts. The Chicago project analyzed civic engagement patterns of selected immigrant congregations across several religious traditions, focusing on the impact of three moral order variables: the locus of the moral authority of the group (on a continuum from individualist to collectivist), the moral projects of the group (again on a continuum from individualist to collectivist), and the sectarian tensions with other groups and the larger society. The panel will present this new approach for studying immigrant religious groups and patterns of civic engagement. The first paper (sociology of religion) will introduce the approach and the second (history of religions) will apply it to selected immigrant religious groups in America, while the last presentation (study of religions) will discuss the applicability to the European context.

**Fred Kniss:** Moral order variables and civic engagement: moral authority, moral projects, and sectarianism

This presentation will discuss three variables that are important components of any religio-political moral order: locus of moral authority, primary moral project, and degree of sectarianism. Considering a group's location with regard to the first two variables suggests a heuristic "map" identifying key distinctions between immigrant religious groups. Adding a consideration of sectarianism enables the analyst to generate hypotheses about the nature and direction of an immigrant group's potential civic engagement. This conceptual model suggests when and how the content of religious beliefs and practices can be causal factors in civic engagement, and not simply consequences of a group's social location.

**Paul D. Numrich:** Mapping the civic engagement of selected immigrant religious groups in America

This presentation will examine how the moral order variables (moral authority, moral projects, sectarianism) and other factors help to explain the civic engagement patterns of selected immigrant congregations in Chicago. Special attention will be given to educational programs, especially parochial schools that offer an alternative to the public school system. Historical comparisons of Buddhist, Catholic, Hindu, Jewish, Lutheran, and Muslim immigrant groups will be included, leading to the following hypothesis: A substantial parochial school movement will emerge only within those immigrant religious groups for whom tensions with the larger society reach a critical level; for whom the moral project

has a primarily collectivist goal; and for those who can muster the requisite material resources.

**Martin Baumann:** Applying the civic engagement map to selected immigrant religious groups in Europe  
Immigration has led to the establishment of sizeable religious minorities since the 1950s in western European countries. With their longer stay, immigrants changed provisional sites of religious worship to larger premises, at times constructing new sacred buildings. In the course of this establishment for longevity, the second generation grew up, socialized both in the ordinary school system and the cultural-religious traditions of their parents' country of origin. Will the young people continue their parents' religions or will they change religious practices, ideas and hierarchies? Also, which forms of civic engagement have emerged? The paper discusses these issues by examples of different immigrant groups in Switzerland, making use of the moral order map developed by Kniss and Numrich. The paper aims to both transfer this approach to the European context and employ it to highlight shifts and changes taking place from the first to the second immigrant generation.

## **Mapping the Dynamics of Religion in Exhibitions of European Museums for the History of Religion: Theories and Practice**

### **Panel Chair: Marianna Shakhnovich**

Recently we have found ourselves in an era of visual culture, where film, video and art practices have great social value. In the museums of the world there are a great number of artifacts associated with different religious traditions. What is the significance of these artifacts in contemporary cultural space? What impact do they have on the modern society? How do the exposition principles and methods of demonstrating change under the influence of new paradigms in anthropology and the history of religion, or in various political contexts? What distinguishes the exhibitions of objects related to religion, in church museums, art museums, or museums specialized in the history of religion? What are the methodological approaches and principles of using such artifacts in modern museum exhibitions? What are the perspectives for the objects of religious culture stored in museums in the formation of tolerance, dialogue and understanding? These questions are raised in the agenda of the Congress of the IAHR for the first time, but they are of great interest to historians of religion, anthropologists, museum curators, teachers of religious education and the general public.

**Marianna Shakhnovich:** Theoretical approaches in the Study of Religion and its representation in museum exhibitions in Europe and Soviet Russia in the 1930s

The aim of the paper is to study the influence of the most important theories in the Study of Religion on the formation of exhibitions of religion at museums in Europe and Soviet Russia in the 1930s. The author examines the impact of anthropology of religion in creating exhibitions on the evolution of religious beliefs and practices and shaping the image of “other” religions by museum means. Particular attention is given to the influence of historical methodology in museum displays, coupled with the development of the tradition of Religionsgeschichte, the spreading of Marxist sociology and the emergence of a new interdisciplinary approach of total history.

**Ekaterina Teryukova:** Visual representation of religion in museums (The State Museum of the History of Religion’s case)

The paper features the history of the Museum of the History of Religion and its permanent exhibition. Founded in 1932, the Museum of the History of Religion intends to make a comparative typological exposure of ritual and sacred objects of various peoples. Its goal is to present religious phenomena as they are. But what is the best way to do it? The Museum’s collection of photos, showing temporary and permanent exhibits of the past, and current permanent exhibits, reveals that the museum dedicated to religion has at its disposal exceptional authentic material objects and documents, such as important instruments, models and maquettes that allow visitors to visualize the evolution of religious beliefs in cultural, historical and social contexts.

**Konstanze Runge:** Religious objects in the service of their collectors, curators and researchers: some observations from the Religionskundliche Sammlung Marburg

What can religious objects and their museum presentation tell us about the understanding of the religion(s) of their collectors, curators and researchers? How is the change of the notion of religion(s) presented in the world’s oldest university-based Museum of Religions? The scholarly understanding of the phenomenon of religion has profoundly changed since 1927, when the Religionskundliche Sammlung was set up by the theologian and philosopher of religion Rudolf Otto. Today Otto’s heritage is critically cherished and employed by the academic staff of the Department of the Study of Religions of Marburg University who run the museum. This paper will deliver some insights into 88 years of studying religions through and with the help of their material representations at the Religionskundliche Sammlung Marburg – from a theological to a study-of-religions-approach – and will illustrate this with selected examples of religious objects.

**Crispin Paine:** Religion in secular museums: is a revolution starting?

Museums are booming all over the world, and many of those museums are full of objects that were once “religious”. Now they have become art objects, or historical artifacts, or scientific specimens. But for many people, they are still “religious objects”, sometimes even sacred. Even secular museums are beginning to recognize this, and some are finding ways of helping their visitors understand those objects’ religious meanings, as well as their scientific, historical or artistic roles. Moreover, some museums are starting to use their objects to help visitors to better understand religion. Secular museums are public spaces where people of any religion or none can meet on neutral ground. This short paper will examine this phenomenon, and will ask: is this just a passing fashion, or can it be the start of a new role for museums, and a real contribution to public understanding of religion?

## **Marginality, Media, and Transformations of Religious Authority**

**Organizer: Laura Feldt**

This session addresses the role of marginality in transformations of religious authority from a media-theoretical perspective. The discussion will centre on how socially or religiously marginal persons, in different historical periods, interact with, challenge, and change religious authority by means of the use of particular media. We focus on the ways in which media are used to (re-)produce religion – from literary forms, rituals, askesis, to visual and material objects, etc. The field of religion and media tends to focus on religion and modern mass media, but the discussion here will address how more comparative and historical approaches to religion and media can be developed and refined, connecting to the fields of “material religion” as well as “aesthetics of religion”, as related to our theme. The open discussion is kick-started by a short presentation by each participant, of a case in which the relations between marginality and religious authority are transformed by means of the use of particular media. The cases relate to a larger project and involve literary forms, technologies of the body, ritual prayers, and oral tradition in diverse contexts ranging from antiquity to the contemporary era. Our explicit aim is to have a comparative and trans-historical open discussion.

**Participants: Jan N. Bremmer, Laura Feldt, Dirk Johannsen**

## Martyrdom Disputed: Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism

### Panel Chair: Hans G. Kippenberg, Katharina Waldner

Along with the spread of religious violence since the 1970s the figure of the martyr arose again. Though it seemed to be a completely outdated concept, it proved to be most topical. While dying for God or his community is earning special reputation, the martyr is regarded by others as heretic, godless, or terrorist. This Janus face characterizes Christian and Muslim concepts in the past as in the present and can be found even in contemporary Buddhism. In two panels we will explore these complex entanglements of ancient traditions and contemporary issues by concentrating especially on the history of Christian martyrdom as narrative genre in European history compared to the mediatization of martyrdom in national and transnational contemporary discourses (especially Islamic jihad, but also US anti-abortion activism and conflicts about Buddhist self-immolators in contemporary Tibet). All cases show that “martyrdom” is a discourse, which is performed in different media and enables individuals and groups not only to legitimize violence but also to “prove” the truth and universality of their religious vision and universalist claims (concerning gender, religious enemies, “the Islam” etc.).

**Katharina Waldner:** The invention of Christian martyrdom as a narrative structure in the Roman Empire

In “The Myth of Persecution” (2013) Candida Moss provokes by the statement that early Christians invented “a story of martyrdom.” But to historians of religion this is no news at all, as some reviewers remarked. Instead of focusing on the content of the martyrdom discourse (Christianity as a persecuted religion), my analysis will concentrate on the procedures of representation. Not persecution was invented – the violence of the Roman Empire was a political fact –, but a certain way to transform imperial violence into a new genre of stories, which ensured religious identity not only for a group but also for individuals. Paradoxically, the authors used strategies that were invented by Hellenistic rulers and brought to perfection by the Roman Empire: the use of violence (real, imagined, staged, performed) to create order (“autotelic” violence according to Jan Reemtsma), and the power of administrative documents to represent “truth” as facts that really happened.

**Benedikt Kranemann:** The death of a believer as martyrdom? Sermon and prayer in WWI

In Germany, WWI was a theme of pastoral practice and theology in the Christian churches and also in the Jewish synagogues. This lecture focuses on the special situation of Catholics in German society during WWI. These Catholics saw the war as a moment to prove themselves as “good Germans”. At the same time,

priests tried to comfort soldiers in battles and military hospitals. Some theologians were open to religious interpretations of the war. Starting from these facts, the paper will explore the following questions: is there any explanation of the death of Catholic soldiers as martyrdom in sermons and prayers in the soldiers' prayer books? Can we see any theological discussions about WWI and a national or religious martyrdom of the soldiers? Was martyrdom in this time a controversial issue in the Catholic Church in Germany? Was it really a theme in church and theology?

**Julie Ingersoll:** Making of a martyr: Paul Hill and abortion-related violence in the US

In 2003 abortion activist Paul Hill was executed for the 1994 murders of Dr. John Britton and James Barrett as supporters and opponents held a vigil. The skies grew dark and a menacing Florida thunderstorm rolled through as lightning bolts stretched from the heavens all the way to the ground putting the "fear of God" into the unbelievers and the most devout alike. Hill's supporters read this as evidence of God's wrath at the injustice of the execution. In their view Hill was not a murderer but a defender of the unborn: a martyr who made himself a willing sacrifice to stop abortions. This paper draws on statements by compatriots, an interview given by Hill, devotional websites, field notes from the vigil on the day of the execution and Hill's own writings, each examined to show how the production of martyrs is crucial to religious movements advocating and justifying violence.

**Pieter G.T. Nanninga:** The culture of jihadist martyrdom operations: al-Qaeda and Jabhat al-Nusra

This paper explores the dynamics of the culture of jihadist martyrdom operations. For this purpose, it studies martyrdom videos that have been released by al-Qaeda (central) in the 2000s and by its Syrian affiliate Jabhat al-Nusra since 2012. The paper argues that the meanings attributed to martyrdom operations in both cases show many resemblances. Several themes can be identified that are frequently associated with violence, prominent among which are world rejection, honor, dignity, sacrifice and purity. In the meantime, the paper shows that the meanings of martyrdom are reconstructed in their specific contexts, i. e., al-Qaeda's global jihad and the more localized struggles of Jabhat al-Nusra. Hence, it concludes, the meanings of jihadist martyrdom operations for the actors involved are produced by global, virtual and local contexts. It is this flexibility of the concept of martyrdom that makes martyrs powerful symbols for jihadists in different regions of the world.

**John Soboslai:** Performing “Tibet”: the martyrdom of Tibetan self-immolators

In their last testaments before incinerating themselves, many Tibetan self-immolators dedicated their act to the Tibetan people, Buddhadharmā, and the Dalai Lama. Condemned as rebels or suicides by the People’s Republic of China, they are celebrated in Tibetan circles as *pawo* (W: *dpa’bo*), a term connoting heroism or courage. Many interpreters translate *pawo* as “martyr” due to their connection with a sacred community, while others condemn such translations as imposing non-indigenous theological categories. This paper takes this dispute as an opportunity to probe the religious and political attributes implicated in discourses of martyrdom. Interrogating the links between Tibetan self-sacrificial traditions and Buddhist doctrine in the twenty-first century context of the self-immolations, I argue that these acts are framed as “witnessing” in ways comparable to the martyrdom traditions of Christianity and Islam. These self-immolations, I contend, “prove” an existential truth through the spectacle of the body’s voluntary submission and destruction.

## Material Culture as Agent in In-Between-Spaces of Religion and Gender

**Panel Chairs: Bärbel Beinhauer-Köhler, Edith Franke**

Our panel looks at the material representations shaping or dissolving the categories of religion and gender. In analyzing the use or active role of material media (e.g. “objects”, architecture, pictorial representations) we explore changing constructions of gender as part of fluid religions. This goes beyond the simple reconstruction of interdependencies of religion and gender (e.g. gender patterns and social orders in narrations and textual discourses) since our understanding of both categories focuses on flexible aspects: gender-patterns shift in encounters between religions and cultures, religions are not fixed entities. Moreover we want to contribute to debates about material culture. Therefore we will look at how materiality – in contrast to first hand impressions – does not play a mere static role as a passive medium of ideas but is a dynamic part of religious cultural systems and their development: material religion forms, leads, emotionalizes and realizes – in this case – gender patterns.

**Birgit Heller:** Images of god/dess and transgender in Hindu traditions

From ancient times the imagery and mythology of the most important Hindu gods Vishnu and Shiva – who are personified as males – comprise the well-known and popular representations of transgender phenomena. For special purposes Vishnu takes on a female form called Mohinī, whereas the androgynous

manifestation of Shiva as Ardhanārīshvara unites the male god with his female counterpart. The significance of these images does not remain the same throughout history. The varying interpretations change according to different cultural contexts, developments, discourses and interests. Regarding Vishnu Mohinī, she may represent the classical pattern of the temptress, but can also be considered as a transsexual. Pictorial representations act as powerful symbols which legitimate traditional patterns of sex and gender, as well as their dynamic transformations.

**Bärbel Beinbauer-Köhler:** Wealthy women marking public urban spaces in Cairo around 1200 CE: reconstructing their material traces

Inscriptions on buildings marked quarters as well as spaces of interest and power by engraved statements of their founders that could be seen by everyone (I. Bierman 1998). The founders of these buildings of c. 1200 CE were not only important political figures, such as Sultans and Wazirs. The Ayyubid dynasty in Syria after 1200 CE is increasingly being identified with the female sponsors of religious architecture. Earlier traces of this tradition can be found in Fatimid Cairo and moreover among different religious groups. It seems that wealthy women showed their agency in society by marking urban spaces with architecture: they underlined their identities, their economic abilities as well as their piety. Recognizing this material leads to further discussions about patterns of “the Islamic city”, in-between-discourses of their pluralistic inhabitants as well as the stereotype of women as passive and unseen.

**Anna-Katharina Höpflinger:** Gendered death? Roman-Catholic ossuary-chapels as in-between-spaces

In European Roman-Catholic regions, bones of the deceased have been collected in ossuary-chapels. Their main function was a normative one: the exposed mortal remains reminded the living of death, and demanded of them a virtuous life. To explain the interrelation between such normative demands and the material representation of death, a gender-based perspective can be applied: the *memento mori*-semantics imply gender-concepts, because a good life depends on gender-specific regulations. Ossuaries offer, in their material representation, gendered ideas of death: e.g. wall paintings of male and female reapers. However ossuaries also represent a non-gendered equality in death: girls, boys, women, and men, are nothing more than bones, arranged side by side. I shall elaborate upon these gender aspects of ossuary-chapels with examples from Switzerland and argue that ossuaries can be understood as in-between-spaces for gender concepts: they support a gendered society, but at the same time they also negate gender differences.

**Edith Franke:** Popular/ized images of sacredness as spaces between normative systems of belief

Religious objects and images are more than static or passive materializations of concepts and expressions of normative religious teachings. Material religion, such as objects of everyday religious praxis and popular religious culture, form, lead, emotionalize and realize patterns of religious praxis and gender-roles. Complementing those objects and images that comply to religious dogma, they reflect or enable non-conforming beliefs and religious practices. This paper is focused on a selection of religious objects held in the collection of the Philipps-University Marburg's Museum of Religions. A look at the origin and meaning of the Christian "volto santo" motif, the so-called "Heilige Kümmernis", as well as the Javanese wayang figure "Semar" will show their relevance in the transformation of religious practice and gender roles.

## **Me, My God and I: The Individual as Recipient of Divine Epiphanies**

**Panel Chairs: Georgia Petridou, Susanne Turner**

Epiphany is of cardinal importance for both modern and ancient religious systems. On the one hand, it provides important information about the nature and the form of the deity/deities and their relationship to the world of mortals, while on the other hand, it informs us of the worshippers' hopes and expectations in regard to their deity/deities. Moreover, the advent of the god into the mortal sphere tells us just as much about the preoccupations and the assumptions of the culture involved. This panel engages closely with the individual as the central agent of religious communication and his or her personal encounters with the divine. The main focus of our panel is to ascertain, on the one hand, the impact and transformative effect these meetings with the divine have had for the chosen few and their respective communities. On the other hand, these much-prized close encounters with the divine often function as authorization tools which invest their recipients with the authority to contest pre-established power structures and proceed with more or less radical actions or political or religious revisionism. What is an epiphany and how (if at all) does it differ from a theophany? Are these transcategorical concepts or are they to be observed with greater frequency in specific situational and generic contexts, media, or religious traditions? How often do we find an epiphany or a theophany at the heart of a pilgrimage destination? What kind of religious expertise is essential to decipher the divine presence and to expatiate on it? To what extent do these individual encounters with the divine follow a single scenario and to what degree are

they shaped by the religious traditions within which the individuals operate? How often do they become embedded in personal agendas of religious innovation and/or reformation and what are their socio-political and/or economic ramifications?

**Greg Woolf:** Authorizing epiphany in classical antiquity

Cognitive science strongly suggests that the experience of epiphany is linked to particular mental states. Some progress has been made in examining means by which such states have been and may be induced, for example through certain kinds of sensory deprivation, by changes in diet or the ingestion of particular psychotropic substances. But the product of these stimuli were often unpredictable and sometimes deemed socially unacceptable, as were visions and revelations claimed by individuals who had not undergone socially sanctioned preparation. This paper looks at the mechanisms through which ancient religious authorities accepted or rejected individual revelations, or imposed their own interpretation on them. Examples will be drawn from the healing sanctuary of Asclepius at Epidauros, from the oracle at Claros, from the history of portents at Rome, and from early Christian attitudes to divine epiphany. In each case it will be argued that alongside institutional mechanisms for authorizing and rejecting epiphanies, religious authorities also invested in preventative means through which individuals were “taught” in advance the kind of epiphanies to expect. For religious entrepreneurs, on the other hand, exceeding expectations and introducing new elements were means of retaining some of the authority conveyed by epiphanies. This dynamic can be inserted into the long dialectical relationship between charismatic and institutional power over the content of religious belief and the conduct of ritual.

**Faiza Hussain:** From Lan tarānī (“You Shall Not See Me”) to Fa aḥbābtu an u’raf (“I Longed to Be Known”): Sufi contribution to Islamic theological discourse on the vision of God

According to the Quranic narrative of Moses’ encounter with God on Mount Sinai, the prophet’s request for visiting God was answered by the divine words, “You shall not see me.” The Quranic verse (7:143) referring to this incident has carried long-lasting theological and mystical debate over the capability of humankind in meeting God in Islamic tradition, itself inducing a variety of other questions such as: How and through what human faculty is visiting God possible? Is such vision peculiar to specific individuals or can anybody as humankind attain it? Resorting to a renowned Hadith in which God states, “I was a hidden treasure, then I longed to be known,” Sufis (Muslim mystics) related this discussion to two concepts of creation and mystical knowledge. Accordingly, a pivotal Sufi discourse on encountering God in the sense of visiting, hearing, conversing with, and being annihilated in Him is formed. Dealing with the

basic Sufi theories pertaining to the issue of theophany, this paper discusses the Sufi participation in the interpretation of Moses' meeting with the Divine from the Islamic viewpoint.

**Aditya Malik:** God's Little Horses: Justice and Ritual Embodiment in the Central Himalayas

Kumaon is a mountainous region in the Indian Himalayas bordering on Nepal in the east and Tibet in the north. Together with the province of Garhwal, Kumaon forms one of the most recently established states of India, Uttarakhand. Several powerful gods and goddess reside here along the banks of sacred rivers and on the snow-covered mountain peaks. These gods are also present in hillside shrines in villages and through rituals of embodiment in which they enter and speak through the bodies of sensitive "dancers" (nacnevala) during intense "awakening" sessions (jagar). The most powerful of all the deities is Goludev who is known as the "God of Justice" (nyay ka devta). Goludev's advice on matters of justice is, among other means, also sought through rituals of embodiment in which the god speaks through a "dancer" to his devotees. The dancers (nacnevala), who are also referred to as the deity's "horse" or "beast of burden" (ghoda or dangariya) are transformed or "awakened" through the words and music of an "awakener" (jagariya) who tells the story of Goludev which is essentially about the injustices experienced by the deity in his own life. Who are the dancers and how do they become the deity's "little horses"? Moreover, what does it mean, in this context to "awaken" God and to embody him? What does it mean to dance God? Why does God dance? Dance primarily is a mode of doing with the body, but it is also a mode of knowing by doing through the body. It constitutes knowledge that arises somatically within and through the body. Dance is a mode of movement that results in self-knowledge and consequently justice even for God and for those who observe and participate in his dance. In this paper I explore the possibility of a hermeneutics of dance, divine presence, ritual embodiment and justice in the context of the religious cult of Goludev.

**Georgia Petridou:** Emplotting the divine: epiphany as status-elevating and agency-enhancing mechanism

One of the main points of departure of the Lived Ancient Religion (LAR) approach is that it looks at narratives not as mythological constructs and reflections of religious beliefs, but as means of investing the individual religious actors with skills and competences to develop evaluations and contextualize social experiences, thus enhancing their agency. Within the wider methodological framework of LAR, narratives are thought of as the literary "emplotment" of events, and as fundamental in the dialogical, the interpersonal constitution of "agency" and collective identity. This paper examines the emplotment of the "epiphanic schema" in two inscriptions, which feature two goddesses manifesting them-

selves to a rather limited number of people – who, unsurprisingly enough, happen to be identical to the members of the socio-political and/or religious elite of the respective communities. The divine epiphanies featured here enhance the agency of a very small minority consisting of a handful of privileged individuals (especially members of the priestly personnel) and invest them with power, prestige and authority, and often with power to deliver the whole community out of imminent danger. Epiphany provides a minority of privileged individuals with the essential god-sent prestige and validity to resolve certain crises and essentially becomes an effective mechanism of perpetuating or, alternatively, challenging current socio-political formations and power-structures. In that sense, epiphany nuances the formation of both basic societal values and socio-economic stratification in Graeco-Roman antiquity. The paper closes by examining the effectiveness of epiphany in enhancing the individual's socio-political status and religious agency cross-culturally.

**Markus Vinzent:** Epiphany: the aitiology of Christianity

The beginnings of Christianity are usually narrated in the form of an historical account, based on what is distilled as historical information from the New Testament and the few historiographical data excerpted from non-Christian sources. Especially what is found in Paul's letters and the canonical Gospels provides the basis for this scholarly narrative with the result that Christ's resurrection is advanced as the starting point and the beginning of Christianity. Yet, as I have shown in past attempts, this does not match the findings in our ancient sources where epiphany or incarnation typologies prevail. The paper will question the "historical" nature of both the sources and the scholarly account, highlight the importance of epiphany for the earliest narrations of the beginnings of Christianity, and outline an alternative scholarly story of the aitiology of Christianity, based not on the resurrection of Christ, but on epiphany, stressing the figurative or metaphoric nature of our sources critical of a historical foundation.

**Julia Kindt:** What's the stuff of divinity? Oracular narratives as epiphanic tales

This paper takes Pausanias' account of Theagenes' multiple entanglements with oracles and statues (Paus. 6.11.2–9) as its point of departure to reflect on the way in which oracle stories serve as epiphanic tales. In particular, the paper illustrates that the status of these stories qua stories is indeed central to the kind of theological questions these tales are able to flag. Overall I argue that the story of Theagenes serves as an aetiological story, which is based on a problematic concept of causation, which raises more questions about the nature of divinity, than it is ultimately prepared to answer.

**Valentino Gasparini:** Listening stones: Isiac carved auricles as signifiers activating human-divine communication

In a recent article (“Isis’ Footprints. The Petrosomatoglyphs as Spatial Indicators of Human-Divine Encounters”) published in a volume edited by the organizers of this panel, I suggested that dedications of carved footprints should be interpreted as polysemic visual operators of human-divine communication. I would now like to focus on apparently similar petrosomatoglyphs representing other body parts, namely ears. After carefully examining the whole available documentation (around twenty items) and – where possible – its precise archaeological context, I aim to display how these signifiers differed from other dedications – the dedication of footprints is an open process with a much wider operational value than the one of ears – and explore the common capacity of feet- and ear-shaped dedications to activate the communication between gods (as epēkooi) and humans. Never accompanied by elaborated inscriptions, both these types of carvings (usually placed at the entrance of the temple, in particular at the foot of its staircase) magnified – through anthropomorphic representations – what Vernant would call the “puissance divine”, proclaimed the divine epiphanic presence and willingness to hear the devotees’ prayers, and offered to individuals different options in constructing a scenario for their encounters with the gods.

**Annette Weissenrieder:** Paradise interpreted

In the midst of a self-defense against his opponents in Corinth, the apostle Paul alludes to his epiphany he had experienced fourteen years prior, in which he was caught up to the third heaven into paradise (2 Cor 12:1–8). There in paradise, he heard and saw things “no mortal is permitted to repeat.” If we consider that each epiphany occurs at what Fritz Graf terms a “crisis situation,” then the context of the epiphany is interesting: Paul demonstrates a clear connection between rhetoric and illness, though with his own emphasis. Here, illness is the subject of boasting, for it is here that Christ particularly reveals himself and makes God’s attending to Paul, the hearing of his prayer, clear. However, rhetoric, emotional engagement and communications about illness are not mutually exclusive here – on the contrary. The polished rhetoric, using the ancient topos of the tearful letter, is an expression of this same emotionality. The power of the rhetoric with which Paul draws on the topoi of the tearful letter, and the physical presence of the read word, open up the emotionality of his statements.

## Media of Religious Communication

**Anna Neumaier:** Religiosity between offline & online: about the exodus of (some) Christians from churches to online boards

The internet has often been viewed as a new medium with uniquely attractive qualities, and therefore being able to explain religious internet use on its own terms. The paper presented here argues that, on the contrary, essential reasons for Christian internet use can be found in clearly nameable deficiencies of traditional churches and parishes. What is more, while the respective internet users experience a destabilization of their religiosity in offline contexts, internet use can be understood as an autonomous attempt to restabilize one's beliefs. The findings presented are drawn from a PhD thesis on Christian, German-language online boards, where especially the relations and interdependencies of religious internet use and the corresponding offline engagement became an important matter. Results come from an empirical study, including online analyses, qualitative interviews and a quantitative survey.

**Gábor Ittzés:** Luther's reform of the *Ars Moriendi*: A Sermon on Preparing to Die and the Medieval tradition

The art of good death was a mainstay of the European religious landscape for at least half a millennium between 1400 and 1900. It developed in the wake of the Black Death, spread virtually over the whole continent, and survived, both in Catholic and Protestant lands, until the twentieth century. Luther's Sermon on Preparing to Die (1519) is a landmark in that history. It is deeply rooted in the late medieval tradition, which it nevertheless renewed significantly and with lasting effects. This paper will explore how the Sermon helped transform the practice of preparation for death, paying attention not only to continuities and discontinuities between the reformer and his fifteenth-century predecessors but also interpreting the changes in the context of Luther's own work and that of the developing sixteenth-century Reformation. The analysis pays special attention to the questions of images and word, faith and sacrament, rhetorical strategy and performative character.

## Media, Religious Communities, and Society: Adaptation and Transformation

**Panel Chair: Andrea Rota**

The question of the adaptation of religious communities to changing social contexts draws attention to the development of new forms of religious communalization. In this respect, the production, distribution, and use of different print

and electronic media by the leaders and the members of religious communities represent an important source of potential innovation, extending the limits of the group beyond face-to-face interaction and redefining the common sociological understanding of the congregation (e.g. Chaves 2004). However, the actual impact and scope of these practices cannot be simply deduced from some universal logic of the media, but instead they represent a field of empirical investigation (Hepp and Krotz 2012). Drawing on the recent research of different religious communities in various geographical and cultural contexts, the panel explores the dynamic interplay of direct and mediated communication in reshaping the “subjective feeling of the parties [...] that they belong together” (Weber 1978 [1921]).

**Oliver Krüger:** The mediatization of religion: a critical consideration of a new paradigm

Recently, the concept of mediatization was presented as a new approach in studying the relationship between the media and religion. Stig Hjarvard sees media as strong agents of social and cultural change, so that “society to an increasing degree is submitted to, or becomes dependent on, the media and their logic.” This approach has been largely received in the Scandinavian and German study of religion. I intend to ask for the new perspectives and the epistemological consequences of the mediatization paradigm. This partly deterministic understanding of the media as agents is evidently challenged by the empirical approaches that seek the general perception and actual use of certain media, and the production and reception of media contents in a cross-media perspective.

**Fabian Huber:** Local and translocal Christian communities: media profile and media use among Jehovah’s Witnesses and Vineyard Churches

Despite the crisis of the traditional church, several Christian communities are able to thrive in the contemporary European religious landscape and on a global scale. This is the case with Jehovah’s Witnesses and the evangelical Association of Vineyard Churches. However, on the organizational level, these communities are quite dissimilar. The Watch Tower Society is an example of a centralized institution aiming at theological and social uniformity. In contrast, despite a regional coordination, the Association of Vineyard Churches allows for a great internal diversity among the affiliated churches. Both of the communities present a diversified media profile while displaying diverging attitudes regarding the use of media. This contribution discusses the preliminary results of an ongoing research project on the production, interpretation, and use of different media within these two communities in Central Europe with relation to their local and translocal forms of communalization.

**Frank Neubert:** Belonging to a “billion strong global religion”: Hinduism today, Hindu communities and conversion to Hinduism in the Śaiva Siddhānta Church

The Śaiva Siddhānta Church (ŚSC), based in Kauai, Hawaii, USA, has been holding rites of conversion to Hinduism since the 1960s. These rites include studying one’s “former” religion, officially declaring severance from it in the presence of a minister or mentor, choosing and officially adopting a new Hindu name, and aligning with “the Hindu community”. Starting from here, this paper will address the question of community with respect to (1) the meanings of the term, (2) the idea of Hinduism as “a global religion” upheld by numerous “communities” worldwide, and (3) the relevance of “community” in the conversion process. For doing so, I will draw on source material published by the Himalayan Academy, a branch of the ŚSC, in the global magazine *Hinduism Today*, in book publications and on their various websites.

**Martin Ackermann:** Approximating the guru: how devotees of Amma overcome distance through mediatization

The Indian guru Amma (Mātā Amṛtānandamayī) has devotees all around the globe. Her fellowship has continuously grown through her extensive travels since 1987. With the exception of die-hard devotees who make arrangements to be with Amma wherever she is, most of her followers are apart from her for most of the year. This study will show how being apart from Amma is overcome by different forms of mediatization. For instance, internet services, such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube, keep followers up to date on the latest events with Amma. Devi-Bhāva events are even streamed to different ashrams, where devotees join in the chanting and sometimes get the chance to shortly interact with their guru. In addition, some devotees use media, such as pictures or dolls, to communicate with Amma, or they altogether turn to their “inner Amma” and become a medium themselves.

## **“Mediatized Catholicism.” Communicative Figurations of Religious Authority in Recent German Catholicism**

**Panel Chair: Kerstin Radde-Antweiler**

The papers of this panel are looking for mediatization processes of religious authorities in recent Catholicism. Religious authority serves as a fundamental concept in religion, and in mediatized cultures and societies such apparently non-negotiable patterns become increasingly debated within and beyond religions. Thus, we can observe the struggle for symbolic capital between the traditional religious experts and new parties, as well as the so-called laity, which leads to

different authority structures. The initial hypothesis of the project is that traditional religious authority has not been completely changed by mediatization, or even dissolved, but that different transformation patterns in different communicative figurations within the field can be observed. This involves the question of the extent to which authority structure has changed with the increasing variety of communication media, and the question to what extent we find different patterns of transformation concerning these authority-creating communicative figurations.

**Marta Kolodziejska:** Establishing religious authority on Catholic online forums: a case study

In this paper three leading Catholic internet forums will be examined in order to determine how the online forums change authority building, as analyzed by Campbell (2007) in the form of structures, hierarchy, ideology and texts. It was established that there is an ongoing tension between expressive individualism and church religiosity, which manifests itself in several ways: texts, ideology and hierarchy are discussed and often contested. So are structures (understood after Campbell as community structures and patterns of practice), with the exception of religious practice reserved for offline settings. Generally, authority among participants is established within a particular thread or theme: it is not assumed due to religious affiliation (believers and non-believers participate in the forums with equal status) or due to any role in offline communities. This study shows that while the forums are not “centres of defiance” against institutional authority per se, they establish their own rules when it comes to religious communication communities.

**Hannah Grüenthal:** Struggling for a place: the CE in the Catholic Field  
The Charismatic Renewal in the Catholic Church (“Charismatische Erneuerung – CE”) was founded in the 1960s, at the same time as Charismatic movements in other Christian denominations. What they have in common is the emphasis on the role of the Holy Spirit and the Charisms, as well as non-traditional forms of liturgy. Members of the CE are spread all over Germany and they are mostly organized in small prayer-groups. Contrary to the organization of the Catholic Church, translocal structures seem to be of minor importance. Even though charismatic practices evoke criticism in the Catholic field, the members of the CE insist on being part of the Catholic Church. In my paper, I will examine the position of the CE in the German Catholic field, and outline which mechanisms and structures are used in the attempt to raise or lower their status. Furthermore, I will explore which media are used by members of the CE, both for the purpose of information and communication, regarding online as well as offline media.

**Sina Gogolok:** The Youth Catechism of the Catholic church as a non-hierarchical branding instrument

The YOUCAT (YOUth CATEchism) belongs to the current phenomena of the Catholic Church in line with the so-called New Evangelization, an emic concept of internal catholic renewal. The initiators refer to an elaborated marketing concept, which marks a new change in advertising Catholic doctrine. The questions of this paper are, first, to what extent the YOUCAT can be understood as a brand, and second, in what way the argument to be a new catechism “from below” is a unique feature of this assumed brand. To consolidate this state of being a “bottom-to-top-catechism” social media are used as a platform for discussions. This paper will exemplarily analyze YOUCAT-Facebook groups to show how this platform is used and how the administrators interfering respectively are involved. Which role do media play by advertising YOUCAT, and how do they transport the idea of being a non-hierarchical catechism?

## Mediatized Religion in Asia

### Panel Chairs: Kerstin Radde-Antweiler, Xenia Zeiler

Religion, in Asia as well as in the “West”, by today is extensively media-saturated. For instance, religious institutions, groups and individual actors increasingly use media to discuss and negotiate religious authority and identity. Mediatization describes a metaprocess which shapes modern societies, on par with various socio-cultural processes such as globalization or individualization. Mediatization research focuses on the individual actors in their mediatized worlds; consequently research on mediatized religion is no longer a media-centered but an actor-centered research. The theoretical and methodical approach of mediatization by today is established in Europe and has primarily been researched in “Western” contexts. The panel goes one step further and discusses different aspects of mediatized religion in Asia. The individual papers present different case studies from various regions in Asia and discuss the data in the light of the current mediatization theory.

**Xenia Zeiler:** Mediatized Hindu festivals: transformed organizations of Durgapuja committees in India influencing religious identity and authority negotiations

Durgapuja celebrations involving complex organization developed since the sixteenth century from being status markers for patronizing landlords to popular mass events by the nineteenth century. The community involvement underwent still another transformation in the twentieth century, with emerging mediatization processes. Today, all aspects of Durgapuja are highly mediatized. Durgapuja

is a common theme in modern mass media, and the festival is increasingly organized, participated in and negotiated via and in a variety of media. This paper highlights transformations in Durgapujas' organizational structures and the implicit identity and authority negotiations which are explicitly brought about by mediatization processes. For this, it analyzes the mediatized activities of local "Durgapuja Committees" which today strongly compete and massively communicate, organize and negotiate via cell phones, emails, Facebook groups etc. in order to create outstanding festivals, which then serve as identity markers for their respective communities and support both the committees' and the community's religious authority.

**Christoph Günther:** When a caliphate also emerges on the internet: mediatization and the establishment of the "Islamic State" in Iraq and Syria  
This group, inspired by Islamic tradition and driven by a social-revolutionary agenda, had long ago begun to employ different kinds of media to disseminate its messages into the public sphere. But it was only in 2013 that IS(IS) would start to produce audio-visual publications of notable quality and aesthetic mirroring the regard of communicative measures as equally important as military means. Against the background of immense social and cultural changes sparked by IS, mediatization as a theoretical concept in this paper can help to analyze the group's use of digital media. Within IS's attempts to both establish state-like structures in Iraq and Syria and spread its influence into other regions, digital media is considered a means to interact symbolically as well as frame and construct reality, history and religious identities in a way favorable to a group with particular interests.

**Kerstin Radde-Antweiler:** Mediatized self-crucifixion on the Philippines: transformations and negotiations of cultural heritage  
Religious groups and actors increasingly use new forms of media which are part of diverse construction processes of religious identity as well as religious action and behavior. An example for this is the discussion of a popular ritual on Good Friday in the Philippines, namely the self-crucifixion. This ritual was invented in 1962 and originates from the concept of self-flagellation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when Spanish missionaries brought Passion plays to the Philippines and introduced the Iberian "Calvary Catholicism". Public self-crucifixion became very popular and is performed in parts of the Northern Philippines. Nowadays, this ritual is highly mediatized: the World Wide Web is full of pictures and videos of self-crucifixions which evoke heated discussions. It is also shown and presented on television as a prominent event and part of cultural heritage. Therefore it is not surprising that certain villages have become famous tourist spots – a fact that is highly criticized by the Catholic clergy.

## Meditation and Spiritual Poverty

**Dhammananda Thammawee:** Reception of the Theravāda mindfulness (Sati) meditation practice in German-Buddhist centres and Theravāda religiousness of Sri Lankan migrants in Germany

The purpose of this paper is to illustrate a twofold methodical perspective on the reception of the Theravāda mindfulness practice in German Buddhist centres on the one hand and the religious practices of Sri Lankan migrant Buddhists in Germany. The reason why I have chosen these two Theravāda complexes, German Buddhists and Sri Lankan migrants, is because they offer the possibility of a comparative approach. In both cases the point of reference in creating sacred time and space are the Theravāda traditions. In my paper, I will focus solely on the above mentioned two Theravāda groups and analyze their practices and performances. This may demonstrate how religious concepts and practices are comprehended, transformed and performed in a new environment. Religious and cultural interactions are of highest importance while practices are transformed, acclimatized and adapted in reaction to other cultural standards and create new home-grown religious complexes.

**Grzegorz Polak:** The bodhisatta's practice of breath retention: self-mortification or an advanced meditative technique?

The Buddha was supposed to practice the most severe forms of self-mortification prior to his awakening. In this paper I would like to focus in particular on the description of the practice of breath retention and its drastic side effects, which may be found in the Majjhima Nikāya. Johannes Bronkhorst has stated in his seminal work "The Two Traditions of Meditation in Ancient India", that this account does not belong to the earliest stratum of Buddhist literature and the description of the side effects is most likely unauthentic, as it appears to be copied from different places in the Suttapiṭaka. By making detailed comparisons of the descriptions contained in suttas with modern accounts of advanced *prāṇāyāma* practices and their side effects, I show that the canonic description appears to be strikingly authentic, and seems to be the first such detailed description of this type of practice in Indian literature.

**Roxanne Ibalobor:** Perceptions of spiritual poverty: a survey of De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde's administrators, faculty, and staff

The current research on spiritual poverty was originally conceptualized as a two-part study. This is study one, an exploratory study that aims to unearth spiritual poverty from the lens of De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde administrators', faculty's, and staff's personal and spiritual experiences. It seeks to identify indicators and causes of spiritual poverty. It also explores how a Catholic institution like De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde alleviates spiritual poverty among its

human capital or human resource. It is a qualitative research that employed focus group discussion and key informant interviews in the data gathering. Data gathered from a total of 13 respondents were content analyzed by the research team. Open codes, categories, and clusters are presented based on the content analysis. Implications of the research findings are discussed. Future research directions are presented, including the plans for the second study.

**Tarig Mohamed:** Aspects of the monastic system in Islamic mysticism: Muslim Sufism and its interaction with Christianity

This paper discusses a group of most important concepts. The vision of Sufism in Islam depends on asceticism. This concept has evolved gradually, overlapping with a variety of faith and spiritual values. As a consequence, we can observe the occurrence of the concept of divine love, which is an expression of asceticism in life. We also observe a profound controversy between the researchers about the descent of asceticism in Islamic mysticism, particularly concerning whether Greek philosophy and the Bible had a greater impact on the evolution of ideas and perceptions of Sufism than did Islam. Groups of Muslim scholars mightily denied this perspective, but we realize that between the folds of Sufism there is strong evidence about the significant impact of Christian monks on Muslim monks in the thought and perceptions of Sufi practice. This paper will examine the nature of the relationship, in the context of mysticism, between Christianity and Islam.

## **Members Only: Creating Commitment in the Context of Religiously Diverse Societies in Africa**

**Panel Chair: Eva Spies**

In religiously diverse contexts, individuals tend to move between different religious communities and seek support from different religious experts. These individuals do not feel the need to affiliate with one group or another; they may adhere to several. The religious groups on the other hand need a solid body of adherents to survive as communities, and the religious leaders need followers to be recognized as such. This panel explores the different ways of how religious communities in Africa try to commit individuals to their group and establish a more or less solid membership in contexts of religious mobility and competition. The panel assembles papers dealing with different religious communities in Africa (Christian, “traditional”) to discuss how they define religious belonging, generate loyalty and deference or create commitment to their religious tradition: Whereas some groups emphasize the importance of collective rituals, others may restrict access to religious knowledge or material advantages.

**Serawit Bekele:** How loyal are members? The Ethiopian Orthodox Church and indigenous religions

In general, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church defines indigenous religions as evil while depicting itself as holy. It also asserts that all Christians should abandon indigenous religions and become faithful to the Church. However, some members of the Church undermine this dichotomy by subscribing to both religious traditions. Notwithstanding their characterization as agents of malevolent spirits, these members succeed in reconciling both traditions. Referring to Bourdieu's theory of field and Bhabha's concept of hybridity the paper argues that in the religious field, the double allegiance of members has resulted in religious identities that challenge the church's self-representation of uniformity and expectation of unadulterated loyalty. This again has led to aggressive moves by the church to dissociate its members from the "evil religion" and to fight for the symbolic/social capital of membership. The contribution is based on data gathered in 2008 and 2012 in North Shewa Zone of Oromia regional state.

**Justice Anquandah Arthur:** "Loyalty and disloyalty": building a church through membership drive

The multiplicity of religions in Ghana engenders a competitive religious landscape, where religious leaders go to great lengths to keep group membership. Dag Heward-Mills, the founder of the Lighthouse Chapel International (LCI), is a pastor noted for his teachings on loyalty and disloyalty, which many observers believe has been a major tool for membership drive in this charismatic church. Conversely, some of his opponents accuse him of using these ideas to build a cult. Nevertheless, the enormous growth of membership that has been achieved within two decades of its existence calls for the need to find out how the church generates commitment among its members. The paper explores the question how LCI maintains and increases its membership in the face of fierce religious competition. The theory of community of practice and the religious markets theory will be employed in analyzing data generated from the fieldwork conducted in Ghana in 2013.

**Magnus Echtler:** Thief of women, friend of chiefs: membership dynamics in the Nazareth Baptist Church, South Africa

When Isaiah Shembe founded the Nazareth Baptist Church in 1910, he tended to the marginalized people in Natal, South Africa. Representatives of both the colonial and pre-colonial authorities regarded him as a threat to the social order and charged him with the stealing of women from fathers, husbands, and missionaries. Twenty years later, his relation to the wider society had changed significantly. He supported the patriarchal authority of Zulu chiefs and lineage heads, who in turn joined his church and acknowledged his spiritual leadership. As a consequence, representatives of the emerging apartheid state considered

him as a stabilizing factor. His success in acquiring and retaining a steadily increasing body of adherents points to the routinization of his charisma through traditionalization (Weber), and to his success in combining church membership with the social capital of the Zulu descent groups (Bourdieu), processes further modified through the social transformations in post-apartheid South Africa.

**Afe Adogame:** Response

## Method and Theory in Religious Studies

**Henryk Hoffmann, Katarina Novikova:** The question of the term “Religious Studies” (Religionswissenschaft) in the context of its development and new challenges

The science of world religion has a 140 year-old tradition. However, during this period the question of religious studies’ terminology was differently understood. It was reviewed many times in individual countries and on the international level. From the very beginning of religious studies it was important to define clear demarcation lines between religious studies and other spheres of sciences, for which religion is the main research object. First of all, this concerns theology and the philosophy of religion. The problem is that in the second half of the nineteenth century, religious studies developed from the theology and Religionsphilosophie of that time, which was understood as speculative science. We should remember that most supporters of the separation of religion from theology were theologians. In the process of its development, religious studies were influenced by modern philosophical trends.

**Indrek Peedu:** What game are we playing? A new look at the identity and beginning of the study of religion

The history of the discipline itself has become a common topic in the study of religion. On the one hand, there exists an understanding that the discipline began around the 1870s with Müller and Tiele, yet other scholars have searched for the beginning of the discipline in the intellectual developments of the seventeenth and eighteenth century. In my paper I plan to argue that the disagreements between the different approaches have more to do with how the identity of the discipline is understood than with matters of historical development. To make some sense of these problems I intend to draw upon the ideas of Andrew Cunningham, who very succinctly pointed out that scientific activity can be viewed as a game of specific rules and guidelines. Based on that I am going to discuss how an analogous approach can also help us analyze the history of the study of religion.

**Liam Sutherland:** Tylor and neo-Tylorian approaches to the Study of Religion

In this paper I will argue that Sir E.B. Tylor, the father of Social Anthropology, continues to be of vital importance for theoretical debates in the field. While Tylor's seminal 1871 "Primitive Culture" carries with it strong historical biases, it has a lasting influence on the ways in which "religion" is defined, modelled and approached. Tylor moved the study of indigenous religions from the fringes of the field to its heart, coining the term "animism" – the utility of which is still being hotly debated. His modelling of religion as an ingrained explanatory framework, especially one which centres on human-like agents, continues to influence many cognitive approaches. Furthermore I will argue that his use of a minimal, etic definition of religion wedded to a vision of a comparative science, can still provide a useful, cross-cultural yet restricted means of delimiting our area of study.

**Renat Bekkin:** The Islamic Studies Department of Petrograd State University (1918 – 1919)

The paper is devoted to the history of the Department of Islamic Studies at the Petrograd University in November 1918. The author considers the scientific and organizational activities of A.E. Schmidt in the Central Asian State University (CASU).

**Christopher Driscoll, Monica Miller:** Identity as method, or method as identity? The contemporary battle over method in the North American academic study of religion

What Jean-Francois Bayart has referred to as the "battle for identity" – that we acknowledge identities as culturally constructed but that they remain as politically potent as ever – has become a defining trend in the NA study of religion. One of these "identities" belongs to scholars of religion that maintain some form of confessionality and allow their methods to be shaped by assumptions held and claims made by the adherents they study. Another "identity" belongs to those labeled "critical" scholars who deconstruct and abhor reliance on self-evident claims. This "critical scholar" attempts to apply a single methodology applicable across all domains of inquiry. This paper outlines features of this "battle" waged between academic "identities" as a new iteration of a long-standing struggle between historicizing and transhistoricizing, understanding both as "operational acts of identification," and characterizes this "battle" as a question of our method as an identity, or our identities as methods.

**Donald Wiebe:** An old Methodenstreit made new: advancing a "science-lite" study of religion

The "conflict of method" I have in mind is that between the ancient Greek cosmologists who sought knowledge for the sake of knowledge alone in a critically

rational and empirical way and the Socratic-Platonic objective of achieving knowledge of the “Good” by way of “right reason.” The conflict was renewed in the nineteenth-century Romantic reaction against religion’s subjection to critical rational reflection and empirical study. The twentieth-century conflict between Popper’s “critical rationalism”, and its rejection by the Frankfurt School, and contemporary “critical theorists” in favor of “practical reason” in pursuit of the “Good” expands the conflict in “religious studies” in the context of the modern research university. Substituting the pursuit of the “Good” for the scientific quest for knowledge about religion, I will argue here, creates, at best, a “science-lite” study of religion if not, indeed, a pseudo-science of religion.

**Maciej Potz:** Religious succession procedures as factors of stability and change: a political science analysis

Religious groups have used various succession procedures, ranging from designating a successor by a charismatic founder, acclamation, co-optation, to election. Their principle function has been to legitimize a new leader by infusing them with divine sanction, thus preventing the potential crisis the leadership change may cause in any political system. Furthermore, while no succession procedure can determine the fate of the community, they may display certain potential: innovative or conservative, disruptive or stabilizing. Examples from various religious traditions will be analyzed – such as a pope’s election by “selectorate” of cardinals, providing a degree of flexibility for an autocratic system; the “finding” of a new Dalai Lama, leading to protracted interregna and thus structural instability; Shaker gender-balanced co-optation and Mormon succession by precedence in the apostolic quorum, both allowing for the institutionalization of the early charismatic leadership etc. – to demonstrate the socio-political consequences of various types of succession procedures in religious organizations.

**Neil George:** Capitalizing science and religion: the rhetoric of the status quo and the creation of a late-nineteenth-century trope

Despite the taken-for-granted legitimacy conferred upon inquires into the relationship between science and religion, such questions lack inherent meaning. Suggesting that talk about science and religion is historically recent and culturally specific, I investigate why such language ever became popular and trace some of the shifts in sociocultural capital interconnected with the popularization of this novel discourse. Although frequently conceptualized as a boiling over of tensions between science and religion dating back at least as far as Galileo, such histories are both revisionist and prescriptive. The increased usage of the language of science and religion in the late nineteenth century, its period of popularization, was a uniquely Victorian contribution to discourse, born out of contemporary sociopolitical concerns. In doing so, a rhetoric of the status quo

was constructed that allowed any behaviors not deemed agreeable within the context of a modern capitalist nation state to be censured.

**Bernhard Lange:** Mapping the complex dynamics of religious communities. Modelling the complex process of adaptation and change in religious communities can neither be done by linear nor by monocausal approaches. I propose to adapt the theory of complex adaptive systems, long prevalent in the natural sciences, to map the dynamic forces involved. By the example of Jewish communities in Zurich and Manchester, analyzing both emic and etic historiography, and applying what I call causal dynamics, I can show that a map of relevant influences emerges. This map can be read in various perspectives, offering additional explanations for the data on hand, or cautiously suggesting possible tendencies of development. By abstracting the findings from its sociohistorical context the model can be generalized and applied to various cultural and historical settings, as I will attempt to demonstrate.

**Shawn Arthur:** Lay religions in China and what they tell us about scholarship on “religion”

During recent ethnographic research about contemporary religions in China, I have come to radically reinterpret my understanding of “religion,” because I encountered a wide array of ways that lay persons spoke about their practice of religion – especially in terms of respect, relationships, mutual obligations, and gift-giving. Not only did this run counter to “official” expectations and teachings, the root of these practices seemed to be an echo of Confucian teachings about harmonious social interactions and relationships. Additionally, I find that lay religion in China has the hallmark characteristics of Graham Harvey’s New Animism theory, which I find to be an insightful tool for thinking about China’s large-scale popular religion. As a result, I argue that scholarly understandings of “religion” could be completely re-envisioned if we focused on the practices and goals of the majority of religious adherents (i.e., the laity) rather than the idealized perspectives of the few elite clergy.

**Alexander Tokranov:** Phenomenology of religion as a methodological reflection on the science of religion

The paper deals with the problem of the crisis and possible perspectives of the phenomenology of religion. Regarding itself in the beginning of its history as a core discipline in the field of religious studies, the phenomenology of religion failed nevertheless to create a description of the objective system of basic structures of meanings of religious consciousness. The paper analyzes the sources of the above-mentioned crisis and proposes to regard it as a result of the fact that the epistemological status of the phenomenological methods in the study of religions remained unclear. It is argued that at present, the function of the phenomenology of religion within the structure of the study of religion can be under-

stood rather as an epistemological reflection on the method of the science of religion, than as an attempt to form the ultimate knowledge about the essence of religion.

**Håkon Naasen Tandberg:** Scholars, too, are agents of (religious) change. This paper discusses the different ways scholars of religion become agents of change in the very phenomena they supposedly only register or narrate, but focuses especially on how the influence of scholarly presence can act as a catalyst for change at the individual level. The roles of scholars in such processes, together with its implications for scholarship, is often noted but rarely investigated – possibly because examples of the phenomena are, without the right methodology, difficult to identify. Because it challenges the traditional notion that scholars are merely observers, it demands more attention. I analyze material from two field trips (2012–2013) among contemporary Zoroastrians in Mumbai, where I had repeated interviews with a group of respondents in and across both trips. This methodological approach enabled me to register both short- and long-term religious change, and investigate how the same changes were, in some cases, the result of that same methodology.

**Jonathan Tuckett:** Disputing “Phenomenology” in the study of religion. “Phenomenology of religion” is a title that applies to a broad and diffuse range of scholars engaged in the study of religion. Despite there being widespread inconsistencies regarding who should or should not belong under the rubric, many scholars – both proponents and opponents – refer to the phenomenology of religion as if it were a single monolithic tradition. But to treat the phenomenology of religion in such monolithic terms involves a reification that ignores that many of the scholars covered by the title studied religion from many different, if not contradictory, perspectives. It is the aim of this paper to deconstruct the phenomenology of religion as a singular tradition and suggest that phrase picks out four separate traditions: phenomenology-of-religion, typological phenomenology, phenomenological history-of-religion, and the Phenomenological Movement. In treating these traditions on their own terms we will be better placed to respond to them as proponents or opponents.

**Petra Klug:** The implicit emic perspective in the study of religion: a call for a change in our understanding of religion. Our definitions of religion – no matter if functional, substantive, or working with dimensions – usually define the subject exclusively or primarily through its meaning for adherents. What religion might mean for the nonreligious – or for the “rest” of society – is not considered. Even scholars who work with etic definitions (as opposed to the emic definitions practitioners themselves carry) still define religion through the lens of the believer. I refer to this as an “implicit emic” perspective – which means that it is an etic attempt to define what religion

is on the emic level of its followers, instead of defining religion in terms of its role in society and culture. As this creates a bias in the broader study of the field and a lack of clarity about what religion is for all members of society – especially when it comes to conflicts – I will propose a new definition of religion.

## **Methodological Innovation in the Study of Religions: The Promise of Big Data**

### **Panel Chairs: Brenton Sullivan, Frederick Tappenden**

This panel introduces the Database of Religious History (DRH), the flagship initiative of the Cultural Evolution of Religion Research Consortium. The DRH aims to bring together, in a systematic and open-access format, data on religious groups from across the globe and throughout history (c. the earliest archeological records to approximately 1,500 CE). By utilizing robust, open-source technologies and best-practice software principles, the DRH constitutes a novel and innovative approach to historical and cultural studies. As a contribution to the scientific study of religion, the DRH offers data amenable to statistical analyses, thus providing tools for assessing diachronic religious innovation and adaptation, the testing of grand narrative theories of religious change, and for enriching and revitalizing traditional fields such as comparative religions, history of religion(s), and anthropology of religion. In addition to highlighting the DRH's methodological potential, the proposed panel provides a summary of the overall project, in-depth discussions of the database initiative, an overview of the project's suite of digital tools, and presentation of representative results-to-date.

**Brenton Sullivan:** The religious group: demarcating the unit of analysis in the Database of Religious History

The unit of analysis for the Database of Religious History (DRH) is the “religious group.” Examples include churches, monasteries, religious communes, intellectual communities of authors of religious texts, sects and so on. The burden of defining a “religion” is lessened by asking the scholar contributing to the database to identify the target group and to isolate that group in space and time. The primary advantage of this approach is that the name(s) given to the religious group are secondary to the group's attributes, which are also provided by the contributing scholar. What defines a religion, then, is not the name(s) scholars give it or even the name(s) adherents give themselves but rather the preponderance of or surprising lack of particular characteristics. The DRH, moreover, provides a program for identifying and analyzing the “polythetic, multi-factorial” definitions of religions described by Benson Saler (1993).

**Frederick Tappenden:** Digitizing historical religions: Latium as a case study

The Database of Religious History (DRH) constitutes a major undertaking that will collect information on religious groups that span space and time, cultures and histories. In this paper I explore the challenges and potentialities of constructing the DRH within a specific geo-spatial region – namely, Latium. From the amphictyonic religion of Iron-Age Latium through the vicissitudinous polis-religion of Republican Rome to the medieval cradle of western Christendom, Latium is marked historically by strong religious differences and intriguing continuities. Specific attention will be given to the problem of capturing long- and short-term variety and variation. In addition to detailing the conceptual and methodological challenges faced in digitally quantifying religious expressions that are known only through historically conditioned sources, this paper will also offer critical reflection on how digital humanities tools can supplement and complement traditional approaches in the humanities, particularly in the burgeoning field of comparative antique religions.

**Carson Logan, Michael Muthukrishna:** Studying religion in the digital age: technical challenges and solutions in constructing the Database of Religious History

There are many challenges to designing a statistically-analyzable and human-readable database of knowledge that intends to grow over many decades. From a technical perspective, such a system needs to be able to handle hundreds of variables, millions of data points and potentially millions of users. From a user perspective, it needs to be (1) easy to enter data for experts from history, anthropology, and archeology, and (2) easy to search, manipulate and analyze the data for analysts from these fields, psychology, evolutionary biology, and other interested fields. The Database of Religious History (DRH) was designed with such challenges in mind. This paper explores the digital humanities dimension of the DRH. We provide a live demonstration of the DRH, demonstrate a case study for using it to study culture within an evolutionary framework, and show visualizations of the results-to-date. We also discuss the technical and human hurdles in creating the system.

**Edward Slingerland:** Bringing religion into the age of Big Data: a massive database approach to cultural evolution

Functionalist theories of religion have a long history, being identified most prominently with early pioneers such as B. Malinowski or E. Durkheim. Traditionally, one of the main weaknesses of such theories has been the nature of the data used to support them, typically anecdotal and cherry-picked, and very much lacking in both geographical breadth and historical depth. In the broader field of cultural history, functionalist accounts of the relationship between socioeco-

conomic factors and cultural change have always been plagued by a similar problem: lack of standardized, accurate and comprehensive data concerning human cultural forms. In contrast to existing anthropological databases (e.g. HRAF, SCCS), which are dominated by stateless or minimal-state societies and consist largely of single (and typically recent) data-points, the Database of Religious History enables the testing of such functionalist theories against the historical record. The historical depth of the database will – unlike static databases – allow the discernment of dynamic patterns of sociocultural evolution of time.

## Methodology in Religious Education

**Ahmad Yousif:** Research methodology: a critical analysis of Muslim scholarship in Southeast Asia: past and present

In Southeast Asia, as well as other parts of the Muslim world, academic institutions often ignore the importance of research methodology as an instrument for determining solutions to particular problems. This is especially evident in the field of Islamic Studies. Many institutions of higher learning in Southeast Asia conduct research in the Islamic disciplines using traditional approaches and techniques. Although such approaches do have some merits, they have a number of disadvantages. Consequently, scholars and students in the Islamic disciplines often face challenges when conducting research due to the use of methodologies which lack innovativeness, efficiency and over-all effectiveness. In an effort to reduce some of the deficiencies of the traditional approach to research, some scholars prefer to completely reject such methods in favor of Western research methodology. This paper will examine the importance of research methodology within an Islamic framework of knowledge, and propose various recommendations for overcoming the limitations of the two approaches.

**Anna Lúcia Collyer Adamovicz:** Religion and education in the First Brazilian Republic: Baptist Press perspectives, 1901–1930

The present paper intends to focus on the way the Baptist Press developed an extensive journalistic production in Brazil between 1901 and 1930, which was committed to reporting on the progress made by the Protestant Movement of the time, giving prominence to the overview of formal and religious education nationwide. The research employs the theoretical-methodological instrumental of New Cultural History, utilizes the Baptist Journal as primary source and objective of investigation, and it aims to discuss different issues relating to the historical development of Protestantism in Brazil. It approaches the denominational press as a channel for wider dissemination of missionaries' religious precepts and cultural values, functioning as an important instrument for evangelization,

religious training and instruction of new converts. One of the research's main goals is to examine how this journal of national scope promoted the growth of Baptist missionary and educational work established in Brazil since 1882.

**Karin Kittelmann Flensner:** Religious education in Sweden

The paper discusses the scope of neutrality in the context of non-confessional integrative RE in the Swedish pluralistic classroom practice. In the classrooms, individuals who identify with diverse religious and non-religious outlooks of life, with different understandings of what religion and being religious might mean, meet. How does this influence the construction of RE? What discourses of religion become hegemonic in the classrooms? The paper is based on findings from participant observation of RE lessons at upper secondary schools. Discourse analysis is used as the theoretical and analytic approach. The findings indicate a hegemonic secular discourse in the classrooms, which influenced the classroom practice and the talk of religion, specific religious traditions and believers of different faiths. Simultaneously there were a spiritual and a national discourse of religion that in some respects challenged the hegemonic discourse, but also enforced it.

**Melanie Prideaux:** Place-based pedagogy and reciprocal research relations in the undergraduate study of religions

In the undergraduate religious studies classroom at Leeds University we introduce students to the complexity of religion in locality. One of the most engaging ways to do this is through a place-based pedagogy utilizing independent fieldwork as part of the learning process. However undergraduates, like seasoned researchers, must learn to balance and understand the way insider representations influence academic interpretations, and the way their academic interpretations and representations can lead to change in the community being studied. Engaging with “reciprocal research relations” as a way to navigate this terrain introduces students to the human impacts of their research and develops their self-awareness as researchers and “religion” specialists. This paper will draw on experience and practice, including commentary from students and local community members, to build an understanding of the interaction between place-based pedagogy and reciprocal research relations which informs both teaching and research in the study of religion.

**Oddrun M. H. Bråten:** A methodology for comparative studies in Religious Education

I will discuss problematic sides of doing comparative studies in the diverse field of Religious Education (RE), and use perspectives from a suggested methodology for such studies to argue for the usefulness of comparative efforts. Since many challenges to Religious Education are the same across national borders, I argue that comparative studies should focus on the impact of supranational in-

fluences on national contexts, while at the same time taking the depth of the national imaginaries seriously. More attention to international and comparative perspectives has potential to enhance the understanding of what is happening in RE domestically. The methodology combines two ideas, firstly that in comparative studies one should consider supranational, national and subnational processes, and secondly that in order to capture the depth of the national cases one should consider four levels of curriculum. In my argument, I will make use of examples from recent publications (Bråten 2013, 2014a, 2014b).

## **Military Pilgrimage: Practices and Discourses**

### **Panel Chairs: John Eade, Mario Katić**

Although pilgrimage places have always been connected to nationalism, politics and the military from the Middle Ages (crusaders) to contemporary practices (e.g. Australian pilgrimage to Gallipoli or Western visitors to memorials of WWI and WWII), this connection has not been extensively investigated. Discussions have been largely framed within debates concerning “secular pilgrimage”, heritage and the relationship between pilgrimage and tourism. In this panel we want to broaden the theoretical and substantive focus. We have gathered scholars and case studies from around the world to analyze practices and discourses connected to Christian and non-Christian military pilgrimage in local and global contexts at national and trans-national levels. We want to observe military pilgrimage in both synchronic and diachronic perspectives and in relationship to politics and nationalism, as well as to individual pilgrims and/or different (secular and religious) agents connected with the establishment and organization of different military pilgrimages.

**Akira Nishimura:** Double-layered pilgrimage: commemorating fallen soldiers on the occasion of visiting Buddhist holy sites

Quite a number of the remains of Japanese soldiers have not been repatriated as a result of the devastating suicidal battles in the latter stages of the Pacific War. However, some Buddhist priests had chances to participate in the international Buddhist conference and to visit Buddhist heritages, in India and Southeast Asian countries, and seized the moment to hold commemorative ceremonies for the war dead around there. These early stage pilgrimages, in a sense, prepared the military pilgrimage movements in postwar Japan. In this paper, I would like to deal with their pilgrimages with a twofold significance. In other words, I will focus upon the double-layered structure of the pilgrim tours both as commemoration of the fallen soldiers and as pilgrimage to the Buddhist sacred sites. Besides, I will mention some other cases in which people regard

the military pilgrimage as a religious practice. Through these case studies, I will be able to discuss the religious aspect of healing the wounds of war.

**Michael Peterson:** “Maple Leaf Up”: patriotic, historical, and spiritual aspects of Canadian Armed Forces participation in the Nijmegen March  
While the historic Four Days March or Nijmegen March predates both World Wars and originates in the decidedly secular spirit of physical fitness, for members of the Canadian military, Nijmegen has taken on the hallmarks and character of pilgrimage. Each year members of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) combine the march with visits to sites sacred to Canada’s military and national memory. By staging events at the Vimy Ridge Memorial in France and at the Canadian war cemetery at Grosebeek, Holland, CAF marchers connect their present-day military service with touchstones of Canada’s military heritage. Wearing Canadian uniform, they traverse a route that Canadian soldiers covered during the Liberation of Holland in 1944–45, which inspired lasting affection between Dutch and Canadians alike. Thus, while primarily a test of physical endurance, for CAF members the Nijmegen March has a rich overlay of historical memory, national and military pride, and even spiritual significance.

**Biljana Sikimić:** KFOR soldiers as pilgrims in Kosovo: Black Madonna in Letnica

This paper tries to trace the transformations of pilgrimage to the Roman Catholic shrine in Letnica (Kosovo) on the Day of Assumption from an anthropological linguistics perspective during the last century. Considering the volume of news items posted on the Internet, it emerges that by the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, Letnica had become a place of mass pilgrimage, visited every year by KFOR soldiers and pilgrims from other countries in the region. A comparatively local Marian cult at Letnica assumes a universal dimension with its recent transformation into the cult of the Black Madonna, strongly supported by the current cult of Mother Theresa, whose picture is found today on the wall of the Letnica church to the right of the altar.

**Kamila Baraniecka-Olszewska:** Sanctified history: on pilgrimage to memorial sites with Polish re-enactors

2014 is a year of the 70th anniversary of many important battles of WWII, in which Polish soldiers took part. Historical re-enactors who recreate history of military units fighting in WWII battlefields organized in 2014 several pilgrimages to memorial sites significant for Polish history. In the paper, I focus on pilgrimages of groups enacting Polish Armed Forces in the West and on travels of some of their members to Monte Cassino in Italy (May 2014) and Arnhem/Oosterbreek/Driel in Holland (September 2014). Although they are not WWII soldiers, re-enactors experience certain connection to heroes from the past: they honor them and try to recognize the past through their “microhistories”. Their pilgrimage

route reflects the combat trail of Polish Armed Forces in the West and is marked – “sanctified” to use the re-enactors’ term – by the blood of Polish soldiers. Human history becomes sacral, is perceived as such by pilgrimage participants and finally can be also analyzed in terms of religion. It also becomes an element of constructing personal and national identities.

**Anna Fedele:** About Templar Knights and warriors of light: military imagery in alternative pilgrimages to Catholic shrines

This paper is based on fieldwork among pilgrims with a Christian background who have embraced contemporary spirituality (often described as New Age) and visit Catholic shrines in France related to Mary Magdalene and to dark Madonna statues. They do so to tap into the healing energies they believe to be present there. In this paper I will analyze the pilgrims’ strategies to test the efficacy of “spiritual” military figures as positive masculine models in their efforts towards a more spiritual, peaceful and sustainable society based on the equality of men and women. Analyzing the parallels my interlocutors drew between the spiritual warrior and the pilgrim, I will also reflect on the influence that the stereotype of the medieval male Christian pilgrim still has even on these spiritual travelers that are so self-consciously fighting against patriarchy. In this context the Templar Knights provided a positive model of masculinity because they appeared as the exponents of a secret “medieval esoteric chivalry” and an “underground Church” promoting equality between men and women.

**John Eade, Mario Katić:** Theoretical and substantive approaches to the study of military pilgrimage

This paper will review the development of research concerning military pilgrimage around the world and draw out the key theoretical perspectives and substantive themes. It will suggest new directions which research may follow based on the other papers presented in the panel. It will also relate these suggestions to the authors’ knowledge of two European pilgrimage centres – the international Marian shrine at Lourdes and more local shrines in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

## Missions

**Geoffrey Troughton:** Samuel Marsden and the peace dimension in early nineteenth-century Protestant missions

From 1814, Protestant missionaries to New Zealand cast their primary task as disseminating a “gospel of peace”. Their emphasis upon peace and peacemaking was a striking feature of nineteenth-century New Zealand. Surprisingly, while scholarly discussions have explored the conflicts, tensions and imperialist di-

mensions of early missionary expansion, this peace emphasis has never been systematically examined. This paper analyzes the origins of the peace emphasis within the first Christian mission to New Zealand, that of the Church Missionary Society (CMS). In particular, it focuses on the role of peaceable ideas and activism in the thinking and strategy of the Revd Samuel Marsden, the founder of the New Zealand CMS mission. Understanding Marsden's thinking, and the place of peace ideologies in the CMS, provides crucial insights into the character of early mission in the region, and its adaptation to local circumstances.

**Giulia Nardini:** *Ñāna Upatēcam* (1656) by Roberto Nobili SJ: adaptation and transformation of catechism in Madurai Mission (Tamil Nadu-India)

My paper presents a case of negotiating religious processes which occurred between Jesuit missionaries and Tamil Brahmins of the seventeenth century in the South-Indian context. My focus is on *Ñāna Upatēcam*, a document of Tamil catechism written by Roberto Nobili (Rome 1577 – Madras 1656), a Jesuit missionary in Tamil Nadu (India), in order to transfer the Catholic doctrine to the Tamil neophytes. This case study explores the transcultural dimensions of Christianity in the well known method of “accommodation” (in lat. *accomodatio*): a new model of catechesis, including forms of worship, religious practices and theological texts. *Ñāna Upatēcam* is not only a translation of Catholic dogma but a creation of new genre, with an added attention to the cultural aspect of the local hierarchical society, thus rendering the catechism accessible to the Tamil converts. This huge magnum opus comprises five volumes and remains till today only in its Tamil version.

**Michael Riber Jørgensen:** *The Home Mission: a movement on the move*  
The Danish Home Mission (Indre Mission) is a Christian revival movement, founded in 1861 to conduct missionary work at home, as opposed to the “outer mission” in Africa, Asia etc. During its heyday in the 1950s, the movement experienced great success, dominating the Lutheran state church as well as exercising a real influence on secular politics in large parts of the country. Since then, however, the Home Mission has been on the decline, and in recent years seen itself become more and more marginalized within the state church. Has the church as a whole changed its theological foundations – or has the Home Mission? How does a religious organization with relatively conservative values react to changes in the surrounding society by (re-)constructing or adapting its own collective identity? The paper will raise these questions – and attempt to answer them.

**Gabriel Luna:** *Visita Iglesia: a Filipino lenten practice in Cagayan Valley, Region 02, Philippines*

Religious landmarks in Cagayan Valley Region 02 do not only serve as tourist attractions but also as places of worship during lenten season, specifically during

Visita Iglesia. The researcher utilizes participant observation, and in-depth interview. Thirty-five Church workers and forty-two religious devotees were interviewed. Findings reveal that a majority of the respondents who observed the cultural practice of Visita Iglesia belonged to the age bracket ranging from 40–65 years old, were female, professional, and with high income. The reasons why devotees observed Visita Iglesia ranked accordingly as follows: to ask for favor, forgiveness of sins, to follow family tradition, to express gratitude, to comply with someone's request, and to atone for a misdeed. Clearly, the reasons are more personal than cultural, but the devotion itself is enhanced and sustained by the culture. The customary practices in relation to a religious devotion serve more as social functions rather than as theologically motivated practices.

**Jana Valtrová:** Medieval Christian missions to Asia: shifting strategies and goals

The paper presents major shifts in the development of medieval Christian missionary efforts which were made during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in Asia by Franciscan and Dominican friars. Reports of such missionaries as William of Rubruck, John of Plano Carpini, John of Montecorvino, Jordan of Catala and others are used as sources for this analysis. The main aim of the paper is to show the transformation of missionary strategies as a process of more or less successful adaptation of particular missionaries in new cultural and religious environments: their flexibility and ability to focus on a prospective group of converts. In connection to this process not only the missionaries' strategies changed, but also their original goals were redefined. Representation of these goals, original and new ones, within the context of missionary reports and their desired effect on European audiences is also discussed.

**Alberto Paala Jr.:** Mill Hill Missionaries: a century of love and service in the Philippines, 1906–2006

Mill Hill Missionaries (MHM) is a congregation of priests based in Mill Hill, London, United Kingdom that arrived in the Philippines in 1906 to counter the rising influence of Protestantism. The objectives of the study are the following: to trace the history of MHM as an institution since it was founded by Herbert Vaughan in Mill Hill, London in 1868 until they arrived in the Philippines in 1906; to assess the achievements of the congregation within a hundred years of service in the Philippines; and to show the challenges encountered by the missionaries and their role in nation building in the twentieth century Philippines.

## Mithraism and Roman Society

### Panel Chair: Attilio Mastrocinque

The panel is aimed at discussing some topics of Mithraism and at focussing on its interrelationship with Roman society. Mithraic congregations appear to the contemporary scholarship quite integrated with the local communities (for example, cities, military camps) and with Roman traditions. Some insights are thus possible in order to focus better on some cases, namely those of Mithraic and non-Mithraic eating of meat; interaction between Mithraea and both legionary units and provincial governors in Spain; beliefs concerning Eros and salvation of human souls both within the Mithraea and in common religious traditions; and relationships between some Roman late-antique senators and the latest Mithraea in Rome.

### Giovanna Bastianelli: Late antique Mithraism in Rome

At the middle of the fourth century only the Roman aristocracy is the custodian of the Mithraic cult. Some *viri clarissimi* restored and built mithraea mostly at Rome and in other places where they had their estates. This late revival, however, did not last long, no more than thirty years, and was followed by a new and final abandonment. Only in a few cases was a pious closure provided to some small family mithraea, which were preserved having their entrances walled, while usually the devastation of these holy places was inevitable: statues of gods were deprived of their heads and arms, and altars, furniture, and frescoes were destroyed. The famous praefectus urbi Gracchus, to deserve his baptism, tore into pieces an entire mithraeum of Rome, as St. Jerome and Prudentius report.

**Jaan Lahe:** Hat der römische Mithraskult etwas mit dem Iran zu tun? Überlegungen zu den Beziehungen zwischen dem römischen Mithras-Kult und der iranischen religiösen Überlieferung

Der Autor des vorliegenden Vortrags hat alle postulierten Gemeinsamkeiten zwischen dem iranischen und römischen Mithras-Kult analysiert und kommt zu dem Ergebnis, dass die Unterschiede so grundlegend sind, dass man hier von unterschiedlichen Kulturen für unterschiedliche Gottheiten sprechen muss. Entgegen der Ansicht, dass der römische Mithras-Kult nichts mit der iranischen religiösen Überlieferung zu tun habe, behauptet der Autor, dass man zwischen den römischen und iranischen Kulturen dennoch Gemeinsamkeiten in einigen Details nachweisen kann, die zwar teilweise peripher sind, teilweise allerdings eine sehr wichtige bzw. zentrale Rolle spielen. Der römische Mithras-Kult ist folglich sowohl ein gutes Beispiel für die große Anpassungsfähigkeit der Religion der Römer, als auch für ein Miteinander von Tradition und Innovation innerhalb ein und desselben Kultes.

**Massimiliano David:** A new mithraeum of the multicolored marbles from ancient Ostia

In 2014, during the archaeological investigations conducted by the University of Bologna (Department of History and Civilizations – Sect. Archaeology), in collaboration with the Soprintendenza Speciale per i Beni Archeologici di Roma, within the Ostia Marina Project, in the suburban neighborhood out of porta Marina (block IV, IX), a new building was found with outstanding mithraic features. It has a major cultic niche, a single bench, a ritual well and a flowerbed for a sacred plant. The building, for the special features of the marble floor, has been conventionally called mithraeum “of the multicolored marbles”. It differs clearly both in form and size from the typical planimetric patterns of the mithraea discovered in ancient Ostia until now. The excavation is not yet finished, but – on the basis of the currently available data – the building can be dated within the advanced fourth century CE. It is abutting some rooms which originally belonged to a “caupona” of the second half of the third century CE.

**Valentina Ramanzini:** Animal bones from mithraea

A presentation of the hitherto known discoveries of animal bones will allow to underscore some peculiarities of the Mithraic diet, which was usually different from the common diet of Roman people. Also regional peculiarities are documented, which could depend either upon local breeding and farming or on religious choices, or even on both. The analysis of these meal remains reveals a preference for the consumption of adult domestic fowls, piglets and lambs or goats. Nevertheless evidence shows that the animal which is expected to be found on the Mithraic table for its central role in the liturgy does not seem to be the favorite meat of the Mithraists. The analysis of animal remains could reveal more specific information about the moment of ritual meal, in addition to that already provided by studies in iconography and pottery.

**Attilio Mastrocinque:** Eros according to Mithraism and Graeco-Roman paganism

Not every feature of Mithraism was secret and peculiar to mysteries. Many elements can be understood thanks to comparisons with other religious and iconographical fields because they were shared. The case of Eros will be studied here. This god appears on Mithraic reliefs as guiding both Sol and Luna during their heavenly journeys, and guiding Psyche as well towards the correct path and possibly to a happy afterlife. In imperial times Erotes were often depicted on sarcophagi. Both Mithraism and current Roman religion supposed, following Platonic teaching, that the soul was enabled by Eros to reach the heavenly realms. However, on a Mithraic inscription from Santa Prisca another kind of salvation is mentioned, which involved the Roman society in a more collective form.

**Valentino Gasparini:** Response

## **Modeling and Simulating Past Minds and Networks: Dynamics of Religious Beliefs and Practices in the Graeco-Roman World**

### **Panel Chair: Esther Eidinow**

Although recent scholarship in the social and cognitive sciences provides theoretical perspectives concerning the transmission of religious beliefs and practices across a population, these hypotheses have yet to be integrated. For instance, while epidemiology of representations is undoubtedly correct to stress the importance for a successful representation to be fitting to the human cognitive architecture, our understanding is incomplete without considering the nature of social links. Such links can be analyzed using novel approaches in network theory. Both epidemiological and network based approaches have been adopted within the study of ancient Graeco-Roman religions: it represents an ideal environment to integrate their respective implementations. In order to proceed with such an integration, historians must enrich their methodological arsenal. This panel introduces case studies offering ways to utilize and combine epidemiological and social network approaches to historical materials, while stressing the limits of particular tools, with particular reference to the scarce evidence available.

**Justin Lane:** Multi-agent AI as a tool for understanding historical data: Modeling the formation of Early Christianity

This presentation offers an example of how theory, history, and multi-agent artificial intelligence (MAAI) can create an interdisciplinary approach to the study of historical religions, using Early Christianity as a case study. It presents a novel MAAI model, which utilizes the theory of divergent modes of religiosity or DMR (Whitehouse, 1995, 2000, 2004), that relies on empirical evidence to revise earlier attempts at modeling the theory (McCorkle & Lane, 2012; Whitehouse, Kahn, Hochberg, & Bryson, 2012). The model tests the theory's generalizability and validity using historical data, namely the case of Early Christianity. By testing the model in conjunction with biblical, historical, and archaeological sources, we can begin to create a clearer picture of the possible dynamics within Early Christian religious groups. Specifically it utilizes social network approximation techniques drawing from cognitive and social approaches to the rise of Christianity (Stark, 1996). This incorporates estimations of population sizes (Grove, Pearce, & Dunbar, 2012; Hill & Dunbar, 2003), limits on social network clusters (Dunbar, Duncan, & Nettle, 1995; Gonçalves, Perra, & Vespignani, 2011; Mcpherson, Smith-Lovin & Cook, 2001; Roberts, Wilson, Fedurek & Dunbar, 2008), and the complexity of early Christian beliefs (Lane, 2013). This presentation concludes by addressing the methodological and theoretical issues inherent in the use of

computer modeling of historical data as well as its ability to apply novel theories to historical data.

**Vojtěch Kaše:** Modelling ritual dynamics against the data: Early Christian meal practices as a test case

Any invention, modification and selection of a ritual practice in a group and its stabilization over time or transmission of it from one group to another depends on a lot of factors. The method of agent-based modelling enables us to consider the relative influence of those factors in an explicit way and to “re-grow” particular processes of interest in an artificial computational environment. Despite its artificialness, a comparison of simulation results with real world data can help to demonstrate the probability of some suggested historical trajectories and, in that respect, to test particular hypotheses. Drawing on recent experimental evidence concerning intuitive evaluation of ritual efficacy, this paper takes into consideration the relative influence of the so-called cognitive attraction of a ritual behavior. One agent-based simulation is discussed and compared to the data derived from literary sources concerning early Christian meal practices in the first four centuries CE.

**Dalibor Papoušek:** Pro-Jewish and counter-Jewish trends in the spread of Early Christianity: construction of network models

This paper reconsiders the influence of the Jewish heritage in the spread of early Christianity throughout the Graeco-Roman Mediterranean. Following the new dating of Lukan writings up to the first half of the second century (Pervo 2006), Marcionite Christianity is assumed to be a contemporaneous Christian trend using other networks for its spreading than those of Luke. Despite weak evidence, it is obvious that these two trends maintained different attitudes to the Jewish background. This paper tries to design models using Jewish diaspora networks (Collar 2013) for Lukan Christianity, which remained open to the Jewish tradition, and trade and maritime networks for Marcionite Christianity, which might have used the infrastructure provided by its founder’s shipping company. Critical evaluation of these models can help solve the question to what extent the spread of Christianity was influenced by the Jewish diaspora networks and how other networks may have been employed in this process.

**István Czachesz:** Cognitive science and network theory in the study of Early Christian origins

This presentation offers a case study of the application of network theory to the analysis of historical texts. I will speak about the generation and analysis of word co-occurrence networks in the Greek text of the New Testament, using examples from past and ongoing studies, and pay particular attention to the historical and psychological validity of such models. Whereas word co-occurrence networks can be thought of as statistical models of (large) textual corpora, at this

place I will outline an approach working with smaller textual units, based on reading-theory and memory studies. As I have shown in previous publications, node and link centrality measures in word co-occurrence networks of biblical passages yield interesting observations about central thematic and compositional features of such passages (that go beyond the insights gained from traditional methods based on word frequency and concordances) as well as open up ways to reconsider how familiarity with certain texts influences the reading of other texts (offering new, quantitative perspectives on intertextuality). In terms of the psychological validity of the models, the cultural context of the first-century Mediterranean has to be taken into account. This implies that the underlying psychological model of textual reception needs to be informed by insights from orality studies. Previous cognitive psychological work on memory in oral transmission is especially helpful in building culturally informed models that do justice to the ways contemporary audiences typically processed the text of the Gospels. Further, research on working memory, including empirical results on working memory span in sentence processing, can be integrated into the model in order to increase its cognitive psychological validity. Finally, I will consider how the syntactic features of Koine Greek (the dialect of the New Testament) can be taken into consideration to fine-tune the creation of networks. The textual examples are selected from well-known passages of the synoptic Gospels, such as the Sermon of the Mount (Matthew 5–7) and its Lukan parallels (Luke 6:17–49). Based on these examples, the relationship between network models, on the one hand, and traditional philological approaches, on the other hand, will be addressed.

## **“Monasticism Without Walls”: Addressing the Dynamics of Inter-Contextual Transfers**

### **Panel Chair: Timon Reichl**

This panel explores inter-contextual transfers between monastic and non-monastic discourses in a context of modern religion. Inter-contextual transfers continue to be a vital element in the enormously productive and multifaceted history of Buddhist, Christian and Hindu monastic thought and practice, both within and beyond monastic boundaries: While the history of monastic renewal and adaptation often relied on the creative application of non-monastic resources, monastic perspectives and resources have also served as reference in the context of wider socio-religious issues. The theoretical framework is thus capable of expanding the outlook of monastic studies. Instead of establishing unsurpassable boundaries, monastic traditions convey a readiness to engage in creative interac-

tions. Two presentations will address the recent monastic engagement with the issues of religious diversity and modern spirituality, encouraging inter-monastic encounters and monastic renewal. Two further papers will focus on the interactions with secular society, based on field research in Europe and Asia.

**Isabelle Jonveaux:** The “secular ascetic”: transfers of monastic techniques to secular society

Monastic life and especially asceticism constitute a set of techniques which all theoretically seek to improve religious life and assist the “search of God”. According to Max Weber this form of asceticism is reserved for religious virtuosi elected by God. Today Catholic monasticism in Western Europe is undergoing a crisis of vocations as fewer and fewer young people are inclined to enter the monastic life. On the other hand, as a model and source for alternative ways of life, monasticism is increasingly attracting interest in secular society. Based on field inquiries in Catholic monasteries and fasting retreats offered in secular contexts, this paper seeks to explore transfers occurring between monasteries and secular society. In this regard, the emergence of secular forms of asceticism represents an interesting field for studying such transfers, in which the techniques and rhetoric derived from an institutional religion are applied in novel forms of holistic spirituality.

**Henry Zimmermann:** The Chogye Order of Korean Buddhism: beholding itself and presenting itself at the conjunction of cultural preservation and organizational modernization

Buddhism in contemporary South Korea is primarily represented by the “Chogye Order of Korean Buddhism”, which was established in its present form in 1962 and is heir to the Buddhist tradition of the late Chosŏn dynasty and successor to the Chogye Order of the colonial era. While this large Buddhist organization identifies itself as the principal preserver of Korea’s Sŏn (Zen) orthodoxy, its institutional and legal structures are the product of distinctly modern developments. Interestingly, there have recently been various efforts on the part of the Chogye Order to present not only its religious ideas and practices to the public, but also the inner structure, rules, programs and agenda it officially and ideally adheres to in its capacity as a religious organization. This paper discusses the Chogye Order’s attempts at a favourable and convincing self-presentation in the context of contemporary South Korea’s highly competitive and largely unregulated religious landscape.

**Timon Reichl:** The “monk as mystic”: on the application of “universal mysticism” in Catholic monasticism

This presentation will address some of the inter-contextual dynamics involved in the participation of Catholic monastics in the modern discourse on “mysticism” and “mystical experience”. Apart from contributing to the rapidly growing

amount of scholarly and popular literature addressing the issue of mysticism in a comparative and/or interreligious perspective, monastics also applied some of the new paradigms emerging in this intercultural and interdisciplinary discourse. This partly stemmed from their efforts to meet a number of challenges that Catholic monasticism was at the time encountering (monastic renewal/crisis, monastic mission/dialogue in Asia). In the course of this development, the new understanding of mysticism as universal and as compatible beyond religious and cultural borders – a prominent feature within the modern discourse on mysticism since the early twentieth century (James, Underhill, Stace) – served as the theoretical framework for redefining monastic identity and practice as universal and as applicable beyond cultural and religion specific manifestations.

**Alexandra Mann:** Monasticism as a bridge between religions

The Weltkloster Radolfzell, a former Capuchin monastery, provides a neutral space for encounters between different religions. The dialogue meetings are based on the shared practice and discussion of the respective meditative and contemplative techniques. For some days or even weeks, monks, nuns and clergy of all religious traditions are invited to form a community in which the everyday schedule includes elements from various monastic traditions. This approach is influenced by the tradition of Christian ashrams in India, which combines contemplative community life with a dialogue of spiritualities. The adopted approach is seen as a dialogue among equals and follows a pluralist outlook. Accordingly dialogue and identity are not seen as contradictory but as interdependent: The complete acceptance of diversity is the foundation for a willingness to experiment. Religious identities emerging from such interreligious contexts might then prove to be more sustainable, exchanging static constructs with openness towards external influences.

## **Mormonism's Engagement with Other Religions**

**Panel Chair: Roger Minert**

This panel will explore the history, theology, and current state of Latter-day Saint efforts to engage in interfaith dialogue, and joint cooperative movements on social, moral, and political issues. In recent years, a renewed emphasis emerged out of initiatives taken by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to improve relations with Christian and non-Christian religious communities throughout the world. This panel provides the opportunity to engage with a broad range of interpretations about these efforts, their historical development, and commentaries on their perceived effectiveness. The panel will deal specifically with Mor-

monism and Islam; Mormonism and Judaism; Mormonism and Roman Catholicism; and Mormonism and evangelical Protestantism.

**Daniel Peterson:** Mormonism and Islam

Emerging from its isolated refuge in the American Great Basin, Mormonism began to take serious root beyond North America and Europe only after WWII. However, Mormon activity in Africa came much later and remains minimal in the Middle East. Thus, Mormon encounters with Islam have been comparatively rare. But they're increasing in both frequency and significance. This paper will describe several of the most important efforts undertaken, with the enthusiastic approval and sometimes at the initiative of leaders of the Mormon Church, to build bridges to Islam and to cooperate with Muslims. It will also examine certain Mormon beliefs, and a few of the key statements of Mormon leaders – going back to the faith's nineteenth-century beginnings – that reveal an exceptional openness to other religious experiences, perhaps surprising in a notably missionary-minded church making exclusive truth-claims, and that not only theologically authorize outreach to Muslims but encourage it.

**Andrew Reed:** "I have marked well the plight of My people": Jewish and Mormon relations – a look at contemporary views

The return of the Jews to Palestine prior to the second coming of Christ is a central tenet of Mormon theology. Early on in the Mormon tradition, there was a concerted effort to formulate a religious identity that was based on understandings of "Israel" as a marker of God's chosen people. Early comparisons of Brigham Young to Moses and the Mormon trek west as an Exodus experience further infused biblical motifs into Mormon self-perceptions. In the post-Holocaust world, these motifs have remained and continue to inform Mormon theology and misology. This paper provides a survey of key moments in the relationship between Mormons and Jews since the Shoah, with particular interest in recent events and debates about how Mormons view Jews and their past.

**Mauro Properzi:** From the periphery to the centers: the development of LDS-Catholic relations

Mormonism's interaction with Catholicism has been characterized by a trajectory that involves movement from the periphery to the center(s) in a geographical, sociological, and theological sense. The two faiths first interacted in the context of nineteenth-century America where they existed as "peripheral" minority religions. Both also operated in a context that was either distant from their center (Catholics) or in continuous struggle to establish such a center (Mormons). When Mormonism established its home in Utah the interaction between the two faiths continued in that setting, even expanding, most recently, to the center of Catholicism in Rome. While Mormonism and Catholicism have also moved to a more central place within American society the two faiths owe much of their re-

cent interaction to shared theological tenets, which are mostly peripheral to secularized society while being central to each respective tradition. This paper summarizes and examines the multi-faceted dynamics of this interaction.

**J.B. Haws:** Mormons and Evangelical Christians in the United States: religious identity-making in modern America

Both Mormons and evangelical Christians raised their public profiles in the United States in the late 1970s and 1980s as religious activism and partisan politics converged in new ways. But although both groups shared similar positions on issues of social morality, historic theological differences made evangelicals reluctant to embrace Mormons as allies. In fact, evangelicals vociferously redoubled their efforts to identify Mormons as counterfeit Christians or non-Christians. This paper will trace, first, Mormon efforts over the past four decades to respond to what became something of an identity crisis for them in American public perception; and, second, trends in evangelicalism over the past four decades in adapting to an increasingly pluralistic American religious landscape. This religious minority-religious majority “gatekeeper” case study speaks to institutional introspection on the one hand and new levels of outreach on the other.

## **Mormons: Past and Present**

**Panel Chairs: Mike MacKay, Roger Minert**

Our panel explores Mormon religious practices. By historically drawing upon several prominent discourses within Mormonism the panel will ask the question of how missiology, scripture, and marriage practices function in the establishment of Mormonism and the contemporary Mormon religion. These are three of the most public aspects of Mormonism. It has been one of the fastest growing religions in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, in part because of its evangelical nature and worldwide presence. This includes the placement of tens of thousands of books of scripture around the world. Mormonism’s production of modern sacred scripture and claim to prophetic charismatic revelation make it a fascinating case study for religious practice and discourse. That said, Mormonism is also known for its former practice of polygamy, distinguishing itself as a unique nineteenth-century religion though it has since abandoned the practice. These three tenets of Mormon practice and discourse will be the center of our panel.

**Gerrit Dirkmaat:** Joseph Smith and early Mormon polygamy

Nothing is perhaps more closely associated with Mormonism in the minds of most people than the Mormon practice of plural marriage or polygamy. Though long since discontinued by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the

one-time practice remains both controversial and the most well-known. This paper will discuss Joseph Smith's introduction of plural marriage to certain members of his faith, including his own plural marriages, and explain the resistance to and justifications used to support the doctrine. It will focus on a discussion of the very limited source material that exists when trying to determine the details of these polygamous unions and highlight the care that must be taken by historians trying to deal with early Mormon polygamy. In particular, this paper will highlight how women who were polygamously married to Joseph Smith justified their own decisions to violate the foundational social norm of monogamous marriage and enter into a martial union that was reviled and despised by nearly every other American.

**Gregory Wilkinson:** Missiology and Mormonism around the world

Missiology, Mormon or otherwise, is best understood both through theory and practice. The papers of H. Grant Ivins provide valuable insight into both. Ivins served five years as a Mormon missionary in Japan, the LDS church's first mission outside of Christian cultures and colonial frameworks. He studied Japanese language and culture while working to establish the Church, thus becoming a unique expert on the limitations of Christian evangelism in Asia. Upon his return to the United States, Ivins lectured often on the limited international potential of the LDS message. He eventually became the first comparative religion professor at Brigham Young University. He wrote and theorized on the potential and failures of Mormon evangelism and more generally Christian missiology in Asia and the rest of the non-Christian world. While not widely known, Ivins is an important early voice in post-colonial studies with modern relevance both for missionaries and scholars.

**Mike MacKay:** Material culture and the production and translation of the Book of Mormon

Instead of concentrating on the literary value or theological message of Smith's translations, this paper will turn to a material culture approach by focusing on three objects that defined Joseph Smith's translations of sacred scripture. Unfortunately, of the three objects (the seer stone, the gold plates, and the Egyptian papyri), only a portion of the papyri is available for examination. Yet, the historical record evaluates them in various ways, which allows this paper to tease out and examine how individuals made sense of the objects. It will describe how Smith gave meaning to his seer stones, the gold plates, and the Egyptian papyri, but also focus upon how detractors altered their meaning to represent Smith as an impostor. The appropriation of meaning upon these objects defined Smith's role and often superseded the message that the text of his translations offered modern readers. Understanding the process of translation was a precursor to motivating readers to approach the text earnestly. For this reason, the meaning at-

tached to the objects was never inconsequential. Instead, the objects embodied Smith's claims to truth because of their centrality to the translation process. Their meaning had the ability to foster faith in Smith's claims and the power to undermine them. This paper will demonstrate that Smith's religious objects were central to his translation and analyze the debate over controlling the meaning and holiness of these objects.

## Mountain Worship and Contemporary Transformation in East/Central Asia

### Panel Chair: James Grayson

Utilizing a multidisciplinary approach, our panel examines social transformation in East/Central Asia through the medium of the divine, the legendary and the topographic. By examining the role of mountainous space in the ancestor cults of the Buryat, sacred architecture of Sanshin (mountain deities) shrines in Korean Buddhist temple complexes, popular mind-body practices in contemporary South Korea and the historical narratives underpinning North Korean charismatic politics, the papers seek to pinpoint and investigate the images of the mountains persisting within the collective imaginary. Considering the changes and continuities in spiritual and political geography within territories as diverse as Buryatia in Russia, Manchuria and both halves of the Korean peninsula, the panelists assess to what degree alterations in the praxis of such mountain worship represent, or are themselves constructed by, the processes of social or political transformation in the sovereign polities in which they are sited.

**David Mason:** Transformations of folk spirit shrines in Korean Buddhist temples: the significance of modern trends

Sansin-gak are small shrines present in Korean Buddhist temple compounds for many centuries, containing icons of the local Sanshin (山神, Mountain-Spirit); in recent years they are being replaced by the larger reconfigured shrine-spaces called Samsōng-gak (Three Saints Shrines) containing icons of two or more related spirits. The long tradition of iconographic representation of Sanshin and other folk-Buddhist deities within monasteries is an essential element of local Buddhist functional practice. These deities are introduced in this paper as core symbols anchoring national ethnic-Korean and Korean-Buddhist identity. The paper investigates the background, motivations and ideological/religious implications of this architectural transformation of sacred spaces. The shift from Sansin-gak into Samsōng-gak constitutes an important and interesting step in the historical development of these spirits' identities, reflecting their place within the complex

divine hierarchy of Korean religions and also the Ch'ŏn-Chi-In (Heaven-Earth-Humanity) philosophy at their ancient root.

**Victoria Ten:** Ki Suryŏn (氣修練) and mountain immortals mythology in contemporary Korea

Cultural practices commonly referred to as qigong in China and ki suryŏn (氣修練) in Korea are reinvented in modernity based on ancient East Asian traditions. Ki suryŏn draw on time-honored mythologies of sinsŏn (神仙 mountain immortals), who represent and embody Korean mountainous areas. Sinsŏn dwell in wilderness spaces, preserving and transmitting techniques of immortality associated by the practitioners with ki suryŏn. Utilizing extensive interview material from the adepts and the textual/visual productions of the movement, this paper examines “mountainous space and time” as sacred, that is lying beyond the scope of everyday experience. The current paper analyzes the mechanisms of reconstructing, encountering and inhabiting “mountainous time and space” by contemporary ki suryŏn practitioners, outlining and examining these processes within the context of body-mind cultivation and a transformative process from mortal into immortal, steadfast in the lore and mythologies of ki suryŏn.

**Robert Winstanley-Chesters:** Contemporary charismatic topographies and sacred terrains

The ideology, the political and governmental institutions of North Korea derive their authority from a topography of charisma formed by Mt Paektu and the mountainous spaces of western Manchuria. These contemporary political forms intriguingly echo traditional Korean manifestations of mountain-focused spirituality, such as the Sanshin (mountain divinity) worship. Both national mythos and narrative surrounding the revolutionary struggles of the Kim family, current rulers of North Korea, have Mt Paektu as their fulcrum and the mountain itself is co-produced or co-opted into these narratives. Legitimatory elements within these political narratives and mythographies thus help to build and transform institutions, social practices, and topographies. This paper explores the theological mechanics behind the generation of such charismatic forms and their wider impact, investigating the process by which transcendent, spiritual elements are woven into conventional political narratives and examining their more practical social manifestations.

## Multiple Discourses on Religion and Science in the East Asian Context: Science for the Understanding of Religion in Japan and Korea

### Panel Chairs: Seung Chul Kim, Christian Meyer

It is an undeniable fact that the theme of “religion and science” has up until now centered on Christianity. This is deeply connected to the historical fact that natural science was born within the Christian world. At the same time, another reason that may be mentioned for this phenomenon is the fact that Christianity has tended to see itself as synonymous with “religion.” As a result, when “religion and science” are researched in terms of how the discussion has occurred outside of Christianity, there is undoubtedly a need for the natural sciences to rethink the meaning of human self-understanding and worldviews and for a reconstruction of the significance of “religion” as it seeks to encounter such sciences. With the goal of rethinking the meaning of “religion” and “science” along such lines, we have planned a double panel. It will consider, in its own context, how representative religious thinkers in East Asian countries, that is China, Japan and Korea, have received and understood “science,” and will discuss how their understanding has helped, directly and indirectly, to shape their understanding of “religion.”

**Jaeshik Shin:** Mapping the single world from a pluralistic perspective: the relationship between religion and science from an East Asian perspective

There have been some attempts to describe the relationship between religion and science. In consideration of the attempts of Pannenberg and Haught, the writer tries to present this relationship using the metaphor of mapping. Traditionally in East Asia, the world has been regarded as a changing reality. Thus, it could not be properly understood from an analytical or reductionistic perspective. Rather, it should be approached from different points of view, which simultaneously represent various aspects of the world. The writer considers religion and science as different mapping strategies in understanding a single world. In the process of pursuing the intelligibility of the world, religion and science have constructed their respective mapping systems with different signs, symbols and terms. As in the yin-yang relationship, they are complementary to each other in comprehending a dynamic world. As provisional work, both perspectives are closely related to historical and social contexts.

**Thomas Hastings:** Seeing all things whole: the scientific mysticism and art of Kagawa Toyohiko (1888–1960)

Kagawa Toyohiko (1888–1960) was a world-renowned Japanese evangelist and social reformer, nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature twice and the Nobel Peace Prize four times. He was a prolific writer of fiction, poetry, and es-

says and books that integrate the insights of Christian faith, modern philosophy and science, and Asian religious and philosophical traditions. His final book, *Cosmic Purpose* (1958), challenges the materialism of Darwin and the radical casualism of H.G. Wells. Drawing on theories in physics, astronomy, astrophysics, chemistry, biochemistry, mineralogy, genetics, physiology, and biology, he offers evidence of “initial purpose” – not “final purpose” – in the vast span of evolutionary history from cosmic dust to the emergence and progression of life, mind (consciousness), social construction, and “cosmic consciousness”. Called “the sole cosmological thinker in Japan,” Kagawa has been compared with the Jesuit paleontologist Teilhard de Chardin, and his “religio-aesthetic cosmic synthesis” is still worthy of consideration today.

**Mira Sonntag:** Protestant interpretations of “empirical evidence” in modern Japan

Common definitions of “empirical evidence” in philosophy and the natural sciences deny religions the right to claim “evidence” for their doctrines. Nonetheless religious thinkers around the world have continued to do so and propagate “empiricism” as a reliable basis of faith. This paper analyzes Protestant sources from modern Japan to answer the following questions: How do Protestant thinkers “define”, i. e., interpret, empirical evidence? To what extent do their interpretations refer to definitions in philosophy and the natural sciences and do they attempt to modify them? What are the practical and theoretical benefits Protestant thinkers gained through engaging in the modern discourse on empirical evidence and rationality? The paper also shows that Uchimura Kanzō’s (1861–1930) emphasis on “empirically grounded faith” was by no means as unique as scholars have claimed. In fact, sources reveal a multilayered discourse shared across denominations; all voices uniting to make Christianity attractive to the modern mind.

**Seung Chul Kim:** Religion and science in the Buddhist philosophy of Nishitani Keiji (1900–1990)

Nishitani Kenji (1900–1990) is a Buddhist philosopher who played an important role in Japan’s Kyoto School. For Nishitani, “science” has a direct connection to the problem of modern nihilism, and in this sense science encompasses a religious meaning. According to Nishitani, there is a need to rethink the relation of “religion and science” in order to overcome this nihilism. Nishitani is critical of the position that takes the common single line that this relation is mutually contradictory, and he takes the relation of religion and science in terms of what he calls a relation of “double exposure”. On the one hand, he criticizes the established tendency of religion to take reality only in terms of “life” and “spirit,” and, on the other hand, he criticizes the established tendency of science to analyze reality only in terms of “death” and “matter.” Nishitani claims that

these conventions of religion and science may be overcome from the Buddhist “position of emptiness.” From the “position of emptiness,” “life” and “death,” and “spirit” and “matter” are taken as a mutually dependent relation, and further that the relation of “the nondiscrimination of divine love” and “the nondiscrimination of scientific law” may be thought of as a relation of paradoxical unity. Through entering this “position of emptiness,” “religion” and “science” are led to a religious self-consciousness that overcomes egoism and may also be able to overcome nihilism.

**Christian Meyer:** Negotiating science, evolution and religiosity: the Protestant Chinese thinker Xie Fuya and his “Philosophy of Religion” (1928)

In 1928 the young Chinese Christian philosopher of religion, Xie Fuya (1892–1991) published his book *Philosophy of Religion* (*Zongjiao zhexue*), the first Chinese book of this title ever written. His publication can be situated within the harsh anti-religious attacks and debates about science and religion of this time. Xie, who had studied theology, philosophy and history of religions in Chicago and Harvard from 1925–27, develops an apologetic view of so-called “higher religions”. Though he clearly applies an evolutionary model (including theories of animism, totemism, etc.), Xie does not follow the anti-religious element in the evolutionist model. Instead, influenced by liberal Protestant adaptations as well as his own Confucian background, he applies measures of rationality and ethics, complemented by an idea of religiosity as the “essence of religion”, and thereby attempts to qualify Christianity as a “higher religion”. His work was highly influential in Protestant circles and beyond, being reprinted many times until today.

**Franz Winter:** The evolution of mankind in the interpretation of New Religious Movements in Japan

The so-called “New Religions” (*shinshūkyō*) are an important aspect of the religious landscape of modern Japan. As their origin must be interpreted on the background of different socio-religious settings, they differ widely in many aspects of their worldview. This paper is focused on two examples of major and important new religions of Japan which came into being in the second half of the twentieth century, namely *Kōfuku no kagaku* and *Mahikari*. Both offer a very special view on the history of mankind and its “evolution” with differences regarding the importance of various cultural periods and particularly Japan and its alleged “prehistory”. An interesting aspect in this regard is the importance of references to the term “science” in *Kōfuku no kagaku* (literally: “The Science of Happiness”) but also in *Mahikari*. A religio-historical approach will be combined with a systematic introduction to contrast and evaluate this specific use and its place.

**Masayoshi Sumika:** Evolutionary thought as a key: Uchimura Kanzō (1861–1930) and his dilemma between Christian belief and patriotism  
 This paper examines the influence of social Darwinism, which was an application of evolutionary thought to society and prevailed throughout the world in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, on Uchimura Kanzō's ideas on religion and state. Uchimura, who was one of the first intellectuals to convert to Protestant Christianity in modern Japan, was the son of a Samurai and had an impassioned loyalty to the state. He named his devotion to Jesus and Japan “the two Js,” but the dilemma between belief and patriotism caused him intellectual and actual distress. Throughout his life, Uchimura searched for a solution to this dilemma, and he took a cue from the social evolutionary views of religion and society. Uchimura's reception of social Darwinism demonstrates the impact of evolutionary thought on Japanese modernity.

## Multiple Religious Belonging

### Panel Chair: Manuela Kalsky

In Western society, cultural and religious diversity increasingly leads to hybrid religiosity. Conventional science of religion paradigms have trouble interpreting this new phenomenon. Some authors describe hybrid religiosity pejoratively as religious consumerism or syncretism. In this forum, we want to join a relatively new and rapidly growing interdisciplinary field of research that approaches hybrid religiosity through the lens of “multiple religious belonging”. Authors in the field vary widely in their conceptions of “religion”, “belonging”, and “multiplicity”, and, as a consequence, in their perceptions of the possibility of multiple religious belonging as well as its qualitative and quantitative importance. Participants in this forum will contribute to clarifying this discussion and to taking it forward, by analyzing existing controversies, and proposing useful interpretations of multiple religious belonging. In addition, empirical approaches aimed at getting insight into the nature and extent of multiple religious belonging will be presented.

**Catherine Cornille:** The concept of religion in multiple religious belonging  
 As an increasing number of individuals claim multiple religious belonging, the Western concept of religion is also undergoing certain shifts. Whereas religion was traditionally understood as a unified set of beliefs and practices relative to a transcendent reality and demanding total surrender, the availability of multiple religious systems has often led to a more piecemeal and utilitarian approach to religion, reminiscent of the way in which religion may have functioned in East-Asian countries. Religions are here judged and appropriated, less on the

basis of their internal truth and coherence than on the basis of their practical efficacy. This may be regarded as a broadening of the concept of religion. But it may also be seen as a narrowing or a diminishing of the self-understanding of most religions. The phenomenon of multiple religious belonging may thus again shed new light on an old discussion in the study of religion.

**Michael von Brück:** Multiple religious identity and social integration  
Religions can be seen as systems consisting of rules and values that bring cohesion to individual life courses using categories of ultimate order. Religions should therefore not be seen as systems that exclude each other, but as ritually transmitted and overlapping sets of rules, influencing concrete life situations on a cognitive, emotional and intentional level. Therefore individual biographies show multiple belonging to “religions”. In case of contradictions, individuals choose different options in different social situations. Only on a more abstract, cognitive level contradictions are experienced that can lead to cognitive dissonance. These are mostly solved by using narrative merging and reinterpretations of rituals. Emotionally, multiple belonging can lead to loyalty conflicts, comparable to those between primary (through parents) and secondary (through others) socialization processes. Integrating multiple belonging in a religious as well as in a more general social sense is a lifelong process of maturation and cognitive and emotional agency.

**Daan Oostveen:** Hermeneutical explorations on multiple religious belonging

Multiple religious belonging (MRB) has recently gained a lot of attention as a new way of approaching hybrid religiosity. This topic has been approached from a wide variety of different academic disciplines, including theology, sociology, anthropology and religious and cultural studies. These disciplines often treat multiple religious belonging in a variety of ways that are not always compatible with one another. This prompts a number of questions. How do different disciplines address the phenomenon? In what ways do they talk about MRB? What are the main differences in their approaches? How can we come to a way of speaking about multiple religious belonging that captures the many facets of the phenomenon? How does multiple religious belonging transform concepts like “religion”, “multiplicity” and “belonging”? My paper will outline some hermeneutic explorations in the field to arrive at new ways of understanding and speaking about MRB that capture the richness of hybrid religiosity.

**Joantine Berghuijs:** Multiple religious belonging in the Netherlands  
The Dutch society is highly secularized in terms of decreasing church membership and church attendance. Meanwhile, there are many “religious creatives” who fulfil their need for meaning by using multiple religious sources. This paper presents an empirical investigation into the occurrence and nature of mul-

tiple religious belonging in the Netherlands, using a representative sample of the population. The number of multiple religious believers depends on the operationalization of the terms “multiple”, “religious”, and “belonging”. Central in my approach is a new interpretation of “belonging”, not in an exclusive, “possessive” sense (Voss Roberts, 2010), but in terms of being related and feeling at home (Kalsky, 2013). This approach leads to a number of “dimensions of belonging”, that can be measured per religion. We expect that the design and the results of this study will highlight the permeability of the boundaries between religions.

## Muslim Women in Modern Transformations

**Anna Piela:** To wear or not to wear the niqab? Discussions of recently converted Muslim women in the West

This paper looks at online discussions amongst women living in the West who have converted to Islam and chosen to wear the niqab (face veil). It considers their motivations for adopting clothing that (in the West) has come to symbolize negative associations with Islam, most notably patriarchal oppression, and/or extremist radicalization amongst Muslim women. This has been illustrated by the recent news stories about “jihadi brides” – women travelling to live in Islamic State-controlled territories. However, discourses associating these choices with purely external influences are oppressive in themselves, as they deny women agency in both their conversion and the adoption of the niqab. Departing from these reductionist narratives, I focus on non-political motivations for wearing the niqab by recently converted women; these remain unaddressed in the literature. I examine these women’s positions in the context of wider, theoretical debates on religious individuation, authority pluralization, and female agency (Peter, 2006; Wadud, 2006).

**Diah Ariani Arimbi:** Women and the politics of piety: women’s rights, roles and equality in the Tarbiyah movement in Indonesia

The Tarbiyah (education) movement in Indonesia’s Islam today is the best known and has the largest number of members amongst groups in the Dakwah (proselytizing) movement that mostly work in Indonesian campuses. This paper aims to explore the number and varieties of women’s activities in this movement, especially in relation to the ways women see their rights, roles and sexual identities within their notion of piety. Female activists of the Tarbiyah movement in Airlangga University Surabaya are used as data. Participation observation and in-depth interviews are used as techniques of data collection. Some findings show that the Tarbiyah movement’s espousal of women’s issues in an Islamic

setting complicates even more the dissemination of such issues to the Indonesian public. One important finding indicates that the Tarbiyah conceives that male and female are segregated in nature (biological construction) yet in that segregation lies irreplaceable equality in any sphere and any value.

**Nahid Afrose Kabir:** Religious communities in society: Muslim women's position

Identity, culture and religion are intricately associated with one another. The factors that normally lead Muslims to define their identity depend on the family they are born into, the culture and religion they belong to and also their community and life experiences. In some Muslim families, male identity is considered privileged over female identity. Research has found that the notion of Muslim family is generally shaped by the Quranic verses, where certain verses are used to justify men's power over women. Yet the notions of patriarchy, power and "othering" of (Muslim) women are also prevalent in non-Muslim societies where they form a minority. In this paper, I discuss the position of Muslim women both in Islamic communities and non-Muslim societies. This paper is based on interviews of Muslim girls and women, aged 15 to 30 years in Australia, Britain and America from 1999 to 2011.

## Mysticism

**Nagehan Ceylanlar:** A "Muslim nun's unusual experience in "the Discalced Carmelite monastery"

Mysticism, which has stemmed from the attempt of deepening the individual experience of human being's search for the Divine and a living under the Divine blessing, has a great role in the practise of religious life. One of the examples of these mystical experiences is the monastic tradition of the "Discalced Carmelite nuns" in Christianity. This paper has been written by a Muslim female researcher who has had an academic interest in comparing Christian mysticism with Islamic Sufism and has been exceptionally welcomed by the Carmelite nuns who opened to her their monastery gates in Fano-Italy with enthusiasm and tolerance. The paper looks at the daily life of the Discalced Carmelite nuns under the Rule of the Order as well as the experience of a Muslim researcher in a Catholic monastic community for approximately a 6-months period.

**Hiroko Taguchi:** "Seelengrund" and "der heilige Sinn": Meister Eckhart's and Novalis's mystic thinkings

Franz Hemsterhuis' "sense of moral" inspires the concept of "sense of the sacred" in Novalis. It signifies the moral organ receiving the sacred. From the standpoint of philosophy of history of Christianity or Europe, he explains that

it is inherent in human nature, but does not function under poor environment: the concentration of interest on life in this world and the predominance of reason over feeling and mind exterminate it. Novalis criticizes that this extermination causes the abandonment of a link with the other and a loss of solidarity in society. Plato's "the eye of the soul" leads to Meister Eckhart's "God's ground" and "the ground of the soul" through Neoplatonism, which influences also Hemsterhuis. This paper elucidates that the sense of the sacred is in the mystic tradition of "the eye of the soul" and encounter with God as individual experience arouses a sense of mission building solidarity.

**Stepan Lisý:** Kuhn's structure of scientific revolutions applied on the study of mysticism

Scholars of mysticism assume the universality of mysticism. They do not use the term mysticism as a reference term. Often they refer to the concept of mystical union (*unio mystica*) as mysticism. So, one kind of mysticism is the mystical union and the other kind is where such a union is absent (e.g. Schäfer). It seems that mystical union is a criterion (Idel), and helps us to classify mystical traditions. But there are scholars who disagree and do not need to introduce the concept of mysticism, e.g. in Plotinus (Gerson). According to T. S. Kuhn we can harmonize an anomaly with the dominating paradigm theory or explain an anomaly in a different paradigm theory and see whether it helps or not. So far there is only one, formulated by S.N. Balagangadhara, and based on this paradigm theory we can question the universality of mysticism.

## Mythology and Mythological Themes

**Christina Nikolajew:** Zum Forschungsstand litauischer Mythologie und Religion

In den vergangenen Jahrzehnten wurde von litauischen Religionswissenschaftlern, Ethnologen, Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaftlern und Archäologen viel zum Thema ge- und erarbeitet. N. Vėlius hat u. a. alle ihm zugänglichen Quellen und Forschungsergebnisse zusammengetragen. G. Beresnevičius begann dieses Material zu typisieren und darin vorhandene Strukturen herauszuarbeiten. Mit der vergleichenden Religionswissenschaft und phänomenologischen Prinzipien erstellte er ein (vorläufiges) Bild eines Systems. Daraus ergibt sich, dass die litauische Mythologie und Religion wahrscheinlich ein zentraler, eigenständiger Bestandteil des indoeuropäischen transalpinen Raumes (von Kelten bis zu den Iranern) und Knotenpunkt eines effektiven Religionsdialogs war. Mutmaßlich haben sich in ihr die ältesten Besonderheiten einer indoeuropäischen Protoreligion erhalten. Diese litauischen Forschungen eröffnen ein phänomenologisches

Forschungsfeld. Es entsteht Material, das immer wieder aufs Neue untersucht und erforscht werden kann. Eine Herausforderung für alle, die sich für den Wandel und die Beharrlichkeit von Religion über Jahrhunderte, unter verschiedensten historischen Einflüssen, interessieren.

**Stefan Heep:** Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl: the legend of the priest-king of Tollan as a result of cultural impact

After the conquest the Aztec elite needed a new authorization of power instead of war and human sacrifices to maintain their privileges. Hernán Cortés provided a new strategy. In his second report he justified his forbidden conquest by claiming a Spanish-Christian origin of the Aztecs. Regarding Charles V as their former leader, who had returned, the Aztecs had voluntarily accepted their subjugation. Therefore Charles V would have the right to call himself “Mexican emperor” – equal to the Roman-German emperor, who claimed to represent Jesus Christ on earth. Indeed Cortés described Charles V as the messiah of the new world. The Aztec elite took Cortés’ assertions to transform the subordinate god Quetzalcoatl into the messiah of the Aztecs, who founded the “Mexican empire”. The wind-god, who turned into the morning-star, became after the conquest a figure of legitimacy (“priest-king of Tollan”) equal to the political Jesus Christ.

**Valentino Gasparini:** “Mulcebant sacris pectora fessa Iocis”: the Inventio Osiridis and the dramatic perpetuation of cultural memories

In Imperial Rome, as well as probably in many other cities of the Mediterranean area, the festival of Isis (which took place from October 28 to November 3) staged the mythical events of the loss of the god Osiris. Plutarch (*De Is. et Os.*, 366e–f) describes the devotees pretending to look for the remains of his body torn limb from limb by Typhon and, once finally finding them, rejoicing as sorrow fades away during the culminating celebration of the Hilaria (also called Heuresis or Inventio Osiridis). “The lost is found, O let us rejoice together!” (*Sen., Apok. XIII 4*). Most of the ceremony (probably not open to the public) had to be held within the walls of the sanctuaries or in the nearby theatres. Only the terminal part, with the proclamation of the rediscovery of Osiris, was maybe to result in extramural rituals. The performance of the Inventio Osiridis theatrically memorialized Isis’ mythical deeds by recreating the presumably related emotional states, and thus represented a collective experience which reinforced the feedback between performers and audience, and created that “effervescent” state (Émile Durkheim) or “communitas” (Victor Turner) which at the same time was a source of union with the divine and of social cohesion. This is exactly what Plutarch himself hinted at, when testifying (*De Is. et Os.* 361d–e) how Isis intermingled in such “holiest ceremonies” (ἁγιωτάται τελεταῖ) images, allegories and “representations” (μιμήματα) of her past sufferings in order not to let her efforts be forgotten and silenced, but to give to humans comfort and hope.

## Nationalism, Transnationalism, Globalization: Dynamics of Civil Religions

### Panel Chair: Valerio Salvatore Severino

The question of religious communities in society cannot be solved without taking into account society as a religious community itself, referring to practices, discourses and institutions conceptualized as civil religion as well as political or secular religion. The sacralization of politics in the age of nationalisms, the interreligious contact of the state especially with Christian churches, have assumed a transnational character. From this point of view we should consider the migration of national symbols, from the French Revolution to totalitarianisms, and the upsurge of universal models of society religiously determined. Religious traditions of communities are re-invented, constantly in correspondence to the ethnical, national, imperial, global stages of society's structure. Such aspects lead to consideration of the adaptation of civil religions to globalization today, as a part of a general reorientation of the concept of citizenship. This panel aims to develop an interdisciplinary cooperation between Political Science and History of Religions by bringing original case studies and encouraging theoretical considerations.

**Aminadav Yitzhaki:** Principles vs. pragmatism in the behavior of religious political movements: Rabbi Berlin and the 1937 Partition Plan controversy  
The Mizrahi was one of the important Jewish movements formed in the twentieth century (1902) following the founding of the Zionist Movement. Its basic ideology was to resettle the Jewish people in the Holy land according to the Jewish faith, viewing the Zionist movement as advancing the long awaited Redemption. Rabbi Meir Berlin (1880 – 1949), scion of a renowned rabbinical family, was the charismatic leader of the Mizrahi Movement in the first half of the twentieth century and as such held central roles in the Zionist establishment. He was a man of vision, integrity and clear principles, stemming from strong religious convictions. A classic case of collision between his religious ideology and politics occurred in 1937 when the British Peel Royal Commission proposed the Partition Plan as a solution to the Arab-Jewish conflict. Flatly rejected by the Arabs, the plan sparked bitter controversy among the Jews. Proponents were reluctant to concede a sizable portion of the territory pledged by the 1917 Balfour Declaration, but nevertheless regarded the plan as the lesser of two evils. However, R. Berlin, a central leader of the opponents, fiercely opposed it, mainly for religious reasons, remaining steadfast until the 1947 UN Resolution, which he was eventually obliged to accept.

**Valerio Salvatore Severino:** The roll call of the fallen soldiers case study: the migration of nationalist symbols

Devastating tragedies such as the 9/11 terrorist attacks, or the massacre during the Polish 1970 protests, are still commemorated with a roll call of the victims' names pronounced publicly. As a matter of civil or political religion this ritual is studied by political scientists and sociologists. Each contribution around this topic has been restricted to a specific national context in which the ritual took shape. For the first time, a comparative method of History of Religions will be applied in order to retrace the transnational diffusion of this ritual from the Napoleonic era, passing through the Fascist European experience, to the present.

**Jane Skjoldli:** The pope as high priest of a global civil religion?

Sociologist José Casanova suggested seeing the pope as “high priest of a new universal civil religion of humanity”; that popes have abandoned *libertas ecclesiae* in favor of *libertas personae* by assuming a role as a bulwark for universal human rights in a global arena. This paper discusses Casanova's suggestion, asking how it may contribute to understanding events such as the World Day of Prayer for Peace in Assisi, Italy, 1986, where John Paul II (canonized April 27, 2014) presided over prayer gatherings that involved religious authorities from various religions around the world. Recognizing the context of Casanova's suggestion as John Paul II's pontificate, the paper proceeds to discuss, in view of Benedict XVI and Francis, whether Casanova's suggestion holds more than a mere reflection of supposed papal ambition and if that “more” might be understood as adaptation and/or transformation to dynamic global context(s).

**Anja Kirsch:** The literary roots of civil religion: the transformation of the “hero of labor” and the topos of socialist work

Work has always been of exceptional importance for German Democratic Republic's real socialism and its Marxist-Leninist worldview. Being far more than an economic necessity, work – in the sense of socialist labor – was seen as a value in itself. The “hero of labor” was the narrative archetype of the “new socialist man” and one of the central issues of worldview education. The stories about him are characterized by experientiality: the transformation of ordinary people into reliable socialists was, according to the script, the result of an extraordinary, even ineffable “socialist experience”. In this paper, it will be argued that GDR's labor rhetoric documents the dynamics of the debate about the nature of socialism and the stylistic patterns that were used to create a socialist culture of remembrance, discussing their implication for a classification as civil religion.

## Naturalizing Rudolf Otto?

### Panel Chair: Gregory D. Alles

Almost one hundred years ago, Rudolf Otto's path-breaking book, *Das Heilige*, gave a major impetus to the academic study of religions. The terminology that his book introduced – the numinous, the *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* – still retains some currency, and some writers who are not professional scholars of religions or particularly religious, such as Ronald Dworkin and Barbara Ehrenreich, still make some use of Otto's ideas. Among professional scholars of religions, however, Otto's thought has largely fallen into disfavor. One important reason has certainly been a turn away from the phenomenological toward the cultural, behavioral, linguistic, corporeal, and material. Another would seem to be the supernaturalistic stance that Otto presumes. After all, American scholars seem quite willing to invoke William James. This panel will explore, from various perspectives, the possibility of naturalizing Otto's thought. It will assess both the possible usefulness of Otto's ideas for a naturalistic study of religions today and the conditions under which these ideas may be naturalized.

**Yoshitsugu Sawai:** A semantic perspective on Otto's theory of religion  
This presentation will reconsider Rudolf Otto's theory of religion from the perspective of semantic theory, especially as developed by the Japanese scholar Izutsu Toshihiko. As a category of understanding religion, Otto's key concept of "the numinous" has received special attention from scholars of religious studies. As is well-known, he emphasized the numinous experience as the core of religion. In his view, since the faithful have religious experience, this demonstrates the existence of the extraordinary dimension of religion. From Izutsu's semantic theory, however, the holiness of "the numinous" is not an a priori attribute of religious experience, but a historical response to it in the life of the faithful. Thus, from his semantic perspective of religion, there is no meaning of sacredness in a religious object or action by itself apart from the religious community which regards it as sacred. This perspective, then, requires us to reconceptualize Otto's analysis of religion.

**Gregory D. Alles:** Reconceiving Otto through contemporary philosophy of mind

The major claim of this paper is that contemporary philosophy of mind in the analytic tradition contains resources for naturalizing Rudolf Otto's thought. An important strand in this tradition, associated with thinkers like Paul and Patricia Churchland, Daniel Dennett, Fred Dretske, and Michael Tye, claims that there is nothing particular to say about conscious experience aside from the physical processes involved in human perception and thought. Others, however, such as Thomas Nagel, John Searle, Frank Jackson, and David Chalmers, have argued

that, while conscious experience perhaps supervenes on physical processes, there is nevertheless something about consciousness that is not exhausted by physical explanation. This paper will draw upon David Chalmers' notion of a science of consciousness, the analysis of non-conceptual mental content by thinkers like Gareth Evans and Jose Luis Bermudez, and Jesse Prinz's work with the emotional roots of morality to explore a naturalistic reformulation of some of Otto's key concepts.

**Edith Franke:** Response

## **The Navaratri/Durgapuja Festival in India: Actors, Agency and Power – Reinterpretations and Appropriations**

**Panel Chairs: Ute Hüsken, Hillary Rodrigues**

The religious festival called Navarātri/Navarātra/Durgāpūjā/Dasara is celebrated all over South Asia, with great fervor and massive public participation. Many elements are common to the different celebrations, yet the arrangement, performance and the interpretation of these elements vary greatly, in texts and practice. The panel presentations look at the particularities of specific festival events or texts, but address the larger questions of differences, commonalities and historical developments. What does the festival mean to those who celebrate it? In what way do different textual accounts relate to other texts, or to the actual performances of the festival? How and why does the interpretation and performance change? By looking at details, we will address a larger question: How is this celebration one festival and many different festivals at the same time?

**Ina Ilkama:** Women's nine nights? Domestic and temple celebrations of Navarātri in Kanchipuram

The autumnal Navarātri is celebrated in most temples and many homes in the South Indian temple town Kanchipuram. Once negotiating the relations of the goddess and the king, the festival is today labeled a "woman's festival" by most of its Tamil participants. While women perform the domestic rituals for the kolu, their role is also more prominent in the temples, seen e. g. in pūjās directed to or performed by women. However, the women's role, as well as Navarātri's backdrop of celebrating the goddess' triumph over the demonic forces, is expressed very differently in the temples and domestically, and also significantly between the temples themselves. This talk addresses these differences by looking into the dynamics of Navarātri in various homes and temples of Kanchipuram, and explores what it implies that Navarātri has become a women's festival.

**Caleb Simmons:** The goddess and the Yadu line: the continuation of medieval kingship in the celebration of Dasara in Mysore

Throughout the medieval period, two of the most ubiquitous methods through which kingship was fashioned was the construction of royal genealogies and the performance of royal military rituals associated with the autumnal Goddess festival of Dasara/Navarātri. In this paper, I examine how these medieval modes of king-fashioning have persisted into contemporary Mysore. Particularly, I investigate how the medieval prescriptions for the royal Dasara rituals found in the Śrīman Mysūra Mahārājavara Vaṃśāvalī were negotiated into the contemporary period, specifically during my fieldwork observation of Mysore's Dasara in 2012 and 2013. Central in my investigation is the continued rhetoric of mythic kingship in which the Woḍeyar kings were connected to the divine Yadu vaṃśa. I argue that these elements demonstrate how medieval kingship persists as a meaningful category within the contemporary Indian context.

**Moumita Sen:** Politics, art and religion in the Durga Puja of Kolkata

The contemporary Durga Puja of Kolkata is a deeply emotional affair for the Bengali community; it is also a “mega-event” which involves millions of rupees and generates employment for thousands of people. In this paper I will reflect on the changes in the festival by looking at the way Trinamool Congress – a political party – appropriates the Durga Puja – a Hindu religious festival – as a tool of governmentality towards electoral gains and mass mobilization. From the end of the nineties in Kolkata, there has been significant traffic between the worlds of high art and that of Durga Puja. “Art” therefore emerged as a category in the Durga Puja scene which was not only related to the status and publicity of the puja organizers (local youth clubs), but also corporate sponsorship and advertising revenue. In this paper, I will focus on the network of political patronage, the motivation of the organizers, and the ways of employing the idea of “art” (broadly, high culture) in the Durga Puja of Kolkata.

**Jishnu Shankar:** Baba Bhagwan Ram and the Navarātri tradition at Parao, Varanasi

Starting first with Baba Kinaram in the 1600s, and continuing through the years down to Baba Bhagwan Ram Ji in the 1900s and beyond, the Aghor tradition of asceticism has gone through many changes. While some of the more esoteric practices still exist to which only the initiated disciples have access, the social persona of the tradition has certainly not only changed, but become visible too. Instead of being located only in the cremation grounds and isolated places, many of these ascetics can now be found in ashrams which are not only easily accessible, but also socially active. One major visible change in the tradition is the reinterpretation of the earlier festivities. While the core philosophy associated with the festivals such as Navaratri still remains the same, Baba Bhagwan Ram Ji

has tried to make them more socially in-tune by giving larger, and more prominent, access to women in the performance of these festivals. My presentation will look at these changes in the modern context.

**Bihani Sarkar:** Sanitizing the autumnal ritual of the goddess: the influx of orthodox ritual elements into the Navarātra between the twelfth and the seventeenth centuries CE

A significant transformation in the Navarātra between c. 1100 CE and 1600 CE is the gradual phasing out of Tantric rituals. Earlier forms of the ritual, as reflected in descriptions in Sanskrit and Prakrit before 1100 CE, contained antinomian elements such as the propitiation of wilder forms of the goddess connected with Kāli and demons to destroy enemies; and sanguinary sacrifice incorporating even the possibility of human sacrifice. However, from 1100 CE the Navarātra became more regulated by Brahmanical notions of purity so that Tantric rituals connected to the attainment of powers are “toned down” and provided with alternatives less offensive to the orthodox. This was a move towards greater brahmanical control and sanitization of forms of the Navarātra. In this paper I will trace this transformation by assessing Sanskrit paddhati literature, examining how the non-brahmanical character of the Navarātra was gradually replaced by the brahmanical and transgressive, controversial elements were synthesized with orthodox ritual aspects.

**Silje L. Einarsen:** Change, tradition, and innovation in Navarātri of Benares  
This paper discusses recent trends and changes in Navarātri celebrations of Benares. The festival centres around two types of artistic presentations: the Rām Līlā play based on Benarasi poet Tulsidas’ Hindi rendering of the epic Rāmāyaṇa, and the Durgā Pūjā installations creatively arranged by neighborhood youth clubs. Whereas the former represents tradition and Banarasi identity, the latter is perceived of as new and innovative, which manifests as skepticism and some resistance to the celebrations. Fieldwork nevertheless suggests that the popularity of the traditional Rām Līlā is decreasing whereas the Durgā Pūjā is increasing rapidly in both scope and public esteem. The paper will inquire into these dynamics of change, creativity, tradition and innovation in the festival culture of Benares.

## Neopaganism

**Kathryn Rountree:** Pagans and the traditionalization of invention: a cosmopolitanism project

The paper will analyze, through several case studies, how religious innovation and the revival of tradition are combined by modern pagans in a continuous, dy-

namic process of creating authenticity. Cosmopolitanism, with its interest in the local/global nexus and relationships between self and Other, self and nation, and oneness and diversity, offers a novel lens through which to explore modern paganisms and native faiths. The paper examines both the culturally-inflected nature of pagan diversity and the global commonality which emerges as a result of pagans occupying a “glocal” space and participating in supra-national networks facilitated by the internet and increasing mobility. It questions the importance of the categories of “nation” and “global community” in the creation of pagan identities and allegiances and seeks to explore tensions between cosmopolitanism, globalization, nationalism and indigenous renaissance. How, and to what extent, does cosmopolitanism play out in the context of individuals’ and local groups’ situated subjectivities?

**Matouš Vencálek:** Contemporary Paganism and politics: the relation of political and religious views among Czech pagans

Both political and religious affiliation reflect one’s worldview. However, the relation of religion and politics is a complex and highly debated issue. This paper focuses on a connection between religiosity and politics in the framework of one specific expression of modern spirituality – Contemporary Paganism. That is an umbrella term (also Modern Paganism, Neopaganism, or simply Paganism) for a diversified group of movements whose main unifying characteristic is that they are to a lesser or greater extent based on or inspired by prehistoric or ancient religious faiths and beliefs. Paganism is highly diversified: some groups have emerged from naturalizing and romanticizing tendencies and emphasize the sacredness of nature, worship and respect for all of its creatures; while some groups have emerged from nationalistic tendencies and focus on worshipping the gods and ancestors. The paper explores the correlation between the religiosity and political orientation of modern Pagans; what is the attitude of Pagans toward politics? Are the political views of Pagans as diversified as their religiosity, or are there any unifying elements?

**Pavel Horák:** “We are Pagans...”: self-reflection and the influence of Christianity in Czech and Irish Contemporary Paganism

Neopagans try to reconstruct and continue practising ancient European pre-Christian traditions. Comparing the way of thinking of ancient “pagans” and their Christian contemporaries I will show how Christianity came up with a completely new way of thinking, especially about the notion of religion as we know it nowadays. Neopagans have unconsciously adopted the theoretical framework Christianity came up with. Hence I claim that contemporary Neopaganism has found itself within the framework of Christianity and its self-conceptualization is therefore implicitly Christian. I will show it through the data collected from my fieldwork of the last four years among contemporary Czech Neopagans

and comparing it with the results from my fieldwork among Irish Neopagans. The data from my fieldwork are striking and appeal for the need to rethink the theoretical foundations of Pagan Studies. Hence the attempt is to outline a few basic ways how to deal with this issue.

**Shai Feraro:** The return of Baal (to the Holy Land): Canaanite reconstructionism among Israeli Neopagans, a double-edged sword  
This presentation will focus on the recent emergence of Canaanite reconstructionism amongst Israeli Neopagans. This development will be set against the background of the unique nature of Israeli society and identity politics, as well as of Canaanism – a cultural/ideological movement, which climaxed during the 1940s in British Mandate Palestine but declined soon after the founding of the state of Israel. If Modern Israeli Pagans hope to achieve a greater sense of integration into (and a common inheritance with) the parent society, it is unclear which Pagan “path” could best serve such a goal. Indeed “Israeli Pagans are clearly at present in a double bind, whereby if they follow non-Israeli traditions such as Wicca and Druidry, they are accused of importing alien beliefs, while if they revive aspects of the ancient native religion, they are accused of bringing back the ancient evil against which true religion originally defined itself” (Hutton 2013).

## New Dynamics in African Religious Landscapes

**Rose Mary Amenga-Etego:** Nyame nnu na M’awu: discourses on African indigenous religions

Nyame nnu na m’awu is an Akan saying implying “God never dies, therefore I cannot die”. This saying underscores the resilience and tenacity of the indigenous religiosity and spirituality in three ways. First, it highlights immortality, as the core attribute of Onyame and the indestructible spiritual deposition in humans, the Okra. Second, it constitutes the name of a unique indigenous shrub that survives and thrives under extreme environmental conditions. Finally, it is one of the names of the Adinkra symbols whose image and embedded meanings have transcended time and space to the global capital market in various innovative forms. In spite of this notion of resilience, the African indigenous religion in Ghana has plummeted, from 38.2% in the 1960 census to 5.2% in 2010 statistically, raising questions about its survival under contemporary social change. This paper examines the future of the indigenous religions in Ghana in relation to this saying.

**Samuel Kehinde Fabunmi:** Spiritualization of objects and symbols among selected Pentecostal churches in Southwestern Nigeria

Christianity over time has been witnessing dynamic changes depending on the environment that hosts it. This is referred to as contextualization in Christian theology. Since the emergence of the Pentecostal movement in the Africa landscape, the utilization of, and engagement with, African culture has greatly helped in the decolonization, reconstruction and contextualization of this faith against the backdrop of inherited theology of the historic churches. The strength of Christianity in this global age is located in the Pentecostal movement, most especially from the global south, with different kinds of innovations. This piece therefore focuses on the engagement and relationship with spiritualization of objects and symbols in African traditional religion and its implications for Christianity through the Pentecostal Churches in Nigeria. The new trend in the Pentecostalism of the use of symbols to represent the realities of spiritualism is a grey area in African Pentecostalism which calls for critical evaluation. The emergence of Pentecostalism in Nigeria is one of the fundamental reasons accounting for the growth of Christianity. This has given an opportunity for Africans to express their own feeling of Christianity, hence the contextualization of Christianity within the limits of an African worldview. In this regard, contemporary Pentecostal churches, especially among those situated in Yorubaland in southern Nigeria, are engaging with traditional beliefs in the practices of Christianity. An example is the spiritualization of objects and symbols in this age. Ayegboyin and Ishola in their work emphasized the importance of the African worldview in the promotion of Christianity among the Yoruba people but did not focus on how this has developed into spiritualization of objects. Both Ogunrinade's and Awolalu's work in this aspect also did not harness how this development is shaping the understanding of people as far as Christianity is concerned. This gap left in scholarship is what this paper intends to attend to.

**Tammy Vanessa Wilks:** An ecofeminist perspective on daily survival strategies of disadvantaged women in post-apartheid South Africa

This paper seeks to establish if and how international discourses on ecofeminism are engaged in the post-apartheid South African context. The aim is to demonstrate that ecofeminist perspectives in post-apartheid South Africa are reflected not in the form of social movements for the poor but rather as a shared struggle for survival in a political and social space recovering from apartheid. It will demonstrate how apartheid represented a form of oppression that was detrimental to the ways in which disadvantaged black women related to the environment. By drawing on specific ecofeminist and environmental theories of Ivone Gebara, alongside interviews in local disadvantaged communities in Cape Town, it will be shown that women are constantly engaged in a daily strug-

gle for survival and navigate various structures of oppression. Using two South African ecofeminist-based groups, the paper will outline how ecofeminist perspectives in South Africa represent possible reactive frameworks against the apartheid legacy.

## **New Methods in Comparative Studies of Religion with a Focus on Women**

### **Panel Chair: Katja Triplett**

Comparative Religion has recently come under harsh criticism for a number of reasons. These range from allegations that the study of comparative religion is simply the product of a scholar's imagination to the critical assessment of post-colonial scholars. Certain postcolonial theorists state that religion was part of an imperial project that distorted the actual meanings used by the colonized peoples – be they those of religious elites or indigenous peoples. This panel comprises presentations from women scholars who, in the light of such criticisms, are exploring alternative approaches to the study of women and religion in comparative and/or intercultural studies. The papers are both theoretical in nature, discussing changes in method, and applied, with an emphasis on women. Two papers introduce specific studies that apply new materialist approaches to the study of religion, while two others feature specific religious contexts.

**Karen Pechilis:** Ethnography, women, and the comparative study of religion. This paper explores the contribution of the ethnographic method in the comparative study of religion, especially its ability to revise the understanding of women in religion. With its roots in the History of Religions, the comparative approach traditionally employed textual materials. Feminist, postmodern and post-colonial scholars have argued that this focus represents a biased, culturally-elite, male view of religion. The turn to ethnography enriches the field of comparative religion, with its emphasis on lived religion today, especially in relation to women, and the differences between textual representations of women and their participation in the making of a living tradition. Reflection on recent ethnographic studies of women in Hinduism, as well as a case study of a contemporary festival to Karaikkal Ammaiyar, a classical female devotional poet-saint from Tamil South India, will demonstrate the historical depth and contemporary enactment of women's distinctive contributions to Hinduism, especially on the theme of speaking desire.

**Alexandra Grieser:** “Comparing what, and how!?” Analyzing religious change from an aesthetic point of view  
 Criticism of “comparative religion” has demonstrated that comparison is not an “innocent” academic procedure; rather, it is prone to ideological and epistemological problems. Conscious decisions alone cannot prevent gender-blindness. Blind spots and seemingly self-evident norms remain part and parcel of comparative category building. Dismissing comparison completely for this reason, however, would be a naïve decision. Grouping, categorizing and comparing are basic cognitive operations. Differentiating – being a task of the cultural sciences – is impossible without recognizing similarities and differences. Integrating a gender critique of religious studies scholarship, and drawing on recent developments in the study of Western Buddhism, the paper will present examples from a newly emerging research approach, “aesthetics of religion,” which focuses on the engagement of sensory perception in religious practice. A discussion focuses on how aesthetic categories can help analysis in a comparative perspective as to how gender differences are created by “cultivating” the senses religiously.

**Sylvia Marcos:** Reconfiguring gender theory from a Mesoamerican decolonial perspective

Gender theory has mainly been systematized from the geopolitical North, by its intellectual theoreticians and within its academic institutions. A review of this material will not be part of this presentation as its complexity and length would make it impossible to present alternative approaches in the time allowed for this panel. My own focus will be specifically on those issues that appear to propose radically different parameters for theory-articulation in order to comprehend a gender theory that emerges from Mesoamerican religion. This could more adequately portray the practices and the elaboration of discourses of women’s rights as voiced within indigenous women’s declarations and demands. Issues like duality, fluidity, simultaneity, homeo-rheic equilibrium, embodiment, will be reviewed explicitly with implicit references of comparison and contrast to Northern feminist gender theory.

**Jay Johnston:** Sense and spirit: matter, gender and perception in the study of religion

The development of “material” and “spatial” approaches to the study of religion has enabled studies that privilege – in a variety of ways – the specificity of embodied experience. Simultaneously, Cultural Studies has developed “new materialism” as a mode of engagement with material agency and a “politics” of non-human agency. The space of assumed “unseen” exchanges between subject and object is closely observed. This paper draws together directives from these two theoretical and methodological approaches in order to investigate the modes of epistemology and the scopic regimes that become necessary when close atten-

tion is paid to cultural constructions of the senses. The proposed approach places Buddhist and post-structuralist ontological concepts in dialogue to articulate a new theory–praxis: i.e., a gendered, embodied and self-reflexive method for the study of materiality ascribed to religious agency. Case studies from contemporary self-directed spiritual practices will be discussed to exemplify the analysis and proposed methodological approach.

## New Religious Movements and the State

### Panel Chair: Catherine Wessinger

NRMs and states relate to and interact with each other in many ways. Some NRMs may be in tension with certain states. States may control which religions receive the benefits of registration, and a religion that is regarded as unconventional may be subjected to discrimination. An NRM may have the goal of establishing a theocracy, and therefore take theological and political positions in opposition to the state. States may seek to exercise social control over NRMs in various ways, including interventions to protect allegedly endangered children, and law enforcement raids to address alleged firearms violations. Members of an NRM contribute in different ways to interactive conflicts with a state, but the state holds the greatest power to enforce the decisions of its officials. Comparison of diverse NRM-state interactions may reveal overarching social dynamics in situations involving tension between NRMs and states.

**Liselotte Frisk:** State support of registered faith communities in Sweden: the question of “basic values of society”

After the separation between church and state in Sweden in the year 2000, the possibility to register as a faith community was offered to religious organizations. Registered faith communities could also apply for economic support from the state, as well as the opportunity to collect membership fees through the tax payment process. Just over 40 faith communities received economic support in 2013. This paper will study the conditions on which economic state support is given, and also which applications have been turned down, and the reasons for this. Among the applications from religious groups that were turned down were those submitted by the Church of Scientology and Jehovah’s Witnesses. The condition that the faith community has to “contribute to maintain and strengthen the basic values of society” will be a particular focus.

**Julie Ingersoll:** Theocracy, Christian Reconstruction, and the (re)conception of the category “politics”

Christian Reconstructionists insist that their goals are not essentially political, yet most observers (scholars, reporters and pundits) focus on the question of

whether they seek to establish a biblical theocracy. This paper will introduce Christian Reconstruction, note some of its key sites of influence in the United States, and then explore its rather distinct (and distinctly limited) notion of what counts as politics, situating that category in the larger totalizing discourse they call “sphere sovereignty”. In their view God ordained three separate, sovereign, spheres of authority to govern human life, each of which is to function autonomously from the others, with “politics” pertaining only to the sphere of the civil government, but with all three under “biblical law.” The larger discourse includes the assertion that there is no such thing as neutrality and that biblical law is irreconcilably and inescapably incompatible with any other value system.

**Susan J. Palmer:** Sekten in Germany: the case of the Twelve Tribes

In September 2013 in Bavaria the Twelve Tribes community was targeted by a massive police raid organized by the Jugendamt in which 40 children were seized and placed in temporary state custody. The children have not been returned in spite of an investigation that found no evidence of abuse. This study analyzes this NRM-state conflict and explores the erosion of religious freedom since the 1998 final report of the German Enquete Commission on “So-called Sects and Psychogroups”, which recommended that the term Sekte should not be applied to religious groups. This paper documents the convergence of forces that led to the raid, the draconian application of the “anti-spanking law” of 2000, and the responses of the child-centered Twelve Tribes community driven by its millennial, perfectionist aims. The various roles of the parties involved in the Kulte opposition are examined: the “EKD” and German Lutheran and Catholic countercult Sekte experts, the Jugendamt and the media.

**Catherine Wessinger:** FBI memos on the Branch Davidians’ apocalyptic theology

After the botched assault on the Branch Davidians outside Waco, Texas, by agents with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms on February 28, 1993, which resulted in the deaths of four BATF agents and six Branch Davidians, FBI agents took over the siege. On April 19, 1993 the FBI carried out a tank and CS gas assault, which culminated in a fire in which 76 Branch Davidians of all ages died. FBI agents pleaded ignorance of the Branch Davidians’ apocalyptic theology of martyrdom. However, FBI internal memos and reports in the Lee Hancock Collection at Texas State University indicate that during the siege agents interviewed people who provided information about the Branch Davidians’ theology. Information in these documents indicates that FBI officials who planned and directed the final assault were well informed of the significance of the Branch Davidians’ theology for the outcome.

**Eileen Barker:** Response

## **New Trends and Recurring Issues in the Study of Religion: Perspectives from Eastern and Western Europe**

### **Panel Chair: James L. Cox**

The European Association for the Study of Religions Conference held in September 2011 in Budapest brought together keynote speakers from Eastern and Western Europe to offer regional perspectives on the historical development in the study of religion and to reflect on contemporary issues affecting the academic study of religion. This resulted in a book entitled *New Trends and Recurring Issues in the Study of Religion* (Paris and Budapest: L'Harmattan, 2014), edited by Abraham Kovacs and James L. Cox. This panel reflects on the trends identified by the contributors to the book and on the recurring issues they emphasized by analyzing the at times conflicting understandings of the field of Religious Studies that characterize Eastern and Western European contexts.

**James L. Cox:** The debate between Theology and Religious Studies in Britain as demonstrating a radically divergent approach from Eastern Europe  
The twenty-first century began with the landmark book published by Timothy Fitzgerald entitled *The Ideology of Religious Studies*, which outlined the theological underpinnings for the development of the academic study of religion, largely in Western European contexts. Fitzgerald controversially called for the academy to drop the term “religion” altogether, if what they mean by the term refers to culture rather than theology. During the first fifteen years of the new century, various responses have been developed in Britain to Fitzgerald’s argument that underscore the radically divergent approaches to the academic study of religion represented by the contributors from Eastern Europe to new trends and recurring issues in the Study of Religion. This paper analyzes the debate over “religion” in Britain in light of the theological trends displayed by Eastern European scholars.

**Abraham Kovacs:** On the border lines of religious studies and theologies of world religions

This paper is to offer some reflection on how often exclusive current American and Western European trends intend to dominate the field of religion with a dismissal of other approaches to the study of religion including issues that may rise out of philosophy of religion and theological reflections of not only Christian but many other world religions. The research paper relies on the experience of the debates in the Hungarian Association for the Study of Religion and some Asian approaches to the study of religion where the presence of a distanced, and objective form of the insider voice articulated in the respective theologies

of world religions is peacefully accepted. The paper offers some insights to the philosophical/methodological biases of some Western approaches which often are inimical towards all forms of theological reflections if it comes to Christianity but more lenient if it is a world religion from Asia.

**Bulcsú K. Hoppál:** “Primordality paradox”: what does the hypothetical understanding of religion imply?

In the postmodern discourse on religion there is one point held in common among many authors: the semantic content of the word “religion” varies depending on the situation and context of the discussion. This insight implies at least four further perceptions. Firstly, almost every religion tends to be eternal. This is what I call the “eternity paradox” of religions. Secondly, religions change notably in time, while all religions tend to be limitless/timeless. This phenomenon is what I call the “continuity/discontinuity paradox”. Thirdly, the criteria under which one can call a phenomenon by the term religion again varies from culture to culture. This is what I call the “definition paradox”. Fourthly, the methodological concerns within the scientific study of religion show that religious studies is extremely interested in historical roots, in the forms of religions and in their truth-claims. Contemporary scholars of religion seek ancient (atavistic) roots and forms of religions. This is what I call the “primordality paradox”. In my paper I will argue that the first insight necessarily implies the further four points, and I will discuss their significance for the current study of religion in Eastern Europe.

## **New Trends in the Study of Japanese Religions**

### **Organizers: Christoph Kleine, Elisabetta Porcu**

The editors (Elisabetta Porcu and Paul Watt) and members of the international advisory board of the *Journal of Religion in Japan* (Brill) are delighted to present their journal, focusing on the theme “New Trends in the Study of Japanese Religions.” Since the *Journal* was launched in 2012, there have been new significant developments in the study of religion in Japan, and discussions on well-established topics have been re-examined. Against this background, we would like to organize a roundtable discussion introduced by a few very short presentations by leading international scholars in order to explore selected topics such as “experimental” religion in Japan; social movements and post-Fukushima developments; and religion and the secular. This open session would be a welcome opportunity to review current research on Japanese religions and look further into the future. Moreover, since the time for discussion in organized panels is usually

limited, this would also allow to tackle in more detail some relevant topics presented in panels on religions in Japan.

## **The New Zealand Attitudes and Values Study: A Focus on Religion**

### **Panel Chair: John Shaver**

New Zealand is a relatively small Western nation of 4.3 million people. This symposium showcases recent findings from the New Zealand Attitudes and Values Study (NZAVS). The NZAVS is a twenty-year longitudinal national probability study of social attitudes, personality and health outcomes. The NZAVS is led by Dr Chris Sibley, and is unique to New Zealand. The NZAVS has now been running for five years, and we have retained over 4,000 people over this time period. The talks in this symposium cover various aspects of the NZAVS, including a talk about what the study is and lessons learned for conducting (or at least starting) a longitudinal panel study, as well as examples showcasing different methods of analysis and research questions that can be uniquely answered using complex multilevel and longitudinal national samples.

### **Chris Sibley: What is the NZAVS?**

This talk introduces the New Zealand Attitudes and Values Study (NZAVS), describes the decisions made in developing the study, how the sample frames were collected, how the survey was administered, procedures for retaining people, how we select or take suggestions for instruments, the multilevel structure of the data and how we link it to area unit information provided by the NZ census, how we organize and provide access to our dataset, opportunities for collaboration, and perhaps most importantly, how we do all this on a fairly tight budget. The NZAVS has retained more than 4,000 people over five years, has attracted considerable interest from various government departments and council research units, and generated more than sixty published papers. The purpose of the talk is to provide an overview of what the NZAVS is, and to offer suggestions and “lessons learned” for how to conduct similar longitudinal studies in other nations.

**Geoffrey Troughton:** What is the future of New Zealand churches? Evidence from a national longitudinal survey

This talk considers the future of New Zealand churches, based on analysis of survey responses drawn from the New Zealand Attitudes and Values Study (NZAVS). Our analysis focuses on the relationship between religious identification and age, and highlights varied patterns within different religious groupings. We describe three important findings, and discuss their implications for the future

of New Zealand churches: (1) NZ Roman Catholics show, remarkably, strength in the younger and older age groups, with weaknesses in middle adulthood; (2) a similar “age gap” is observed for mainline protestant identification where religious identification is, however, weaker than among Catholics; (3) Christians who do not identify with a tradition (Christian NFDs) show the strongest religious identification of any category, and there is no “age gap” among Christian NFDs. This later result is surprising because it is unclear where Christian NFDs are deriving their strong religious identifications.

**John Shaver:** The fitness costs and benefits of ritual behavior: the Alloparental Signaling model

Substantial empirical work has demonstrated that costs paid in ritual return high levels of cooperation as measured in economic games; however, research to date has failed to demonstrate how ritual behavior directly impacts fitness. Here we propose the Alloparenting Signaling model and suggest that because ritual behavior embeds people in highly cooperative communities, religious children receive more alloparenting than secular children, and thus religious people can achieve higher fertility than secular people. Using data from the NZAVS, we show that (1) religious New Zealanders have higher fertility, (2) these fertility effects are in addition to standard ecological life history determinants, (3) ritual behavior is negatively correlated with hours spent engaging in childcare, and (4) non-reproductive religious people invest more in children than their non-reproductive secular counterparts. These findings suggest that religion in New Zealand may be part of a cooperative breeding strategy that results in a high number of offspring.

**Joseph Bulbulia:** What is the dollar value of religious charity?

Charity counts among the defining features of humanity, yet its psychological underpinnings remain unclear. We investigate the relationship between charity and religious identification in a large and diverse sample of New Zealanders ( $n=6,518$ ). In contrast to previous research, our study rigorously controls for a host of demographic variables and for social desirability biases. We find that high levels of religious identification are associated with four times the financial charity of low or zero religious identification. Highly religiously identified people are also twice as likely to volunteer. We then assess the practical economic impact of high religious identification by converting the charitable tendencies of religious people into dollar values, and estimate economic losses resulting from secularization.

## No Human is an Island: Natures, Norms and Narratives

**Jeppe Sinding Jensen**

Humans have two natures: the biological and the socio-cultural. Without the first, they would not exist and without the latter, they would not exist as human. Humans are social and cultural creatures and they have an inclination towards religion. For millennia, the modes of the socio-cultural existence of humans were shaped in relation to religion. Ludwig Feuerbach explored how sacralized human projections exerted their force on human, socio-cultural existence in indirect, reciprocal ways. Max Weber later explained how “humanity is suspended in webs of signification”. These webs have mostly consisted in religions as ideologies, discourses with known authors (more or less) and myths that think themselves in humans (without their knowledge of it). These webs are human social constructions that are transmitted in narrative and discourse, and solidified in norms and institutions. They present themselves as “what goes without saying” and they modulate and regulate human thought, emotion and behavior in normative cognition. The human cognitive machinery consists of an innate fast biological system (1) and an acquired socio-cultural system (2) that is modulated and regulated by norms and institutions. These are what Émile Durkheim termed “social facts”. They exert massive influence over human minds; one of these now being the fashionable idea that the present time is more individual and that individualization is the key to understanding the present social, cultural and religious forms. Individualization, then, may be studied as a “social fact” that has a history (not to be exercised here). Any individual unavoidably needs internalization of collective ideologies (as pointed out by Peter L. Berger & Thomas Luckmann). This demonstrates the simultaneously public and private character of religion – designated as “I-religion” and “E-religion”. Religiosity was never individualistic nor does “spiritualization” seem to be, as current conceptualizations of individualization appear remarkably similar. This raises that question of “How private is the individual?” Bringing three philosophers and a psychologist into the discussion may help clarify the issue: Donald Davidson on the nature of the subjective, John McDowell on the role of tradition in human cognition, Ludwig Wittgenstein on the idea of private language and Michael Tomasello on the cultural origins of human cognition. It is obvious that the present world offers more in terms of choice, liberty and rights to individuals but that should not lead to the conclusion that humans are islands. Individualization is a discursive formation: as individuals we would not even be able to think of ourselves without shared language, shared norms and shared institutions. Entertaining notions about individualization may thus also be a way of “cloning the mind”.

## Nurturing the Pious Body: Diet Patterns and the Dynamics of Religion and Culture

### Panel Chair: Bernadett Bigalke

Bodies of different condition need to be nurtured in a certain way, be it the bodies of communities or those of individuals. Instead of presenting diet rules and habits as part of specific religions we will take into account a broader variety of factors and situations which necessitate negotiations in the relationship between food and religion. This panel proposes to contribute to the growing research field of “food and religion” by examining the relationship between diet patterns and emerging dynamics fueled by tensions between the demand for an exclusive pious lifestyle and efforts to be included in wider strata, i. e., struggles concerning group formation. Our aim is to challenge typical contrasts such as pure/impure and ethically prescribed/condemned by studying the dynamics of diet and religion. The examples illustrating these dynamics are based on conflicts over food taboos, food ways and commensality.

**Bernadett Bigalke:** Theosophical bodies and the horrors of slaughterhouses Using the example of the Theosophical Societies around 1900 I will present how their spokespersons argued for a vegetarian diet with direct reference to physical aspects of theosophical anthropology, especially the concept of multi-layered bodies. Notwithstanding the ostensible use of Indian body concepts, this mix of ethical and “occult” argumentation and practical advice was written by Westerners for Westerners. Somatic, energetic and dietetic concepts merge here into one another. Living as a vegetarian was expected of a veritable theosophist at that time or was a goal to strive for. This ideal practice was used to set apart the “new men” of the coming “new age” from ordinary people.

**Jörg Albrecht:** “Vegetarians are murderers!” Alternative diets and cultural dynamics

The popularity of contemporary alternative diets like vegetarianism, veganism, whole food and organically produced food consumption has grown tremendously throughout the last decades. To date no consensus has been found with regard to the question whether the character of these dietary practices and related conceptions is religious, quasi-religious or “essentially non-religious” (M. Hamilton). They did, however, originate in what one might call the “cultic milieu” (C. Campbell), a cultural underground of society which covers multiple, related elements ranging from unorthodox science and medicine to alternative religions and spirituality. In my talk, I will outline some basic analytical layers of diet in general which enfold more dimensions than just consumption of food. They will be used to examine processes of “diffusion of innovations” (E. M. Rogers) in alternative dietary conceptions and practices in order to understand how they

helped to establish new values, social structures and procedures and thus contributed to cultural change and diversification.

**Thomas Krutak:** Troubles with the “holy cow”? Diet management among Indian Christians

The bitter altercation in regard to cow slaughter and cow protection in India has been studied as a major issue in triggering riots and as a factor in constituting Hindu and Muslim respective identities due to confrontational national aspirations. Less attention has been given to its impact on the Christian community. Since Christians are basically neither bound to any command of animal or flower sacrifice nor restricted in meat consumption, there is no *prima facie* answer as to whether they should obey the social and legal demands concerning cow protection or not. So is there no space left for a distinctly Christian diet position? To examine diet restrictions among Christians in India I will concentrate on examples demonstrating how food habits trouble Christian converts and distinguish them from other communities. This will reveal the use of diet patterns for status management and the making of boundaries.

## **Of Yellow Teaching and Black Faith: Entangled Knowledge Cultures and the Creation of Religious Traditions**

**Karenina Kollmar-Paulenz**

The spread of Tibetan Buddhism to the Mongolian regions in the late sixteenth century did not only result in often violent confrontations between Tibetan Buddhist monks and Mongolian religious specialists, the male and female shamans, but also led to a reification process of local religious practices and concepts resulting in the creation of a single tradition on the discourse level. In my presentation I will show how the “teaching of the shamans” has come to be formed as both a concept and a practice in early-modern Inner Asia. By analyzing its discursive formation and entangled historical configurations, from late sixteenth century Mongolia to late nineteenth century Buryatia, the lecture aims to shed light on the question how religious traditions are discursively created and socially affirmed.

## **On Revolutions, Paradigms and Other Liminal Narratives**

**Panel Chair: David Atwood**

To create order in time, one needs to separate and differentiate time periods. This applies to individuals, peer groups as well as to societies in general. By focusing

on “turns” – liminal narratives in different contexts ranging from conversion stories (in individual religious lives) to paradigm changes (in science) to revolutions (in politics), to crises (in economics) and epoch changes (in historiography) – the panel does not try to answer the quest of the legitimation of a particular narrative but concentrates on different techniques and strategies of the positioning in time. It focuses on the discourse of religion in the twentieth century by taking its “turns”, e.g. the “hour zero”, “1989”, the newly announced (and denounced) “Arab Spring” or “financial crisis” as temporal difference markers that contribute to a mythopoetic landscape of the modern historiography of religion.

**David Atwood:** The politics of the origin revisited? The Axial Age and the contribution of historiography to European religious identities

The concept of the Axial Age breakthrough allows an insight into European mythopoesis of Modernity and techniques of time diagnosis. According to philosophers and sociologists since Alfred Weber and Karl Jaspers, what we find as a cultural renewal in the universal breakthrough of the Axial Age (around 800 to 200 BCE) is always what is needed most for the future of humanity. Be it reflexivity (Jaspers et al., Eisenstadt, Bellah), tolerance (Karen Armstrong), a division between the immanent and the transcendent (Charles Taylor) or the transition of a mythical to a logical worldview (Jan Assmann), the axial breakthrough was usually constructed as the mythicized epoch that provided the major capability that is usually presented as modernity’s salvation. In this view, the liminal narrative of the Axial Age breakthrough stands for one of the major historiographical accounts that contribute to the construction of “religion” in “modernity”.

**Stephanie Gripenrog:** Revolution revisited? How the “Arab Spring” challenges European narratives on revolution, democracy and religion

In 2011 a new narrative appeared in the media, telling the uprisings in the “Arab World” as the story of an “Arab Spring” or a new, Arabic version of “Revolution”. To make them understandable for a European audience it tied these – broadly unexpected – happenings to the broader context of European experiences with political turning points: reports in Germany for example compared the “Arab Spring” with the French Revolution, 1848 or with 1989. Furthermore, they turned the story of the “Arab Spring” into the story of an “Arab Autumn” as soon as Islamic forces appeared to be the strongest new political force in these processes of transformation. This paper aims at taking a closer look at the framework of European liminal narratives within which the “Arab Spring” was placed and how the relation of religion, revolution and democracy was constructed in that context.

**Jens Kugele:** Exodus to Palestine: narrating liminality in European Zionism  
Around 1900, the diagnosis of a deep crisis in European Jewry led religious, cultural and political intellectuals to rethink the future of Jewish life in Europe and

beyond. In this context of liminality, the literature of early Zionism offered new perspectives on and redefinitions of the Jewish collective in the national age. Drawing on a wide range of genres, these writings presented visions of a new Jewish identity on the basis of a (re-)discovered cultural and national foundation. In contrast to more traditional voices of religious orthodoxy, supporters of a territorial solution outside of Europe conceived of an explicitly “secular” program, while at the same time drawing on the mythopoetic reservoir of Jewish history. This paper investigates the religious motifs in these narratives of renewal and revolution as they challenge notions of religion, ethnicity, and secular politics.

**Christoph Lucas Zapf:** Changing narratives: metaphysical charges of “the Market” in the financial crisis

The term “the Market” refers to more than a mechanism of exchange. The Market can be a guarantor for wealth. And the Market can be a strict, even punishing entity. The paper describes these mythopoetic narratives of “the Market” and their transformation in the course of the recent financial crisis (2008–2010). A theoretical overview is presented about the “more” of the Market in the form of metaphysical charges: the leading narratives being the myth of Market-salvation – Smith’s “invisible hand” – and “the Market” as a mechanism to cope with contingencies – the mighty Market creating precedents, structuring decisions. The research then turns to the media discourse from the last financial crisis to pinpoint the new nature of “the Market”: the change from being a benevolent force towards a fierce force, outweighing individuals, companies, bossing around politics. The crisis serves as a liminal narrative for the metaphysical charge of the Market.

## **On the Management Mode of Chinese Theravada Buddhism**

**Xiaoyun Zheng**

The successful existence and continuous development of Chinese Theravada Buddhism in the secular life of minorities are closely related to its unique management mode. This mode concerns the management on Sangha, monasteries and stupas. Particularly, a unique pyramid-like management structure appears, characterized by its focus on the grassroots level and integration of religion into the social management system, which effectively promote the continuous development of Buddhism in the local society.

## Orthodox Christian Extremism: Theoretical Background and Implementation (Ideology and Practice)

### Panel Chair: Liudmyla Fylypovych

Though mass media attention concentrates on Islamic extremism, the twentieth century has provided numerous examples of Orthodox Christian extremism. The twenty-first century demonstrates an explosion of neo-pagan and Orthodox extremist views in Russia grounded on a syncretic theory of a “Russian World”. Used as an ideology and mass manipulation tool, Russian Orthodoxy becomes a form of totalitarization of all life’s spheres, a threat to civil society. This fundamentalist system is currently implemented in the political life of Russia and neighboring countries. The religion-based “Russian World” does raise national pride and promotes the national and religious identification of Russians, but for other peoples, even those of Orthodox faiths, it has become potentially conflicting because it considers Russian Orthodoxy superior to other religions and its believers as having a special right to ultimate truth, and persecutes other religions by legislative prohibition, seizure of churches, and physical destruction of clergy and believers. The most expressive manifestations of today’s Orthodox extremism are the justified-by-religion crimes in the Crimea and Eastern Ukraine.

#### **Liudmyla Fylypovych:** Religious ideology that ruins the world

The Orthodox church/Russian state doctrine “Russian World” has become the ideology of modern Russian neo-imperialism used to re-conquer countries liberated from the Soviets in 1991. The heart of “Russian World” is national Orthodox Christianity. In 2014, the Russian People’s Council adopted the “Russian Identity Declaration” which states: “Every Russian shall be an Orthodox”, thus violating human rights and freedoms. “Russian World is where Russians are!” – This geopolitical justification was used during the annexation of the Crimea and Donbas, where Moscow “protected” Russians as co-religionists, and can be used in any country. The separatist regions of the Donbas have declared Russian Orthodoxy as their “state religion”. Other religions are prohibited, their believers persecuted and discriminated against. The Donbas gang “Russian Orthodox Army” systematically closes non-Orthodox churches. This social experiment creates Russian national and religious dictatorship in the conquered region – an occurrence Europe has not seen for centuries. The world waits for new “initiatives” from the Orthodox president.

**Anatoliy Kolodnyy:** “Russian World”: the spiritual foundation of Russia’s imperial politics

The forerunner of today’s “Russian World” was the fifteenth century Orthodox Christian ideology of “Moscow – the Third Rome”. Its goal was the legitimization of its claims to the Byzantine legacy justified via the concept of a special spiritual

mission of *Moscovia*. With the rise of the Moscow Patriarchate in 1589, the concept became a guiding ideology of national policy (later implemented in the imperial credo of “Orthodoxy – Autocracy – Nation”), and its hostility to Catholicism and other denominations. After the collapse of the USSR, the Russian Orthodox Church found itself to be the only Russian institution that had maintained and controlled the entire space of the former tsarist and Soviet empires. Justifying its actions by reference to the legacy of “historical Rus”, the Moscow Patriarchy actively, often aggressively, spreads and imposes the “Russian World” on all peoples which have been involved in the history of Russia, including other religions’ believers. The goal of “Russian World” is the return of imperial grandeur.

**Jonathan Cahana:** Transformation and accommodation: proto-Orthodox Christianity as an adaptive reform of Gnosticism

The emergence of Christianity is frequently portrayed as the result of a continuous struggle and conflict both between and within competing parties. The classical approach sees an early pure and unified Christianity from which heresies later splinter. Walter Bauer proposed a different influential scheme: a conflict between competing simultaneous Christianities. Much more recently, Karen King suggested that “heresy,” and specifically “Gnosticism,” never existed except as rhetorical terms that were nevertheless crucial in the development and demarcation of normative Christianity. Engaging the arguments of both Bauer and King, I will attempt a new paradigm: reading Christianity as an adaptive reform of Gnosticism. Since recent research has emphasized how Christianity celebrates but simultaneously accommodates most of its subversive elements (e.g. Loughlin, 2), I will attempt an understanding of proto-Orthodox Christianity as adaptive transformation of an originally subversive gnostic Christianity made in order to reduce its tensions with the surrounding Graeco-Roman culture.

## Othering in Salafi Islam: Examples, Effects and Explanations

**Panel Chair: Susanne Olsson**

Salafism as a new religious movement in contemporary Islam has become a worldwide phenomenon. Although Salafism in different parts of the world displays variations and adaptations to local contexts, certain themes are recurring, such as strict literalism in relation to the scriptures, a limitation set to the use of human reason in interpreting these scriptures, and a stress on the duty to imitate the example of the Prophet Muhammad and the “pious forefathers” in everyday life. The panel, however, focuses on another, also recurring trait: that of explicit othering. Salafis define themselves in opposition to diverse “others”, which

include both non-Muslims and Muslims considered to be deviants from the “straight path”. The papers in the panel address different aspects of this othering, its causes and its effects, in texts, in discourse and in the ritualization of everyday life.

**Jonas Svensson:** The other festival: Salafi hostility towards Mawlid

While celebrations of Muhammad’s birthday are common among Muslims worldwide the festival has come under attack during the last century. It holds a prominent place as a negative “other” in Salafi activism. The main emic reason given for Salafi hostility is that mawlid constitutes a *bida’*, i. e., an illegitimate innovation, without support in the practice of the first generations of Muslims. The academic study of Salafism tends to accept this stated reason at face value. This paper, however, aims to move a bit beyond. It argues that celebrating mawlid becomes particularly problematic for Salafis not only because it constitutes an innovation, but also because it provides a potential context for religious innovation. In addition, mawlid becomes particularly provocative because the celebration’s traditional religious justification entails a way of relating to the divine that is a direct challenge to a Salafi ideal of absolute deference.

**Emin Poljarevic:** Clash of religious interpretations in Muslim Bosnia

This paper presents a case study of the dynamics of religious disagreement within the Muslim community in contemporary Bosnia. Since the Bosnian war (1992–1995), we have witnessed growing tensions between the traditional Muslim religious establishment, *Islamska Zajednica* (Islamic Community), and Salafi groups’ (for the region) non-traditional religious beliefs and practices. These tensions are manifested on several levels, ranging from verbal and physical disputes in local mosques (several resulting in individuals being murdered) to public disagreements concerning the “correct” interpretation of religious scriptures. The dynamics of disagreement are nevertheless rooted in a more profound process of social change. The paper will discuss the most relevant social changes in relation to the expressed religious tensions. The ambition here is to outline the prospects of the development of a sustainable pluralistic Muslim community in Bosnia.

**Susanne Olsson:** The relevance of medieval Islamic sources in contemporary “re-Hanbalization”

The paper pursues an analysis of contemporary Hanbali oriented interpretations, with the thematic focus being “othering”, concerning how people are categorized into “us” and “them”. More specifically, the paper addresses how medieval sources are used in order to authenticate contemporary interpretations of othering. The paper probes into the question of how such sources are used, what is selected from them and rejected (reinterpreted); it will also address the question why such sources are considered relevant to use instead of returning straight to

scripture (the Qur'an or Sunnah). One aspect of the paper is thus to investigate the reasons why and how medieval sources have such an impact on contemporary interpretations. This will be analyzed as a part of an increasing "Hanbalization" on behalf of many contemporary fundamentalist inclined interpreters.

## **Pentecostalism and Charismatic Christianity in Southeast Asia: Church – Nation – World**

### **Panel Chairs: Giovanni Maltese, Katja Rakow**

Studies on Pentecostal/Charismatic movements in Southeast Asia have so far received only limited attention despite their public profile in Southeast Asian societies. Pentecostal/Charismatic Christians show a rising visibility in the public sphere – may it be via media, public prayer rallies and intercessory marches in mega-cities, through active candidacies in local and national political settings, or through community and social engagement. As an effect of the same global Pentecostal discourse that posits believers as vehicles of the full gospel to their immediate surroundings and the world, others have opted to stay out of a deeper worldly engagement and found new meaning in concentrating on individual transformation, holiness, evangelization, and building their own congregation and thereby giving them a higher profile in the public sphere as well. The interdisciplinary panel presents current research and case studies that interrogate the role of these religious movements in contemporary Southeast Asian societies.

**Esther Berg:** "Model citizens for the glory of god": engaging Singaporean society

In 1975, Lee Kuan Yew, then prime minister of Singapore, openly acknowledged the contribution of Christian organizations in bringing forth outstanding citizens. The same time witnessed unprecedented growth of Christianity in Singapore in the wake of the so-called "charismatic renewals." The sheer number of conversions in the 1980s and a perceived growing "religious revivalism" prompted the state to reconsider the role of Christianity in Singaporean society; charismatic Christianity in particular came to be considered a divisive force rather than a contribution to nation-building. In 2002, the charismatic City Harvest Church began to pursue what they understood as a "cultural mandate" aiming to be "relevant to contemporary culture" and to "serv[e] our society [...] as successful model citizens." Drawing on the City Harvest Church as an exemplary case, this paper will explore how charismatic Christians negotiate their place within Singaporean society, a place characterized by a peculiar double-relation of symbiosis and opposition.

**Matthias Deininger:** Negotiating difference and belonging in a plural society: Christian imaginaries and the state in Singapore

Over the last decades Singapore has become a culturally-significant hub for Christianity in Southeast Asia and, as such, is commonly claimed to be the Christian “Antioch of Asia”. The continued growth of evangelical Christianity in Singapore and its increasing public engagement and visibility, however, challenge the very ideas of the urban public sphere and the “secular” nature of the multi-confessional and multi-ethnic Singaporean polity. In an environment where the government exercises strong legal control over all religious matters, Christians are thus forced to develop flexible strategies to negotiate and translate their ethical positions and beliefs both within Singaporean society and in relation to the Singaporean state. This paper explores how Christians in Singapore realize the image of Singapore as the Christian “Antioch of Asia” and find ways to locate themselves within the nation as a rooted aspect of the national community without losing their evangelical and outward-oriented character.

**Esmeralda F. Sanchez:** The Weekly Appointment with El Shaddai DWXI-PPFI: a way of being church

This paper discusses the central activity of the El Shaddai DWXI-PPFI, the “Weekly Appointment with El Shaddai” and its function within the broader practices of this worldwide unparalleled indigenous Catholic-charismatic mass movement. The researcher employs participant observation and in-depth interviews with the members of the movement. Findings show that the most awaited part in this activity is the healing message of Mariano “Brother Mike” Velarde, the founder of the movement. Healing functions as a symbol that includes individual as well as collective well-being, which translates in social-engagement and nation-building projects. Accordingly, the words of god are seen as the foundation of any community and of all life.

**Giovanni Maltese:** Conditional cash transfer, contradictoriness and Pentecostal politics in the Philippines: a proposal for a genealogical ethnography

The Philippine Conditional Cash Transfer program requires its beneficiaries to attend Family Development Sessions, facilitated by NGOs. In Dumaguete, Philippines, the facilitators of such sessions are mostly Pentecostal pastors. What is Pentecostals’ place in Philippine politics and society? Drawing on various stereotypes by which Pentecostalism is described in public discourse, Pentecostal articulations on poverty and prosperity oscillate between appropriating and rejecting social and political categories. This contradictoriness translates in serious methodological problems. I submit that Pentecostal politics can only be described through a thorough historization of said articulations – a genealogy of their signifiers and names. It is exactly this contradictoriness that shows Pentecostals’

determination to participate in the competition for interpretative dominance in the discourse about status quo and social change.

**Susanne Rodemeier:** An analysis of sermons in a charismatic church on Java, Indonesia

Looking at messages of sermons in charismatic mega churches is of high relevance. First and foremost, it is important because every Sunday several thousand believers receive an input on what and how they should think. Secondly, on Java, people repeatedly mention the appealing topics of the sermons as reason for joining a charismatic church. Therefore, I assume that the ideas, descriptions, and interpretations of the preacher are becoming part of his listeners' thinking and acting. An analysis of sermons from 2014 reveals topics that particularly appeal to Christian people on Java. Therefore the focus of the paper is on the ways in which topics such as Javanese manners, democratic elections, and the economy of Korea are presented in the Family of God Church (Gereja Keluarga Allah) in the central-Javanese town Surakarta.

**Joel A. Tejado:** Pentecostal civic engagement in the public sphere: a case of a Pentecostal ministry in the slum area of Baguio City

Civic engagement has been increasingly recognized as one of the resource capitals that empowers the lives of the poor. Yet, research about the civic engagement of Pentecostals in Southeast Asia, particularly in the Philippines, remains understudied and invisible in much of the literature on civic engagement. This paper attempts to investigate the impact of Pentecostal/Charismatic religion on civil society and asks what the study of "spirit empowered" religion contributes to our understanding of the role of religion in human society. We utilize a quantitative and qualitative approach of enquiry to flesh out empirical evidence that reveals what Filipino Pentecostals believe and practise about civic engagement. We provide a case study of our findings to further point out that Pentecostals in the Philippines are not on the "sideline" of civic engagement but one of the religious players in the creation of what they see as a just and loving society.

**Giovanni Maltese, Katja Rakow:** Responses

## **Pentecostalism and the Practice of Religions in Nigeria: Adaptation and Transformation**

**Panel Chair: Danoye Oguntola Laguda**

In Nigeria, Pentecostalism has become an unconventional trait of all religious beliefs and practices. It is synonymous with Christianity; however, a critical evaluation of its features and characteristics shows that it is now a common feature of other religions in Nigeria. Pentecostalism is built on spiritual engagements. It

has come to be seen as one of the most dynamic movements as well as a formidable force of change in human spirituality leading to social and economic development of both the nation and the person(s). In Nigeria, this brand of religious participation has altered the way individuals reconstruct “self” in religious participation and values, as well as the social and economic practices of groups and corporate organizations. This study seeks to explore reasons for the appropriation of Pentecostal features and characteristics by religions as practiced in Nigeria. Qualitative and quantitative research methods shall be employed by scholars of various backgrounds to explore the thesis that Pentecostalism has become a model for all religions in Nigeria even though it has a Christian origin.

**Adeoluwa Okunade:** Church music and music in the church: a contemporary Pentecostal phenomenon in Nigerian Churches

The Pentecostalism fire in Nigerian churches is a wild one that has consumed the traditional music in the churches to the extent that most mainstream churches no longer lay emphasis on or cherish the church music as given by the early missionaries. This new experience queries what could be responsible for this. Is it modernity, spirituality, or identity problems? This paper looks at the elements and differences that constitute church music and music in the church using four different churches – three mainstream churches and one Pentecostal – to draw its conclusion. With bibliographical evidence and audio-visual examples, the paper justifies the title.

**Atinuke Okunade:** Reflections of Pentecostalism in Nigerian Baptist Churches

The Baptist mission came to Nigeria in 1850 from America as an Evangelical church. The order of worship service remained evangelical cum orthodox until the last two and a half decades in which a wave of Pentecostalism spread over all the churches under the Nigerian Baptist Convention. These Pentecostal reflections have become so prominent in every item of the order of worship service that new entrants into the church may not agree that the Convention is not a member of the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria, an umbrella body that brings all Pentecostal churches together in Nigeria. This paper looks at these reflections as against the heritage handed over to the Nigerian Baptist Church by the American missionary. With participant observation of more than three decades, this paper submits its results with bibliographical evidence.

**Danoye Oguntola Laguda:** Evaluating Pentecostalism among African religious groups in Nigeria

Pentecostalism has become the “unconventional” trait of major religious groups in Nigeria. Pentecostalism has come to be seen as one of the most dynamic movements as well as a formidable force of change in human spirituality in Ni-

geria. This brand of religious participation is altering not just the way individuals reconstruct “self” in religious participation and values, but it is also changing the social and economic practices of religious groups. This leads to a much more fluid service than the old styles. As a genre in Christian spiritual models, Pentecostalism emphasizes spiritual experiences and encounters that are appealing to post-colonial Nigeria where poverty, diseases and illiteracy are common elements that challenge the life of the people. These traits are no longer limited to the Christian groups in Nigeria. African traditional groups are not left out in the efforts to set up “prayer markets”, healing programs, appropriating the media, etc., that are the basic characteristics of Pentecostals.

**Mobolaji Oyebisi Ajibade:** *My Church is Sick: filmic construction of intersection of Pentecostal spirituality and prosperity in the era of globalization*  
Pentecostal spirituality and prosperity are topical issues that have been addressed in many academic fields, but the space they occupy in cinematography has not been given adequate scholarly attention. This paper engages the construction of Pentecostal spirituality and prosperity in one of the most popular Christian home video films among the Yoruba of southwestern Nigeria, entitled, *My Church is Sick*. This Christian home video film was selected, transcribed and analyzed within the theoretical framework of sociology of religion. It concludes that cinematography is part of the repertoire of Pentecostal spirituality and prosperity and the notions have become re-contextualized, reinserted and re-imagined within discourses about social and philosophical change.

## **Performance of Language: Space and Time in Meister Eckhart and Modism**

### **Panel Chair: Markus Vinzent**

Looking specifically at the discourse crossings of Meister Eckhart, Thomas of Erfurt and the wider movement known as Modism, the panel will ask how the elements that converge in the fertile environment of the period of history in which Eckhart lived still inform the way we read texts today. Becoming aware of our contemporary presuppositions and methodologies, the panel will consider medieval religious discourse that challenges categorical notions of space and time as structural moments of grammar. Accessing the meaning of space and time in late medieval religious thinking will provide a new way of viewing forms of cultural and religious changes that arose out of discourse constellations, social proximity (as in the Universities of Erfurt and Paris), social mobility, and media distribution between such centres. The panel will bring together philosophy, theology,

migration and cultural theories, and contemporary art to dynamically assess these questions.

**Oliver Davies:** Creativity, Meister Eckhart, representation and language

The paper explores the limitations of language, poetry and art in representing or interpreting concepts associated with Meister Eckhart's "mystical theology", and how such limitations can give way – in the material and by means of such limits – to something beyond itself.

**Shuhong Zheng:** The "Now" that goes beyond eternity

What Eckhart means by "now" is no longer confined to the concept of time, but indicates the presence of God. By differentiating being from becoming, creation from formation, Eckhart radically removes the concept of time from the philosophical and theological speculation of God, and thereby allocates temporality to the realm of becoming and formation once and for all. Hence creation is to be considered in the sense of conferring existence on nonexistence in the "now". The conceptualization of "now" in Eckhart overcomes the polarity between the ephemeral and the eternal, the changing and the everlasting, breaks through the boundary of eternity, and brings us back to this world. Differing from Heidegger and Derrida, Eckhart's ontological thought is unfolded in a scholastic framework and formulated in both religious and philosophical language, which enables "being" to be revealed in the "now" – a concept which is more intriguing than what philosophers mean by "time".

**Taery Kim:** Performing time and Eckhart

The concept of time in Meister Eckhart regards time as the precondition of eternity. This is expounded by the concepts fullness of time and now, or now of eternity ("vülledē der zît", "nû", "nû der êwicheit", in Latin "nunc", "nunc aeternitatis"), with which Eckhart describes that the move from the division and multiplicity of time to the simplicity and unity of eternity occurs in the ground of the soul in human nature, in time. Eckhart's eternity, therefore, is eternity in time. This concept transforms into praxis through several "Forgettance I" art installations and performance works, which stage life as a performance in time-as-body: "Time.artworks" that show that the function of time is necessarily an embodied experience in which the individual lives within eternity in every instance of time; and "The Hours and Forgettance I" art installation and performance works, which stage life as a performance in time-as-body, Time.

## Perspectives on Religious Studies in India

### Panel Chair: Åke Sander

The late Joseph O'Connell, whose work will be commemorated in this panel, recognized the striking disparity between the prominence of religious factors and the rarity of scientific study of the phenomena in South Asia. The panel will discuss central concepts for the academic study of religion in India including secularism, transcendence, knowledge, devotion, and caste. Religious traditions involve claims about the world and the place and role of human beings within it: about God(s) or transcendent reality, about the nature of the self and its relation to the divine or ultimate reality, about the possibility of an afterlife, appropriate action and behavior in light of these facts. If the academic study of religion should be impartial and in principle comparative, as O'Connell suggested, then studying central concepts and truth-claims of religious traditions is a legitimate component of it, as well as the critical evaluations of such terms and claims.

**Åke Sander, Clemens Cavallin:** Changes of the views on religion in higher education in India

This paper will present preliminary results from an interview study performed at Banaras Hindu University (BHU) in 2014 which focuses on the views of university teachers and researchers on the place, role, and function of teaching and research on religion at BHU. The study is part of a comparative project in which a similar study will be performed in 2015 at Pondicherry University. Main research questions are: What is, according to faculty, the situation of religion at Indian universities today, both as an object of study (religious studies) and as a phenomenon on campus? Do they think the place and role of religion have been changing over the years? What is their evaluation of the present situation and the changes? What is their view of the ideal situation of the place and role for religion and the study of religion?

**Marzenna Jakubczak:** Knowledge and devotion in Dharmic tradition: the case of Sāṃkhya-Yoga

The paper discusses the dichotomy of knowledge and devotion as a subject of the study of religion, arguing that they are both not just compatible but rather strongly interrelated and indispensable factors of spiritual development as it is conceptualized in the non-theistic tradition of Sāṃkhya-Yoga. In the first part, the paper briefly reviews the understanding of “discriminating knowledge” (*vivekakyāti*) and “devotion” (*bhakti*), or “meditation on God” (*īśvarapranidhāna*), in the oldest preserved texts of the classical Sāṃkhya and Yoga. The second part of the paper takes a closer look at the Kapila Maṭha aśram – a contemporary phenomenon recognized as an attempt to revive the ancient ṛṣi Kapila's tradition

– being an interesting example of the conjunction of both cognitive and pious Dharmic aspirations.

**Gregory D. Alles:** The persistence of the tribal: Adivasi cultural tropes in the Pragat Purushottam Sanstha

The paper focuses on the relation between the Hindu and the tribal tradition in Gujarat, exploring how India's indigenous peoples have negotiated their encounters with religions of caste Hindu communities. The Pragat Purushottam Sanstha is a cousin lineage to the BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha. The Pragat Purushottam Sanstha is limited to Gujarat, with headquarters in central Gujarat, but a focus of its activities has been among adivasi people in the Chhotaudepur District, eastern Gujarat. Here Pragat Purushottam typifies an incursion of caste Hindu beliefs and practices into adivasi communities. It replaces adivasi traditions with Viśiṣṭādvaitic teachings and Vaiṣṇava inspired practices. Adivasis join the sanstha both because of its teachings and practices and because of economic advantages. Nevertheless, in religious practice, hints of adivasi traditions remain. Inspired by Greg Urban, this paper suggests that such interaction constitutes one pattern by which India's indigenous peoples have negotiated encounters with the religions of caste Hindu communities.

**Ibrahim Khan:** Tagore and the academic study of religion

Tagore understood a university to be a place of working together in the common pursuit of truth. He envisioned its scope to lessen dependence on exported European education and thereby to address a seeming feeling of discontent emerging in modern India with borrowing from foreign educational plans. He held also to a view of truth as informing and inspiring so as to make alive that which is human within us. This paper inquires whether Tagore's vision of an eastern university education would accommodate the academic study of religion as canvassed by the modern West. A response may lead to a better understanding about comparative religion in an Indian context as an academic approach in the study of religion, especially at Visva-Bharati University, an institution that Tagore nurtured. Resources for thinking through the question include Tagore, Creative Unity, and Towards a Universal Man, and the comparative religion curriculum at Visva-Bharati.

**Kana Tomizawa (Kitazawa):** The development of the modern concept of "spirituality" in India: the usage of the term by Vivekananda and his contemporaries

In previous publications I have explored the use of the concept of "spirituality" in the discourse on India, especially among British Orientalists. In this paper I will examine more precisely the genealogy of "spirituality." In particular, I will discuss the development of the concept by various Indians in the late nineteenth century, focusing especially upon Vivekananda and members of his circle.

My argument is that Vivekananda and his mentor, Ramakrishna, played a decisive role in the development of a discourse about Indian spirituality as a counter to a hegemonic Western materialistic rationality. My aim is to show that, in this case, at least, a common if stereotypical image of India was not simply a product of the Romantic British Orientalist imagination, but that a certain class of Indians themselves, namely, the Bengali *bhadralok*, also contributed significantly to the construction of this image.

## **Philosophy for the Study of Religion: Problems, Potentials, and Proposals**

### **Panel Chair: Gabriel Levy**

Following a panel on “Philosophy of Science and the Study of Religion” at the 2005 IAHR Congress, published as a special issue of *Religion* (2009: 39/4) and a panel on “Possible Futures for Philosophy of Religion” at the 2010 Congress, published as a special issue of *Studies in Religion* (2012: 41/1) and also from similar panels at the North American Association for the Study of Religion and elsewhere and recent related publications such as Wesley Wildman’s *Religious Philosophy as Multidisciplinary Comparative Inquiry: Envisioning a Future for the Philosophy of Religion* and Kevin Schilbrack’s *Philosophy of Religion: A Manifesto*, we propose a session on “Philosophy for the Study of Religion: Problems, Potentials, and Proposals” explaining why the kind of integration of philosophy and the study of religion envisioned by such activities is desirable, what it might hope to achieve, and particularly moving forward to make concrete proposals for its implementation.

**Steven Engler, Mark Gardiner:** Philosophy and the Study of Religion: intersection, reciprocity, collaboration

What role should Philosophy of Religion play in the Study of Religion? The extreme views are (i) that a Study of Religion reduces to a (suitably reformed) Philosophy of Religion and (ii) that Philosophy offers nothing of value for the Study of Religion. We suggest that the debate has taken an unproductive turn, not least due to the misleading “of.” Rather, we should explore questions about Philosophy and (the Study of) Religion; we should look to philosophical advances no matter where they lie that may be of value to scholars of religion, and to any advances in the study of religion that may be of value to philosophers. This presentation will offer an informal and incomplete typology of collaborations between philosophers and scholars of religion, point to some normative implications of further collaborations, and prescribe some potentially productive directions.

**Caroline Schaffalitsky De Muckadell:** How to provide a definition of religion

It is well known that the study of religions is abundant with definitions of religion and also that there is no sign of imminent concord on the matter among scholars. Part of the reason for this may be that discussions about definitions of religion have been tied to foundational questions such as whether definitions should be real/nominal, monothetic/polythetic, implicit/explicit, folk/expert, normative/descriptive, Western/global, and prior to/post theory. In this paper I suggest a way to bracket these and similar foundational issues in a way which allows us to proceed with the more practical task of providing a definition that is both academically fruitful and open to further refinement. I will argue that a definition is a necessary part of theorizing on religion, I will suggest a definition, but also – and more importantly – I will introduce a novel philosophical method of analysis to help provide the tools necessary to advance these discussions.

**Bryan Rennie:** The undergraduate course in philosophy for the Study of Religions

Recent publications argue that “disciplinary” philosophy of religion has failed to differentiate itself from philosophical theology concerning the coherence of Christian belief and problems of Western monotheism. This is a significant failure to apply philosophy to all of the available data of the History of Religions. Suggestions have been made as to the direction that the philosophy of religion should take if it is to fulfill its promise as the philosophical analysis of the global human behavior identified as “religion”. I suggest an integration of Philosophy of Religion and “Theory and Method”. However, little has been done to make these theoretical interests and intentions accessible to undergraduate students so as to benefit the future study of religion. This paper proposes to describe such an undergraduate course, integrating the History and Philosophy of Religion in such a way as to benefit developing scholars of religion, whatever their future field of research.

**Tim Knepper:** The Comparison Project: an experimental program in comparative philosophy of religion

The Comparison Project (TCP) is an innovative, experimental approach to the philosophy of religion (at Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa). Each year it organizes a series of lectures about a core, cross-cultural topic in the philosophy of religion. Specialist scholars of religion first explore this topic in their religions of expertise; comparativist philosophers of religion then raise questions of meaning, truth, and value about this topic in comparative perspective. TCP therefore stands apart from traditional, religiously narrow approaches to the philosophy of religion in its focus on historically grounded and religiously diverse acts of re-

ligious reason-giving. In its first full cycle of programming (2013–15) TCP investigated the topic of ineffability in ten different religious traditions as well as the adjacent fields of literature, poetry, music, and art. This presentation invites constructive criticism about both the specific conclusions of this programming cycle and the general goals and methods of TCP.

## Philosophy of Religion

**Christian Kästner:** A Wittgensteinian interpretation of Bodin’s 1588 “Colloquium of the Seven about Secrets of the Sublime”

This paper brings Bodin’s text, written around 1588, and Wittgenstein’s remarks on religious belief into conversation with each other to elucidate a possible approach to interreligious dialogue. The Colloquium narrates the discussions of seven people, each representing a different religion, on the truth of their religious beliefs. In the literature, the Colloquium is usually treated as an example of a pluralist approach to religions, i. e., the view that various religions afford access to absolute truth; that each contains some falsity; and that they potentially complement each other. Epistemologically such a view is problematic and consequently there is much disagreement in the literature about the success of the Colloquium’s dialogue. This paper suggests that there is a different way to read this dialogue. Employing Wittgenstein’s notion of “language game” and his distinction between “saying” and “showing,” I argue that the dialogue of the Colloquium does not aim at pluralist consent and that, if at all, it “shows” complementarity rather than “saying” it. As such, it can serve as a model for successful, i. e., epistemologically sound, interfaith dialogue.

**Curtis Hutt:** The world as he found it: Wittgenstein’s quietism and the philosophy of religion

What are the implications of Wittgenstein’s so-called “quietism” on his philosophy of religion? Some commentators have linked, unjustifiably in my view, Wittgenstein’s assertion in the *Investigations* that at its best philosophy “leaves everything as it is” (§124) with his plea for silence regarding what cannot be said found in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Divergence over the interpretation of Wittgenstein on “quietism” and especially the say/show distinction will be understood as the pivot upon which possible “Wittgensteinian” accounts of religion hinge. I argue that Wittgenstein’s advocacy of “quietism” in the *Investigations*, while bearing a superficial resemblance to his pleas for “silence” regarding what cannot be said in the *Tractatus*, is very dissimilar. According to Wittgenstein’s new theory of meaning, all appeal to what cannot be accounted for through examination of linguistic usage in specific discursive contexts is disal-

lowed. The quietism characterizing Wittgenstein's later philosophy leaves the unsayable "nonsense" of the *Tractatus* behind.

**Ion Josan:** Christianity: the "political" and the spectre of "possibility"

Martin Heidegger is one of the most important European thinkers of the twentieth century. His philosophy is a veritable critique of the "mechanization" of human life. The Heideggerian interrogation proposes a return to the very problem of "grounding", trying to recapture an authentic state of "being". The implications of such an endeavor are multiple and long running. The aim of this article is to show how the thought of Martin Heidegger reopens space for a philosophical perspective that gradually intakes a Christian tension. This quest for the authentic "Dasein" marks a philosophical attitude that aims to break the chains of the "political" absolutism of the mechanized, technologized world, making the spectrum of "possibility" plausible. So that in "Being and Time" we find, as Bultmann puts it, the very structure of religious and Christian existence but without the ontico-mythical worldview that was an idiosyncratic feature of first-century cosmologies. This article aims to show how this philosophical demarche opened the way for a philosophical revalorization of the Christian legacy in European philosophy, that gradually fundamentals an alternative to the "political". Placing human being under the sign of the "possible", outside mechanized, unauthentic formulas that close our understanding of pluralism and "otherness", we can once more position the self under the latency of salvation.

**Laura Navajas Espinal:** Strategies of hermeneutics and philosophical space in Qumran and Ishmaili thought

The aim of this paper is to find connecting elements between two communities (Qumranite and Ishmaili), which share as a conceptual structure a new way of understanding hermeneutics. With the mystical proposals by thinkers such as Rosenzweig, Scholem or Benjamin, complemented by the relationship between desert and "thinking of the outside" (Blanchot, Foucault), it is possible to break with the linearity of the event in metahistorical conceptions not liable to totalization, where the process of fall and redemption is condensed. My contribution attempts to outline the basis of such a shared discourse between communities, both regarding hermeneutic justifications of authority and the crafting of non-physical spaces of relationship between community and revelation.

**Naomi Miyazaki:** Die politische Philosophie über das Vergängliche in der Gegenwart. Zu den Begriffen "Erwartung" Paul Tillichs und "Ungleichzeitigkeit" Ernst Blochs

Tillich und Bloch haben an vergleichbaren strukturellen Problemstellungen während der Weimarer Republik gearbeitet. Tillich hat in "Sozialistische Entscheidung" von 1933 sowohl an der politischen Romantik als auch am damaligen So-

zialismus Kritik geübt, weil besonders die politische Romantik keine “intentionale Auf-Zu-Struktur” hat. Wie Tillich kritisiert Bloch in “Erbschaft dieser Zeit” von 1935 gleichzeitig den Faschismus und den sogenannten “orthodoxen” Marxismus, der keine gültige Kritik am Faschismus entfalten kann. Bei der zeitgenössischen Diagnose hat Bloch die noch in der Gegenwart wirkende “Ungleichzeitigkeit” als ein Moment der Veränderung der Gesellschaft thematisiert. In meiner Präsentation werden fundamentale Begriffe für die politische Philosophie wie “Erwartung” bei Tillich und “Ungleichzeitigkeit” bei Bloch auf der Basis der Religionsphilosophie Tillichs und der Ontologie Blochs erörtert und die Struktur dieser Begriffe wird verglichen.

## Pilgrim Trains in the Nineteenth to Twenty-first Centuries

### Panel Chair: Gábor Barna

The spread of public transport in the mid-nineteenth century changed people’s travel habits. It also brought change in travel for religious purposes, enabling a new form of religious mass tourism to emerge. As the railways grew into a European network, distant shrines became more accessible. Long-distance pilgrimages were revived and grew to a mass scale, reviving or augmenting the popularity of some shrines. Special trains were organized for pilgrimages within individual countries too, enabling new trends to flourish. Ethnological research and anthropology of religion have paid little attention to this form of mass pilgrimage that is still alive and has “traditional” forms in many countries of Europe. The papers for this panel should analyze the past and present organization and itineraries of pilgrim trains and their influence on the shrines, as well as the spread of devotional forms, votive objects, songs and religious souvenirs, and identity-building both within specific countries and internationally.

**Marion Bowman:** Railways, rivalry and the revival of pilgrimage in Glastonbury

When formal pilgrimage to Glastonbury resumed in 1895 after 350 years, the advent of the railway there enabled 1,500 Catholic pilgrims to arrive from all over Britain to celebrate the beatification of the Glastonbury Catholic martyrs Whiting, Thorne and James. In 1897, the 1,300th anniversary of St Augustine’s arrival in England was commemorated by “an international pilgrimage” of 130 Anglican bishops to Glastonbury Abbey, led by the Archbishop of Canterbury after the 1897 Lambeth Conference. The bishops were able to make a day trip from London on the train. This paper examines the role of railways in the revival and conduct of pilgrimage to Glastonbury, highlighting both “diverse processes of sacralization of movement, persons and/or places” and the idea of “meta-movement –

the combination of mobility itself with a degree of reflexivity as to its meaning, form and function” (Coleman and Eade 2004, 18).

**John Eade:** Railways and the development of Lourdes: meaning and movement in a changing Europe

During the second half of the nineteenth century the development of Lourdes from a small frontier town into a bustling, international pilgrimage centre was intimately bound up with Western Europe’s rapidly expanding railway system. The railway acquired more than an economic significance – it was symbolically important in political and cultural terms. Mobility was combined with a variety of meanings (Coleman and Eade 2004) concerning different collectivities, i.e., the Church, nation, pilgrims, tourists etc. Since the 1950s, however, the iconic status of the railway has weakened as road and air transport has expanded. Individual choice has increased undermining established meanings. Current discussions about the shrine’s future anxiously refer to the vast majority of visitors, who appear to be tourists, highlighting the complicated relationship between pilgrimage and tourism, religious and non-religious motivations, and modern and post-modern/post-secular processes.

**Gábor Barna:** Pilgrims and identity-building

Pilgrimages serve not only religious but simultaneously secular (worldly) aims. Since the rich donation of the Hungarian King Louis the Great for Mariazell in the middle of the fourteenth century, the place was regarded as national shrine of Hungarians which was strengthened by the second cult-object, the Schatzkammerbild, another donation by the Hungarian king. The Virgin Mary of Mariazell is known as Magna Domina Hungarorum. The cloister of Czestochowa was founded by Hungarian Pauline monks supported by the Hungarian King Louis the Great and is rich in Hungarian memorials until our days. The Pauline Order is the only Roman Catholic religious order founded by Hungarians. The third place of pilgrimage, Csíksomlyó, where pilgrim trains regularly visit, is situated in Szeklerland (Transylvania) in a homogeneous Hungarian region, occupied by Romania after WWI. To visit these three shrines means to build and cultivate not only the Catholic faith, but to strengthen the Hungarian historical roots in Central Europe, to keep up the traditional friendship between Poles and Hungarians and to promote the cultural and historical connections with Hungarians living outside of today’s Hungary.

## Pilgrimage

**Mihaela Sighinas:** The development of Saikoku pilgrimage in early modern Japan: on Kōyo Shunō's Kannon Reijōki and Saikoku Junrei Utagenchū. During the Edo period Saikoku pilgrimage is tainted with strong entertainment features, and its condition becomes complicated (for example, many pilgrims do not respect the order in which the temples should be visited; moreover they complete the pilgrimage circuit over the course of several interrupted visits). There are two positions among the Jōdo priests of the time, so as to stand up to these degrading morals and to regain the sacred meaning of pilgrimage, and they were expressed in a sacred genre of pilgrimage text called reijōki. (1) Shōyo Ganteki's Saikoku Sanjūsansho Reigenki Shinshō (hereafter cited as Saikoku Reigenki) (Genuine Collected Writings of Miraculous Records of the Thirty-three Holy Locales of Saikoku), which dates from 1705 (this reigenki is a new edition of an earlier work dating from 1687); (2) Kōyo Shunō's Saikoku Sanjūsansho Kannon Reijōki (hereafter cited as Saikoku Reijōki) (Record of the Thirty-three Holy Locales of Saikoku), and Saikoku Junrei Utagenchū, which date from 1726 and which have the same structure as the Saikoku Reigenki, therefore I consider them as a set, forming one single literary entity. In this presentation I focus on one major collection of Kannon engi, Saikoku Reijōki, yet by comparing it with Saikoku Reigenki I analyze its structural and ideological characteristics. I show that actually there was a significant development in the ideology towards pilgrimage and its benefits that influenced the later course of this literary tradition. While Shōyo's Reigenki preserves the old medieval thinking that man must pursue only the after-world benefits, his rebirth in the Pure Land, Kōyo's Reijōki admits the social and ideological changes that were taking place at the time, and stresses the benefits to be gained in this world. His aim is to teach people that performing the act of pilgrimage could alleviate all sorts of woes and to motivate them in taking the road of pilgrimage. This leads to a spiritual dynamic between Kannon and the pilgrims, who entrust this and the afterlife to the hands of the compassionate bodhisattva.

**Juan Campo:** The ecological impact of modern pilgrimage: a comparative view

This paper is a comparative study of the ecologies of three modern mass pilgrimages: the hajj to Mecca, the south Indian pilgrimage to Sabarimala, and the pilgrimage to the Basilica of Guadalupe in Mexico City. Their phenomenal growth in recent decades requires significant investment in infrastructure and engagement of religious bodies, governmental agencies, technology experts, businesses, and non-governmental organizations. Such changes and adaptations have had serious ecological consequences, which have yet to be studied in comparative per-

spective. In this paper, I will explore three key facets to these pilgrimage ecologies: their representation in religious discourse, the extent to which mass pilgrimage has contributed to their deterioration, and efforts being made to ameliorate these impacts. The central question is to determine to what extent religion can foster ecological sustainability or actually undermine it in the context of modernity and global climate change.

**Scott Esplin:** Memorializing and marking the Mormon experience

Cold War America experienced a proliferation in the development of historic sites as the nation sought to affirm its greatness in the midst of social and cultural upheaval. At the same time, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormonism) desired to position itself within the grand American narrative, seeking acceptance as a mainstream faith. To do so, it developed its own historic pilgrimage sites, with the restoration of Nauvoo, Illinois as the chief project. As a religiously sponsored endeavor, however, the faith walked a fine line between historical interpretation and evangelization, a narrow charge that was further complicated by competition from rival faiths and longtime residents of the city. This paper will examine the development of Nauvoo, Illinois as a national and religious historic site, placing it within the context of religious historic sites development and pilgrimage in the twentieth century.

**Seán McLoughlin:** Pilgrimage, performativity, and British Muslims: scripted and unscripted accounts of the Hajj

This paper concerns contemporary British-Muslim performances of Hajj. Analyzing 60 interviews/testimonies, I signal the utility of pilgrimage studies for Hajj research. This is equally true of paradigms associated with sacred place, liminality and *communitas*, as postmodern approaches emphasizing contestations of the sacred. However, also working across the anthropology/sociology of religion/Islam and diaspora studies, I also view Hajj as an example of Muslim religiosity across local, multi-local and supra-local spatial scales. Therefore I dwell not only on Makkah but also religiously inspired and everyday experiences in locations before, during and after pilgrimage. Through embodied actions associated with the Hajj, its preparation and remembrance, Muslims shape their self-identities, spirituality and emotional lives, while at the same time reproducing authoritative Islamic scripts. However, the fragility of such performances by actors positioned by multiple and sometimes paradoxical lived structures such as consumer capitalism, means that pilgrims' lived experiences also include unscripted uncertainties and ambivalences.

**Daniel Andersson:** Archaeotopia, spirituality and religious tourism

The Lonely Planet bookseries was founded in 1973. The aim was to ease traveling for independent backpackers searching for more "original", less developed sites. Even though the books still focus on backpackers, they now also cover the

whole tourism-spectra. Nowadays tourism, as well as literature on tourism and religion (Stausberg 2011, Swatos Jr & Tomasi 2002) have grown out of proportion. This is the global society. In religious terms, this is the subjective turn – the return of individualized religiosity among secular westerners. Just as in the beginning, the detailed guidebooks of Lonely Planet are aimed at young, urban, westernized people. They visit the same spots as the charterpackage tourist. But they also move on to more original, “indigenous” sites. Today there are no such sites. Still the backpacker needs them. Otherwise he or she is just a tourist. Here religion has come to play a role. New in this context is the spiritual quest. Albeit the fact that travelers/trekkers are secular they embrace a new religious discourse so palpable in contemporary western societies. So do the guidebooks. It is evident that many presentations in the books more often than before give examples of traditional or new-age-inspired religious language with words like “power places”, “pilgrimages”, “crossing space between the physical and the spiritual worlds”. Religion is selling. An example of this can be seen in the 1981 edition of *India: A Travel Survival Kit* compared to one more recent edition. Hervieu-Leger argues that in the contemporary “postmodern” world religion is an ideological phenomenon by which an individual and collective sense of “belonging” is created. As major religious traditions transform or even decline, other spiritual narratives appear. This in turn creates new collective memories and a longing for nostalgia or archaeotopia (coined by Mexican anthropologist Bartra). The Lonely Planet series then can be seen as a tool for young people coping with a stressful contemporary world and searching for a reversed utopia.

**Jens Kreinath:** Transformative dynamics of mimetic acts: aesthetic and semiotic dimensions of saint veneration at interreligious pilgrimage sites in Hatay, Turkey

The study of interreligious pilgrimage sites has gained significant attention among scholars of religion (Fowden 2002; Bowen 2012; Albera/Couroucli 2012). However, scholarship on interreligious encounters at sites of saint veneration has not yet succeeded in presenting a coherent theoretical framework. This paper is designed to make a methodological and theoretical contribution to the interpretation of saint veneration at interreligious pilgrimage sites. A central concern of this contribution is to employ the concept of mimesis in analyzing the transformation of interreligious relations unfolding at pilgrimage sites. Rituals of saint veneration are conceived as mimetic acts as they become efficacious through imitation and representation. In conjoining ethnographic scrutiny and analytical reflection, this paper aims to open up new theoretical and methodological venues to capture the ritual dynamics of saint veneration through the concepts of mimesis and to include the study of mimetic processes of ritual practices as central to theorizing interreligious relations.

**Knut Aukland:** The circuit and the guide: tourist forms and formats in Hindu pilgrimage

Hindu pilgrimage is promoted, facilitated and packaged by the tourism industry in India. As a result, tourist forms and formats have become part of the pilgrimage scene, such as tourist guides and circuits. The paper presents the Himalayan Char Dham pilgrimage whose recent success is argued to be a result of the local government making it into a tourist circuit – a unit of destinations to be developed, promoted and sold as a package tour. As a tourist circuit the pilgrimage is juxtaposed with other destinations and framed in new ways by the tourist agencies that sustain and promote it. The second case study compares the guided tours of priestly and tourist guides in Vrindavan and Haridwar, arguing that the dynamics of contemporary Hindu pilgrimage means that traditional institutions have to adapt to a changing market where tourist stakeholders and practices have become increasingly significant.

**Suzanne Van Der Beek:** Opposites attract: diversity and contradictions on the modern Camino

Since the reanimation of the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela at the end of the twentieth century, the ever-increasing community of modern pilgrims that travel to the shrine of Saint James attempt to re-invent this medieval Catholic ritual in a way that makes sense to the modern spiritual pilgrim. The Camino has enjoyed a staggering surge in popularity over the last twenty to thirty years and this is mainly due to the great range of different opportunities for meaning-making it provides, and the freedom it allows the modern pilgrim to create a personal and individual character for their journey. This presentation will illustrate this broad pallet of spiritual opportunities offered by the Camino, and show how a traditional ritual was successfully appropriated by a modern community of new users by allowing for diversity and contradictions.

## **Podiumsdiskussion: Religionswissenschaftler\*innen und die mediale Öffentlichkeit: Erwartungen, Hindernisse, Chancen**

**Organizer: Eva Spies**

Das Thema Religion war und ist in den deutschsprachigen Medien präsent – die Fachvertreter\*innen der Religionswissenschaft sind es allerdings kaum. Wer aber denkt nach den üblichen Diskussionsrunden zum Thema “islamischer Terrorismus”, nach TV-Streitgesprächen über die “Religion(en) Deutschlands” oder Dokumentationen über “exotische Rituale” nicht, dass sich daran doch besser auch Religionswissenschaftler\*innen beteiligt hätten? Was hindert sie daran? Wo liegen Hürden und Möglichkeiten aus Sicht der Religionswissenschaftler\*innen

und was hindert Vertreter\*innen der Medien daran, sich in diesem Fachgebiet umzuhören? Die wissenschaftliche Kritik an der medialen Darstellung von Religion hat Tradition, doch wo sind die Gegenentwürfe? Kann man wissenschaftliche Inhalte so vermitteln, dass sie Medienerwartungen ebenso genügen wie wissenschaftlichen? Müsste die Förderung solcher Kompetenzen nicht Teil des Studiums werden, da die Universität selbst kaum Arbeitsperspektiven bietet? Die Gesprächsrunde wird sich mit dem Verhältnis der Religionswissenschaftler\*innen zur deutschsprachigen medialen Öffentlichkeit auseinandersetzen. Vertreter\*innen des Fachs, der Medien und anderer Institutionen stellen ihre Positionen zur Rolle und Notwendigkeit von public intellectuals ebenso zur Diskussion wie ihre Skepsis und Erwartungen.

Participants: **Christoph Bochinger, Xavier Pilloud, Christoph Wagenseil, Anne Françoise Weber**

## **Positioning in Cross-Cultural Encounters and the Transfer of Religion and Knowledge**

### **Panel Chair: Catherina Wenzel**

The panel deals with travelogues and translations of a pilgrim, a Maronite scholar and a missionary in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. They acted between the cultures of Persia, India, Tibet, Syria and Europe and had to translate the foreign and new in their own respective contexts. Peter Burke speaks regarding such cross-cultural exchanges of a “double process of decontextualization and recontextualization, first a reaching out to appropriate something alien and then domesticating it.” We have chosen the term “positioning” to describe these processes. Donna Haraway’s work has been important in theorizing this notion of “position” as “[...] the key practice grounding knowledge”. The sources transported and mediated knowledge about religion and society over long distances. For this reason the concept of positioning must be supplemented with a cluster of concepts such as intercultural transfer, translation and change.

**Agita Baltgalve:** Early approaches to the Buddhist texts’ translation in China and in Tibet

The paper will compare two different approaches to the translation process of Buddhist texts, as performed in China (from the first century) and in Tibet (from the seventh century). In China the translation process first took place in large sessions (up to 1000 persons), usually headed by one Buddhist master from India. In Tibet it was purposely organized and sponsored by the government, appointing three to four persons for the translation of one text; several Indian Buddhist masters and one or two Tibetan scholars were also present. Rea-

sons for these differences may be based on geographical and time factors. In China (with a territory at least ten times bigger than that of Tibet) translations were done over a period of more than 1000 years (first to thirteenth century, Han-Song dynasty), but in Tibet only of 300–400 years (seventh to thirteenth century). Then-current cultural and social customs, philosophical and religious traditions may also have played a significant role.

**Ulrike Kollodzeiski:** Religion and gender as key factors of positioning in Pietro Della Valle's Travelogue

Pietro della Valle (1586–1652), was a Roman patrician who traveled through Mesopotamia, Persia and India in the years 1617–1625. He wrote a detailed travelogue of his observations which was published and translated into several different European languages. He can be described as a devout Catholic who was struggling for an almost modern ethnographic approach. Religion and gender are crucial factors in all early modern travelogues. But unlike other travellers who based their descriptions on hearsay, della Valle discussed religious matters with local authorities in Turkish, Arabic, and Persian, and through the medium of his wife, an Armenian, born in Mardin, Turkey, he had also access to those realms of women that were closed to every other man. In his travelogue, I will argue, Della Valle created a syntagmatic as well as a paradigmatic relation between the different cultures that is much more complex than the "Othering" suggested by Mary Pratt.

**Karsten Schmidt:** Positioning and understanding in interreligious dialogue: the case study of an eighteenth century Jesuit Missionary in Tibet

Unlike any European before, the Italian Jesuit missionary Ippolito Desideri (1684–1733) managed to master the Tibetan language and engage in an interreligious dialogue during his stay in central Tibet from 1715 to 1721. In his Italian and Tibetan writings he was faced with the task of transferring information in two directions: presenting Buddhism to a European audience and Christianity to his Tibetan interlocutors. In regard to Buddhism he considered a sufficient understanding to be the precondition for arguing against concepts like "emptiness" – that posed obstacles for the Tibetans to adopt Christianity, and succeeded to a remarkable degree. Being a missionary he strongly criticized those concepts and presented counterarguments from a Christian background. The concurrence of taking a critical position and simultaneously applying a non-reductionistic approach in understanding "the other" can serve as inspiration for a concept of transferring knowledge avoiding problems concerning normative relativism, incommensurability and epistemological foundationalism within interreligious discourse.

**Reza Pojarvady:** Positioning and intercultural translation: the case of the Maronite Abraham Ecchellensis (Ibrāhīm al-Ḥaqilānī, 1605–64) and his Latin translation of Mīr Ḥusayn al-Maybudī's *The World-Revealing Cup*

The protagonist was born in Syria and repeatedly travelled between the Islamic and Christian cultures in the Mediterranean. As an expert in Arabic documents in the "Republic of Letters", he attempted to reconcile contemporary scholars' expectations of specialized knowledge both with his Catholic and controversialist commitments and with his status, in his role as a Maronite, as a spokesman not only for Arabic, but also for Muslim culture (Heyberger). I will examine one of his translations: "*Speculum mundum repraesentans*" (Jām-i gīti-numā/*The World-Revealing Cup*), originally written in Persian and composed by Mīr Ḥusayn Maybudī in 1491/92. He presented it as universal "Arab wisdom" coming from the land in which Christianity had originated. In order to do this, he expunged Islamic terminology from it by a recourse to the Christian Arabic literature. Furthermore it shows the impact of confessional commitment and philology on the rise of oriental studies in Europe.

## Poster Session

**Jörg Albrecht:** Alternative diets between religious marginality and cultural mainstream

This project examines the role of religious non-conformism for cultural innovation and change. The research focuses on the popularization and transformation of alternative dietary conceptions such as vegetarianism. At the end of the nineteenth century the idea of "*naturgemäße Lebensweise*" (natural way of living) was central to the religious and ideological non-conformism of a cultural niche known as the German life reform movement. A hundred years later elements of it re-emerge in the center of society inspiring the practice of organic agriculture and the consumption of organic food.

**Shin Ahn:** From religious discrimination to religious literacy

In 2010, the Korean Government formed a program preventing civil servants from religious discrimination in public areas such as administration, law, medicine, prison, and education. Since different religious traditions including Buddhism, Christianity, and no-religion exist in Korea, civil servants are exposed to religious discrimination. Because of their religious background, they may support particular religious groups or despise them. Teachers in public schools play an important role in the formation of the religious worldview of their pupils. Offering service to citizens and living with colleagues, civil servants act as transmitters of religious ideas and knowledge. This poster will show the new directions of reli-

gious education by analyzing the programs operated or researched by the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism, Korean Government from 2010 to the present.

**Julia Dippel:** Places of power, worship and magic: concepts of religious space in contemporary paganism in Germany

Kraftorte – “Places of power”: In Germany many associate this term with geographically and aesthetically striking places in the open countryside or sites of ancient cult practice. These places are attributed with certain qualities and characteristics, and that’s a reason why contemporary pagans and people who practice New Age spirituality perform their rituals at so-called Kraftorte. The construction and approbation of Kraftorte play a significant role in the process of establishing contemporary paganism in the public space and their public visibility in Germany. Kraftorte are also affected by diverse public interests: archeological cultural heritage preservation, places of ritual practice and tourism. In my poster I would like to present some of the results of my qualitative research on analyzing the discourse around the phenomenon and conceptualization of this kind of religious space, and systemizing these localities in the context of contemporary paganism in Germany.

**Jakub Havlicek:** Religions and education in the Czech Republic

The presentation deals with the role of the schooling system in the Czech Republic in the process of re-producing knowledge on religions. It aims to answer the question of how the education system contributes to the re-production of religious memory, and also where is the place of the topic of religion within the framework of the school lessons on Czech history. It allows describing the process of re-producing the image of Czech history by means of the education system. The presentation is based on the analysis of school programs, school books and manuals, particularly those used in lessons on history, geography and civic education at primary and secondary schools. The presentation is a result of research under the grant project Continuity and Discontinuities in Religious Memory in the Czech Republic, supported by the Czech Science Foundation.

**Ramona Jelinek-Menke:** Religion and intellectual dis/ability

Religion and disability are linked in various ways: historically, the category of intellectual disabilities was spread and established in central Europe by religious actors. Today for example, most of the institutions of the handicapped aid-industry in Germany belong to religious associations. In consequence, most of the people who are called intellectually disabled live within a religiously influenced separate infrastructure – although the society which they are part of understands itself as secular. What kind of influence does this fact have on the way people who are called intellectually disabled and their relatives deal with the

label “disability”? Do these people develop a specific type of religious conviction and practice because of their social role? This PhD project demonstrates how the experience of disability – as a personal confrontation with socially implemented deviance – in a religious context becomes a resource for identity as well as for religious and cultural dynamics.

**Christiane Kliemannel:** Folkish religion: the religious adaption and transformation of racist ideology

Modern religious diversity includes certain New Religious Movements which provide propaganda for right-wing and racist ideology. These communities and their religious opinions are not new but have their origins in the pre-fascist movement and are referred to by cultural sciences as “Folkish Religion.” The presentation is focused on four German communities (youth alliances) and their prominent masterminds: Deutsche Schwesterschaft (Otto Reuter), Adler und Falken (Wilhelm Kotzde), Nordungen (Hildulf Flurschütz) and Deutschjugend (Mathilde Ludenthorff). The first part reconstructs and compares the religious concepts and their origins in the view of their proposed identity and meaning. Then, selected adaptations by female members of these alliances are analyzed. The final part discusses references to contemporary Religious Movements and their differences. The presentation points out a detailed view on the thoughts of these youth alliances, particularly in regard to new contents of folkish religion, and clarifies adaptations and transformations of folkish and racist ideology.

**Monika Lisiewicz:** Differences in the process of acculturation of Christian diaspora in Islamic countries depending on generation of migrants based on the example of Poles living in Istanbul and Polish-origin inhabitants of Polonezköy

This research concerns the issue of psychological acculturation in the example of the Polish community in Turkey, according to the generations of migrants. A qualitative study was conducted to describe the differences in the choice of strategies and the extent of acculturation with regard to many aspects of everyday life. Adopted acculturation strategies were considered in terms of RAEM model, and the study was based on grounded theory. The first group surveyed were the descendants of Poles living in Polonezköy village – therefore the analysis shows additionally a rare portrait of the culture frozen in history. Uncommon for existing intercultural studies is to analyze the attitudes of migrants in such a distant generation. The second part of the subjects are today’s Polish migrants who have settled in Istanbul over the past fifteen years. They were divided into two groups according to the observed differences in the choice of the acculturation strategy.

**Dušan Lužný:** An explanatory model of the contemporary religious situation in Czech society

Quantitative indicators present the situation clearly – all indicators decrease. Long-term trends show a very low level of religious adherence, a very low level of participation in religious life and attendance of religious services, a low level of belief in traditional Christian concepts, a decreased importance of the religious dimensions of rites of passage (baptisms, weddings, funerals) etc. The poster presents a theoretical model and shows its explanatory potential. The model has eight basic dimensions: (1) a change in ontology (emancipation process and the place of humans within this world; development of scientific ontology); (2) discontinuity points in religious history; (3) structural modernization processes (urbanization, industrialization, increase in education, women's emancipation, change of family model); (4) functioning of plausibility structures (family and religious socialization, school, religious networks); (5) biological and demographical factors; (6) religion in public space (media); (7) religion and state (interconnection of religious and national symbols); (8) religious innovation.

**Kumi Makino:** Lids and the Jewish dietary purification in ancient Palestine  
My research theme is the lids in Palestine in the Hellenistic to Roman periods in regard to the purification rules of Judaism. The typological classifications and its change will be shown by using a database built by the author. Mishnah, an oral Torah, was established around 200 CE after Jewish communities in Palestine were devastated by the wars against the Romans. The importance of using lids is prescribed in it to avoid contamination of cooking vessels and containers. Lids are among those popular finds from Palestine sites of these periods. However, they are usually treated as common cooking ware without being discussed in their religious contexts. The results show the lids in these periods have several variations, though there was little variation in the previous periods. The study of lids might be a key to understanding the transformation of the early Jewish dietary customs and sense of purity in Judaism.

**Vanessa Meier:** Who is doing global Hinduism?

Indian Gurus with a numerous global discipleship are key representatives of contemporary Hinduism in its global manifestation. They often act as representatives of “the Hinduism”, for example at interfaith conventions, peace declarations, or UN conferences. Their success is accompanied by an increasing promotion of religious universalism in the specific form of Hindu Universalism (Neo-Vedanta). As the authority of these gurus emerges from the relationship to their devotees across the globe, the role of these devotees as active globalizers and promoters of Hindu Universalism should be taken into consideration. The devotees, who merge the Neo-Vedanta teachings and practices with their partic-

ular religio-cultural backgrounds in various ways, link local and global spheres through their activities. By maintaining specific social relations to the guru as well as to co-devotees, they establish social networks with potentially global outreach, thus being relevant actors in the manifestation of globalized religion.

**Daniel Topinka:** Maintaining of religion as an expression of resistance: an unusual case of religious continuity in the region Hlučinsko in the Czech Republic

This paper deals with the case of the region of Hlučín that is situated in the border zone in the northeast of the Czech Republic. For three centuries, the inhabitants of this area were exposed to an ethno-national paradox. They found themselves in the overlay of national projects that created variable situations and thus a social reality. The ideology of nationalism in the nineteenth century formed the destiny of local inhabitants. First German nationalism entered the scene, but ethnically they kept endorsing their Moravian origin. Czech nationalism, that had at first ignored the Moravians, entered penetratively at the beginning of the twentieth century. In spite of the waves of nationalization it is interesting how the local identities managed to adapt to the situation despite a great extent of resistance. Religion played a major role in maintaining social life continuity. Religion became a symbol of protest, resistance, and the source of a strong social binder.

**Oksana Vinnichenko:** Crossing boundaries: rethinking religion, well-being and health in Ukrainian society

In Ukraine the relationship between religion, well-being and health is becoming increasingly important. The global flow of influence to the country from Europe, through people, technology and ideas, is effecting a transformation that is challenging commonly accepted presuppositions of a welfare society. This paper identifies and understands current perspectives of how medicine and religion are related in the emerging modern secularized Ukraine. Both religion and medicine, powerful historical and cultural factors, take into consideration healing and well-being of the individual. Ukraine being religiously diverse, this paper limits consideration to two traditions, Ukrainian Orthodoxy and Catholicism, to outline their devotional practices that correlate with healing. Thus, it sketches the common ground between two healing traditions as is currently the case in the country, with reference to the transformations that are occurring. This it does by working from data based on the perspectives of practitioners of both healing traditions: religion and medicine.

## The Power of Perspective at the Fringe of “Religion”

### Panel Chair: Nathan Fredrickson

This panel consists of three papers from PhD students at the University of California, Santa Barbara, the first elaborating on J.Z. Smith’s familiar claim that “there is no data for religion” to argue that being anti-paradigmatic invites an endless plurality of perspective-based productions of knowledge. The second and third papers demonstrate how specific perspectives shape the study of religion as well as religious phenomena themselves, the second using Sperber’s epidemiological understanding of cultural transmission to help account for the propagation of countercultural representations within what Colin Campbell terms the “cultic milieu,” and the third responding in the affirmative to the question, “Are All Religious Traditions Invented?” particularly through an engagement with Markus Davidsen’s recent interpretation of the “fiction-based” Tolkien religion as having arisen from the religious or spiritual milieu Tolkien created.

**Jed Forman:** No data for religion? The interdependence of method and object and the possibility of multi-paradigmatic approaches

Some take Jonathan Z. Smith’s claim that “there is no data for religion” as disparaging the field of religious studies, that without a data set that is naturally religious, religious phenomena will be explained away by other disciplines. This paper argues that this reading misunderstands Smith’s imperative. No discipline, from physics to religious studies, has a “datum of intrinsic interest,” for only in reference to methodology does data become pertinent. Smith does not implicate religious studies alone: legitimizing any field based on the existence of phenomena that are particular and unique to its domain is not only unnecessary, but problematic. Rather, the phenomena are created in the act of investigation. This anti-ontology creates incredible power: no singular paradigm is ultimately privileged over any other, nor will any finite set of paradigms be exhaustive. Within and across disciplines, knowledge becomes cumulative instead of contradictory, and Truth gives way to truths.

**Kevin Whitesides:** An epidemiological approach to the cultic milieu: representational clusters and transformative hermeneutics in countercultural networks

This paper attempts to reconsider and, to some extent, revivify analytical interest in Colin Campbell’s (1972) notion of the “cultic milieu” by reframing its conceptualization in terms of Dan Sperber’s “epidemiology of representations” model of cultural transmission. Where Campbell’s rather descriptive conceptualization sees the cultic milieu as comprising the cultural underground of a society – the sum of its “deviant” beliefs and practices, inclusive of its avenues of transmission – Sperber’s cognitive/naturalistic model of how cultural representations

propagate and transform through chains of public and mental representations provides a fruitful explanatory framework through which the improvisational combinatory acts of counterculturalists can be modeled and analyzed. Specifically, Sperber's model of cultural attractors (which contrasts the more well-known meme-theory) allows us to consider the ways in which information deemed countercultural (or heterogeneous to some perceived hegemonic authority structure) tends to cluster in some ways among some groups of individuals and not in others.

**Nathan Fredrickson:** When scholars christen new religions Are religions invented? This paper argues yes, that religious studies scholars are often actively involved in inventing religions and that Markus Davidsen's recent dissertation on the fiction-based Tolkien religion participates in a consistent tendency, perhaps inaugurated by J.Z. Smith's designation of "religion" as a scholar's category, to defend the religious character of New Religious Movements, especially those based on fictional works. This tendency, present also in Cusack's treatment of "invented religions" and Possamai's "hyper-real religions" may be traced not only to Smith but also to a liberal move to counteract the excesses of the counter- and anti-cult movements. It responds to this apologetic tendency by invoking Ann Taves's call for scholars of religion to stop attempting to intervene in first-order, on-the-ground debates about and attributions of what counts as true "religion" and instead to adopt a more general, second-order perspective where one attends to cultural "building blocks."

## Practices and Metaphors of Domestic Religion

**Darin Lenz:** "Fed by faith": making the story of George Müller into a new tradition of living piety in nineteenth century print culture

In 1834 George Müller, an emigrant from Prussia, established an orphanage in Bristol, England, that was funded, according to Müller, by prayer and trust that God would supply the necessary resources to care for the children. Abandoning the direct solicitation of funds to support his work, Müller received acclaim for establishing the largest orphanage in Great Britain by faith. His method of living by faith garnered Müller a great deal of attention globally thanks to his story being repeated in periodicals and books that celebrated him as a model of Christian piety. This paper will analyze the role that publications played in creating Müller's reputation as the practitioner of living by faith in the nineteenth century. The aim of the paper is to show how print culture legitimized Müller's method and created a new tradition of living piety that affected the practice of Christianity worldwide by the late nineteenth century.

**Jennifer Jones:** Faith, failure and death on the Australian goldfields: Environmental adaptation of Scottish Calvinists' belief, 1852–1865

When Scotsman James Hoey arrived on the Australian goldfields in 1852, he believed prosperity and worldly progress rewarded piety. Thirteen years of hardship, including failed business and mining ventures, the death of two wives and a son, and his own impending death from lung disease, however, led Hoey to question his election amongst the faithful. This paper considers how Hoey and his family, who were committed United Presbyterians, negotiated their Calvinist belief in the context of the goldfields. A rich archive of family letters reveals how these educated, middle-class, urbanized Lowlanders attempted to identify and interpret the will of God in their experience of hardship and loss. I argue that the realities of the goldfield required the adaptation of their beliefs and consider how the colonial environment triumphed over denominational expectation, as failure forced this Scottish family to alter their theological interpretation of a blessed life and a good death.

**Neomi De Anda:** Reclaiming the theological image of breast milk throughout the Americas

The images of breast milk and breastfeeding were once theologically robust in Christian Europe. The image was largely covered and silenced by the mid-eighteenth century in Italy, France, and Germany. In Spain, however, this image was maintained as sacred and carried to the Americas by conquistadores, missionaries, and settlers through both physical pieces of sculpture and painting and was later incorporated into writings. This paper will trace three historical occurrences of this image to show that this image continues as both theological and sacred in parts of the Americas. The first will engage Sor María Anna Águeda de San Ignacio's (Puebla, Mexico, 1695–1756) writings concerning *el camino de la leche de Maria*. The second will illuminate the paintings of *Nuestra Señora de Belen*, significant in San Juan, Puerto Rico since the sixteenth century. The third will elucidate the devotions to *María de la Leche*, the first Marian shrine in the continental USA.

**Svein Ivar Langhelle:** Religion between tradition and modernity

This paper will discuss the implementation process of new ethical standards that took place in South-western Norway during the first half of the nineteenth century, caused by the comprehensive religious revivals of the followers of Hans Nielsen Hauge. The revivals prompted individualization by the new enlightenment and detachment from old views of the world. Under these new conditions, a more intense self-discipline was required in order to achieve success in society. This devoted self-discipline has been decisive and necessary for the further societal developments. The “awakened” appealed to the traditional religious authorities and were anchored in a pre-modern worldview. They aimed for the re-

ligious roots. However, their methods were radical and path-staking for the process of modernization. Consequently, the Haugians promoted personal religious choice. They were traditionalists in speech, but modernists in action.

## Predictions, Experience and Behavior in Religion: Three Experimental Approaches

### Panel Chair: Jesper Soerensen

It is a common presupposition that religions not only shape people's experience of the world, but also guide their behavior in the world. So far it has been unclear how this process takes place. How do priming with religious concepts or artifacts, sensory deprivation and representations of authority modulate religious experience? The seminar investigates these questions based on recent neurocognitive models focusing on the brain's predictive abilities.

**Jesper Soerensen:** Predictions, experience and behavior in religion: a new framework for studying cultural modulation of cognition in religious behavior. How do religious beliefs and models influence believers' experience of their surroundings? How do religious worldviews acquire their status as "really real"? And, once established, how can they maintain their plausibility and influence believers' behavior? A recent neurocognitive model that focuses on the brain's predictive abilities is a promising way to approach such questions. Accordingly, humans navigate and act in their physical and social environment by matching incoming perceptual information to predictive models specifying what to expect in any given situation. Mismatch between model and sensory information elicits an error signal that demands attentional resources which eventually lead to a modification of the predictive model. Understanding religious ideas as culturally shared predictive models allows us to investigate the intricate relation between expectations and experience, on the one hand, and its impact on human behavior, on the other. This paper gives a short outline of the theoretical underpinnings of the approach.

**Kristoffer L. Nielbo:** God, nation, or gender? Effects of religious priming and allocation cost on pro-social behavior in anonymous economic games. Several studies have shown that priming with religious concepts (e.g. "sacred", "divine", "God") facilitates pro-social behavioral responses in economic games. Social and evolutionary psychology offer two proximate explanations of how religious primes facilitate pro-social behavior. The dominant explanation states that religious primes activate implicit representations of being observed by a supernatural watcher, which in turn increase pro-social behavior. The alternative explanation is a behavioral priming or ideomotor account. Religious primes,

as other cultural primes, activate implicit cultural norms, which increase the likelihood of behaviors consistent with these norms. We ran a series of experiments to test possible effects of religious priming on economic decisions in a Danish student population. Preliminary results indicate that the Danes' default response is more complex than the Canadians', and that religious priming has little if any effect. Gender, on the other hand, seems to influence economic decisions, as well as decision time, considerably.

**Uffe Schjoedt:** Expert power in religious interactions

The expertise of religious authorities appears to be an important facilitator of religious experience and interpretation among believers. Going further than self-report measures in psychological surveys and anthropological interviews, we present experimental evidence that expertise can, indeed, influence how believers perceive and behave during religious practices. Briefly introducing neurocognitive insights on charismatic authority in intercessory prayer interactions (fMRI), we present a recent study that shows how the translator's authority affects the reading experience and theological understanding of the Bible among students of theology. Using eye-tracking data we demonstrate how participants' eye movements predict such effects. Finally, combining neural recordings with eye-tracking, we look for new ways to experimentally approach an important hypothesis: namely, that strong beliefs in religious experts may prevent believers from detecting conflicting information in religious practices in order to facilitate authoritative religious experiences and interpretations.

## Production of Religious Knowledge

**André De Campos Silva:** Changes in discourse regarding the relationship between humans and deities in the ancient Egyptian wisdom instructions

In ancient Egypt's "wisdom literature" there were several differences, in form and content, from one historical period to another. Here the subgenre of the "instructions" of the Middle and New Kingdoms (c. 2010–1630, c. 1539–1069 BCE, respectively) will be considered. Chiefly among the changes from the Middle to New Kingdoms' instructions that will be addressed are: the contributions from the wider New Kingdom phenomenon known as "personal piety" – leading to the depiction of a closer relationship between humans and gods –, and the seeming replacement of connective justice (Ma'at) by arbitrary divine will. In this paper an analysis will be undertaken of what made possible these changes in the instructions' discourse regarding the way the relationship between humans and deities was presented and used by the authors of these texts, and

of how the new ideas coexisted with the intensive copying of Middle Kingdom instructions in New Kingdom schools.

**Augusto Cosentino:** The exorcisms of King Solomon

There is a tradition in Jerusalem, according to which King Solomon possesses powers of exorcism. The Judeo-Christian text titled “Testament of Solomon” speaks of these powers and of the fight of Solomon against demons. According to this ideology, there are many amulets which describe King Solomon fighting against a female demon. This idea developed within a Solomonic fringe of Judaism, and is then taken up within some Christian circles, developing into esoteric forms of magical demonology. It is necessary to point out, even in terminology, the fine line between magic and exorcism: in the case of Solomon this border is not entirely clear. It is possible that the development of the topos of Solomon as magician affected the traditions about Jesus. It should be noted that after the closure of the sanctuary of Solomon in Jerusalem, the objects contained in it were moved into the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

**Chiara Crosignani:** Philosophical meaning and functions of demons in a Christian context

The aim of my paper is to demonstrate the changes in Christian demonology in the first three centuries CE. The Hebrew Philo of Alexandria and some of the Christian authors (Origen above all) aim to discard the fear about demons: in order to do that they use the philosophic notion of *daímon*, which Philo and Origen are well aware of. Philo only reads the Ancient Testament, where demons are almost never quoted, hence explaining that evil spirits do not exist; however, Christian authors must accept their existence because evil spirits are widely present in the Gospels. My aim is to demonstrate that the most important change in Christian demonology derives from Origen, who explains the nature of demons by rationalizing the demonic system presented by the Gospels and by Paul’s Letters: he makes Christian demonology suitable in the context of Greek philosophy, without denying its Christian features.

**Gabriele Coura:** Monastic life in nineteenth-century Tibet: normative texts by the First Kongtrul

The First Kongtrul Rinpoche, Lodrö Taye (1813–1899), was an outstanding figure in Tibetan religious history. Trained not only in Buddhism, but also in painting, medicine and Sanskrit, he was active in the non-sectarian (Rimé) movement, established the three-year retreat as a form of monastic training, as well as a center for its practice, and was a prolific writer. Among the texts authored by him, some treat various aspects of conduct appropriate for a Buddhist practitioner. Based on several of these writings, either already published in English or newly translated from Tibetan, the paper investigates Kongtrul’s approach to monastic discipline: To what extent is it innovative, to what extent conservative? Why did he

consider innovation necessary? Which strategies of legitimization did he use? What was his view on the teacher-student relationship? How did the discipline requirements for three-year retreatants differ from those for members of open monastic communities?

**Katrin Killinger:** Beyond the divide between religion and medicine: the Carakasamhita and the Ayurvedic knowledge system

The medical system of Ayurveda was shaped during a power struggle between heterodox and orthodox religious groups in ancient India. As a result of this dynamic interchange, the earliest complete surviving document of Ayurvedic medicine, the Carakasamhita (100 BCE–400 CE), was compiled. Calling attention to the interconnectedness of religions and medicine in this Sanskrit source, the paper asks whether or not it is suitable to regard the medical theory of Ayurveda as secular or whether we can consider the Carakasamhita a religious document. Challenging in turn both assumptions, the paper shows how Indian medical discourse drew on Vedic and Buddhist traditions as well as aspects of Samkhya philosophy. Consequently, Ayurvedic medicine constitutes an innovative knowledge system that can only be comprehended in its historical and methodological relevance when we acknowledge the transformative and integrative power of traditional religious discourse, thus going beyond the divide between religion and secular medicine.

**Shriya Bandyopadhyay:** Dharmā-thakūr, the “Healer of Wounds” and its peasant followers in eighteenth-century Bengal

The cult of Dharmā-thakūr was very popular in eighteenth-century Bengal, mainly among the marginal people of village society – agricultural laborers, landless peasants, manual scavengers. They imagined their divine as a lord supreme who was harsh, benevolent and a healer of wounds. This paper explores how changes in the land revenue system under Nawāb Murshid Quli Khan and harsh methods of revenue collection were reflected in the imagination of God-head and religious rituals of certain agricultural communities. The discussion will be based on a combined study of the Dharmā-maṅgal religious genre and Gājan ceremony of the cult worshippers. In Gājan the worshippers of Dharmā practiced arduous rituals by self-infliction of bodily pain to satisfy their God. The paper also looks at the process of Brahmanical adaptation of Dharma texts through control over literacy in order to incorporate the margins of society into mainstream Hinduism.

## Protestant Emotional Practices: Scales of Proximity & Christian Missions in Comparative Perspective

### Panel Chair: Simon Coleman

This panel offers a comparative analysis of the role of emotional practices, including rhetorics, affective economies, and bodily displays in three different early-twentieth-century Protestant missionary contexts, including settings within Germany, England, Canada, First Nations territory on the Northwest Coast, and Africa. We begin our comparison with the frame of “scales of proximity”, by which we mean varying levels of intimacy and distance in the human relationships framed and advocated by missionary practice. We ask how emotional practices in local contexts work to generate and sustain wider networks of missionary funding, allegiance, and norms of the Protestant self in relation to a variety of posited “others”.

**Monique Scheer:** Questioning Evangelical emotions in Wilhelmine Germany

The late nineteenth century saw an influx of missionaries from Protestant “sects”, mostly from England and the United States, into the newly formed German Empire. These denominations, stemming from traditions other than the Lutheran-Calvinist brand of German Protestantism (e.g. Methodist, Baptist), did not convert massive numbers of believers, but they were a thorn in the side of the established church. In this paper, I focus on the monitoring of the emotional practices of these evangelizing groups, as between 1880 and 1910, critics devoted a great deal of attention to the displays of feeling at their assemblies. In their critiques of traveling preachers from the Holiness Movement and the activities of the Salvation Army, Lutheran observers negotiated what place to allocate to religious feelings in German Protestantism in general. Their critiques turned not only on the issue of emotional norms, but also on what conceptions of the self they underpin.

**Rebekka Habermas:** Global ties of religious compassion: German missionaries around 1900

Missionary work in Africa, Asia or the Americas around 1900 depended on the financial and emotional support from the home mission societies as well as from so-called “mission friends.” Beyond these groups, even women and men only loosely connected to the mission organizations gave money, clothes and little presents to the mission. Without this support, German Protestant missionaries, who exclusively relied on donations, would not have been able to establish their broad net of mission stations. But how could this support be gained, how could stable and long-lasting ties between the missionaries, the “heathens” and these supporters be built up? This paper addresses the question how emotional

ties over great distances could be established between German mission supporters and the so-called heathens in West and East Africa. On which specific religious and perhaps even Protestant forms of compassion were these global ties grounded, and how were they shaped?

**Pamela Klassen:** Emotional appeals in a settler colony: Protestant missionaries in early-twentieth-century British Columbia

This paper focuses on the role of emotion in Anglican missionaries' appeals for financial support for two kinds of missions – those they called “Indian work” and “white work” – during the early phase of settler colonialism in northwestern British Columbia. As missionaries pleaded with church leaders and laypeople in Toronto and England to send them more money and more “men”, they shifted between appeals for funds for work with Indians and appeals for funds for missions to the white settlers streaming into the region along with the railway. Putting these appeals in the context of conflicts regarding Indigenous sovereignty and regarding intra-Christian competition for missions (with the Salvation Army as a persistent threat), I show how local, affectively shaped conflicts on the northwest Coast shaped the rhetoric and relative success of these missions within their broader international network.

**Simon Coleman:** Response

## **Publicly Funded Islamic Education in Europe: A Story of Adaptation and Transformation to Context**

**Panel Chair: Jenny Berglund**

Since the time of 9/11 and the Madrid/London bombings, public debate about Islam and Muslims has directed attention towards places of Islamic education with a focus on the often controversial and contested manner in which they have been depicted in the media, in public discourse and within Muslim communities themselves. In Europe, numerous Muslim children, teenagers, and even adults attend privately run supplementary classes on Islam in the afternoons or on weekends, while others are taught at home or attend private schools. An emerging option in European countries is to provide publicly funded Islamic education – an alternative that lies at the heart of questions concerning religious freedom, equal rights to education, integration and social cohesion, but that is also connected to issues of securitization and the control of Islam. The aim of this panel is to provide presentations of publicly funded pre-university Islamic education and to discuss the transformation and adaptation of Islamic education within European contexts.

**Tuula Sakaranaho:** Putting religious rights into practice: Islamic Education in Finland and Ireland

In Finland and the Republic of Ireland, Islamic Education is adapted to a “denominational pattern,” although in different contexts respectively. In both countries, Muslims who are active with respect to Islamic (Religious) Education seem to work harmoniously with the state authorities towards the goal of a multicultural society in accordance with state policies concerning integration and education. My presentation will analyze the case of Islamic education in Finland and Ireland from the perspective of action coordination involving both the state and their Muslim counterparts. In this way I will illustrate some of the complexities involved in putting religious rights into practice in a multicultural society.

**Damian Breen:** Increased state-funded Islamic schooling as a pathway to political enfranchisement for British Muslims

The expansion of state-funded Muslim schools in Britain has developed against a backdrop of key moments in global public consciousness such as the attacks of September 11, 2001, the declaration of the “war on terror” and more recent anxieties around the rise of the “Islamic State” (ISIS). At the national level, further questions have been raised in the media and far right political movements about the compatibility of Islam and “Englishness” following the death of Lee Rigby in May 2013. Through a Critical Race Theory (CRT) analysis, this paper argues that existing and emergent frameworks for state faith schooling have failed to meet the requirements of British Muslim communities. This has a dual effect. Firstly, education is lost as a key site for developing partnerships and fostering increased political enfranchisement for British Muslim communities. Secondly, Muslim interests become displaced from mainstream British politics, reinforcing Islamophobic public narratives of “otherness”.

**Elena Arigita:** Teaching Islam and about Islam in the Spanish public system: the confessional and the cultural approach to a controversial heritage

Is Islam part of Spain as a cultural and historical formation and identity? If we observe this issue through the lens of education, we will see how the subject of “History of Spain” and that named “Religion” (which is given as part of an agreement with the officially recognized confessions) interact in the school to create a narrative that makes Islam part of a historical past and represents an immigrant minority. This paper will look at this interaction within primary schools through interviews with a group of teachers of the subject named “Islam” to learn about their own training and the requirements and processes to be allowed to teach Islam, about the curricula and about the challenges that are posed by the secular frame of a school system with the aim of training their pupils in the Islamic tradition in a country whose Islamic heritage keeps being a source of controversy.

**Jenny Berglund:** A litmus test on state relations to Muslim minorities

In this presentation I will compare and analyze state funded Islamic education in five European countries (Austria, France, Germany, Sweden, UK) pointing to the transformations and adaptations that Muslim communities have, on different levels, done to fit into each educational setting. The presentation shows that issues of integration, social cohesion, but also Islamophobia in each national setting affect what in the end becomes Islamic education. I will argue that it is possible to understand publicly funded religious education as a litmus test for church-state relations and that the specific study of publicly funded Islamic education can be seen as a litmus test for the relation between various Western democracies and their Muslim minority populations.

### ***Quaerendum est in litteris quod non est in actis: Issues of Religious Historiography in Scholarly Correspondences***

**Panel Chair: Giovanni Casadio**

Correspondences as a literary genre have proven to be, in the last years, an important key to reading religious historiography, both in order to obtain access to the Lebenssitz of scholars and to put concepts, debates, developments, structures and changes in their respective contexts. Hence, the religious-historical methodology cannot afford to neglect such a literary genre, given its character as “etic” representation approaching the research object with an immediacy and originality that only personal communications can have: a freshness enriching scientific narration at all its levels with new and sometimes unexpected points of view. This panel intends to present some recent publications dealing with particularly significant exchanges of letters in the European area. The panel was launched with a half-open structure: besides the fixed books presentation (correspondences between Pettazzoni–Rose, Cumont–Loisy, and Weirich–Nilsson), it cordially invited researchers to contribute to it with further proposals of publication projects.

**Giovanni Sorge:** The correspondence Eliade–Jung

Starting from their encounter at the Eranos meeting in 1950, Eliade and Jung developed a mutual interest for each other’s field of research. This is witnessed in their correspondence, alongside with Eliade’s attempt to promote the diffusion of Jungian ideas in French. Although they moved from different perspectives, they dealt with the psychic surfacing of archetypal constants. In any case, the Jungian concept of the collective unconscious does not coincide with that of the transconscious according to Eliade. In fact, an epistolary discussion on the symbolism of the mandala, which took place in 1955, shows, alongside the

undeniable convergences in their approach to the phenomenon of the sacred, their different theoretical and philosophical assumptions and, consequently, their different conceptions of the psyche. The paper is focused on this theoretic plexus in the context of the human and intellectual relationship between the two scholars.

**Giovanni Casadio:** The correspondence Weinreich–Nilsson

For at least forty years, the review “Archiv für Religionswissenschaft” was a fundamental reference point for German and international history of religions. Its originality consisted not only of its openness to foreign contributors, but also of the active participation of a non-German editor (M. P. Nilsson) as well as in the cooperation with the Swedish Society for History of Religions for about twenty years, which decisively assisted this journal both on the financial and the scientific level. The correspondence between the Swedish Nilsson and the German Otto Weinreich, both editors of the “Archiv”, delineates very well, as M. Dürkop remarks in her book, this cooperation, with particular attention to the German *Altertumswissenschaft* during the interwar period.

**Peter Antes:** The correspondence Pettazzoni–Rose

D. Accorinti’s imposing volume presents the edition of the correspondence between the second IAHR president (1950–1959) and an eminent British-Canadian scholar, who were united by a very deep friendship and scientific cooperation. During his whole academic life, Pettazzoni strove to defend the unity and irreducibility of religion as a human phenomenon, without ever yielding to any theologism or reductionism and constantly applying a sound philological scientific method. As G. Casadio argues in his preface, Rose was an expert of Greek and Roman religions and folklore with “a natural instinct for cross-cultural comparison”, an instinct which greatly assisted him in his very competent translations of Pettazzoni’s works into English. This correspondence offers insights not only into the writing processes of the Italian scholar, but also into the origins and development of the IAHR and its official review *NVMEN*.

**Annelies Lannoy:** The Correspondence Loisy–Cumont

The correspondence between Alfred Loisy and Franz Cumont extends for more than thirty years and consists of over 400 letters. Very rich in substance, it gives a unique overview of the genesis of the works of both scholars, who use their correspondence to provide a sort of analysis and structuring instrument for their leading ideas regarding varied topics: Christianity (above all in its relation with mystery religions), Gnosticism, Manichaeism, Mandaeism, as well as methodological questions like the definition of the notion of “religion” and its socio-political effects. Moreover, the letters reflect on the role and the evolution of the history of religions and related disciplines, and can be seen as a mirror of

coeval society, with numerous reflections on its political, religious, and cultural aspects.

**Corinne Bonnet, Danny Praet:** Responses

**Alessandro Stavru:** The correspondence Frobenius–W. F. Otto

This paper will deal with scientific and personal issues surfacing from the correspondence between the ethnologist Leo Frobenius (1873–1938) and the philologist Walter F. Otto (1874–1958). The extant letters – enriched by other documents available in the Nachlässe of the two scholars – testify the development of their relationship from 1924 to 1938. Frobenius and Otto became close friends a couple of years after their first “official” contact in 1924 (when Otto made possible the transfer of Frobenius’ *Forschungsinstitut für Kulturmorphologie* from Munich to Frankfurt, as well his appointment to honorary professor in 1932 and, in 1935, to director of the municipal *Museum für Völkerkunde*). Their personal friendship was at the core of the “*Religionswissenschaftliche Frankfurter Schule*”, in which eminent scholars took part in the decade between 1924 and 1934. The scientific and personal background of this school and other significant collaborations is well documented in this correspondence, which strikes both for its immediacy and scholarly interest.

**Chiara O. Tommasi:** The correspondence Pettazzoni–Widengren

The proposed paper sets the basis for the publication of the letters between Raffaele Pettazzoni and Geo Widengren. Although fewer in number if compared to other epistolaries of Pettazzoni, these letters represent an interesting document to reconstruct Pettazzoni’s scholarly legacy (which has been recently reassessed by many specific studies). Between 1948 and 1956, Widengren and Pettazzoni mainly discussed questions like the establishment of the International Association of the History of Religions and its official review, “*Numen*”, providing therefore interesting insight on its very beginning; at the same time, scholarly issues are occasionally debated, especially those concerning Iranian religion, according to Widengren’s unparalleled experience.

**Daniela Dumbrava:** The correspondence Bianchi–Culianu

The primary aim of this paper is to present the correspondence between Ugo Bianchi (1922–1995), a leading Italian historian of religions who was IAHR President (1990–1995), and his Romanian disciple Ioan Petru Culianu (1950–1991), an internationally renowned figure in the historical and scientific study of religions, and involves reviewing topics of Bianchi’s methodology and the manner in which Culianu evolved following his encounter with the Italian “maestro”. The specific aim of this paper is to give an overview of “method in religious studies” moving from the constant methodological contrast between Bianchi and Culianu and argue that its overcoming is a key motive in the academic correspondence between the two scholars. Seldom addressed in the growing number of studies

dedicated to them, dualism and ascension stand out as problematic issues in several pages of their correspondence. Thus the second part of the paper will address the ways in which Culianu uses these terms at variance with Bianchi's standard terminologies.

**Riccardo Nanini:** The correspondence Kerényi–Buber

Although being Religionswissenschaftler with quite different interests and temperaments, the Hungarian transplanted to Switzerland Károly Kerényi (1897–1973) and Martin Buber (1878–1965), the German Jew soon moved to Jerusalem, esteem and frequent each other for a long time, as their correspondence (1947–1963), conserved at the Deutsches Literaturarchiv in Marbach, shows. The mythologist Kerényi and the philosopher of religion Buber, though with different accents, are both asserters of a creative religious primordiality (Kerényi calls it *Grundmacht*) that has to be preserved from the *Urgefahr*, the risk of reification and institutionalization of religion, and reveal in this exchange of letters their ability to relativize the distance between their fields of research as well as cultural worlds, namely Greek and Roman antiquity on the one side and Jewish tradition and thought on the other, on behalf of a common humanism that becomes fertile ground for mutual intuitions, influences and references.

**Valerio Salvatore Severino:** The correspondences between Italian and Polish historians of religions

This paper proposes an in-depth look at the impact of the Cold War on the European academic studies of religion, focusing on the correspondences between Polish and Italian historians of religions in the second half of the twentieth century. Pointing out the tensions between the two Occidental capitals of Christianity and Communism, Rome and Warsaw, the paper proceeds to discuss the role of such epistolary correspondences in shaping a new East/West debate. The research will aim at evaluating whether these letters cross or build ideological frontiers on the topics of secularism and atheism, and at investigating if and in what measure these documents were pieces in the mosaic of European integration.

## Questions Raised and Answered by Laboratory Studies of Religion

**Panel Chair: Panagiotis Mitkidis**

After describing the core features of “laboratory experiments” in the social sciences, this panel will spotlight some questions answered and raised by simple experimental studies of religious phenomena. When well-designed, experiments offer tests of competing causal explanations concerning the extent to which as-

pects of religious phenomena are physiologically and psychologically embedded. We emphasize the value of multidisciplinary teams (historians, anthropologists, psychologists, and physiologists) in identifying suitable hypotheses and finalizing designs. Studies designed in this way avoid decontextualization, in that they are motivated and informed by historical and anthropological records of specific practices and concepts. We will discuss experiments on the practices of kneeling, prostration and meditation, as well as on the concept of “luck”. With respect to each, we will show the necessity of a multidisciplinary approach in addressing surprising and tangential findings.

**Radek Kundt:** Laboratory experiment as a part of the religious studies scholar’s toolkit

After introducing the strengths and weaknesses of the social-scientific laboratory experiment, I will focus on its ability to decide between competing hypotheses. I will argue that Religious Studies can use it for the same purpose. As a showcase, I will use the hotly debated issue of religious prosociality, an issue in evolutionary research on religion. Here, rival hypotheses compete for supporting empirical evidence (increased cooperation, generosity, reciprocity, trust and altruism; reduced cheating, etc.). One hypothesis considers religious prosociality to be an expression of parochial in-group favoritism, suggesting that it is a mere by-product of our coalitional psychology. The other sees religious prosociality as extending even to out-groups, arguing that it might be an adaptation. I will use this case as an example of how highly influential wide-ranging theories boil down to empirical testing and how experimental research can in the end play the essential role of an arbiter.

**Eva Kundtová Klocová:** Look up and kneel down before your God: why the position matters

Most religious traditions emphasize strict power distinctions between the human and superhuman/divine and often demand a submissive attitude towards the superhuman agents. This attitude can be enforced not only directly in the teachings and theology of the given religious tradition, but also by ritual practices using embodied states of submission, such as kneeling, prostrating or looking up to the representation of deity. I argue that these practices in religious rituals are not mere expressions of subordination; rather, they establish and modulate submissive attitude and behavior towards the superhuman agents. Experimental evidence supports this assertion for other bodily postures and the vertical orientation of perception. There is however no exhaustive research program focusing on submissive positions and dominance cues in religious rituals. The proposed paper will present experimental research exploring the influence of posture and location of stimuli on the perceptions and self-perceptions of power and dominance.

**Anastasia Ejova:** Factors underlying human concepts of luck: preliminary results and methodological recommendations

Case studies of “concepts of luck” in ancient and modern societies share the conclusion that luck is conceived of as both a higher power and a personal quality: that is, as both a guardian spirit and a power one is born with. I will present one possible interpretation of this apparent contradiction, focusing on common features of the two conceptions. Psychological studies suggest that, as both a higher power and a personal quality, luck is concluded to be at play when outcomes are of high importance. Likewise, in both its manifestations, luck is conceived of as involving sudden reversals. Underlying the concept might then be the memorability of significant life events and the correct perception of them as arising from a mixture of deservingness (personal skills, just reward by higher powers) and pure randomness. A survey methodology for testing this interpretation will be discussed.

## **Rearrangement of Traditional Religious Concepts and Practices in Contemporary China**

### **Panel Chair: Chiyoko Nagatani**

Since the late 1990s, the government of China has been reevaluating religions and utilizing them for national unity and moral rebuilding. Chinese citizens seem to welcome the trend rather than rejecting it as a new type of propaganda. How is it possible under the banner of Chinese socialism? How are the governmental activities related to everyday religious habits and practices of the general public? What do modern Chinese people think is the ideal or practical function of religious traditions? By accumulating concrete examples studied from an anthropological point of view, we aim to draw a new picture of the emerging composition of religion on the canvas of contemporary lives of the Chinese people. The positional differences of the three traditional religions, Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism will be depicted. We also believe we can understand the process of recycling religious ideas into a secular sense of values.

**Chiyoko Nagatani:** New Buddhism for Chinese local city dwellers  
Until the early 1980s, in Marxist theory, Buddhism was seen as an unproductive religion unneeded in the modern world. However, in last three decades, there are many reports that Buddhism is being revived in many places in China. What are the characteristics of the new Buddhism in contemporary China? In this presentation, I focus on a Buddhist circle in Yunnan province. In the circle, different from the traditional one belonging to Guanyin temple, there are many male members and comparatively highly educated people including a doctor, teach-

ers, and political cadres. They mainly observe Tibetan Buddhism service, but also accept Mahayana Buddhism, Hinayana Buddhism and Confucianism. They take these thoughts as one traditional Chinese thought, and see Buddhism not as religion, but as a traditional style of education. By listening to the circle members' voices, I try to analyze what Buddhism is in people's minds in the new era.

**Yusuke Bessho:** From “ethnic culture” to “ecological culture”: the new-reformed concept of “primitive religion” in contemporary Tibet

Because of the environmental damage caused by river disasters in the second half of the 1990s, environmental awareness of the Tibetan High Plateau has rapidly increased at the national level in China. In the context of frontier governance policies pertaining to environmental security, Tibetan religion is broadly claimed as an ecological culture. In particular, outside groups such as Chinese scholars, politicians, and domestic NGOs have highly evaluated some elements of Buddhist thought such as altruism and the abstention from killing, as well as the so-called “primitive religion” (Yuan-Shi-Zong-Jiao) of Tibet. In their viewpoint, Tibetans' religious culture is idealized as a foundation of a sustainable system of environmental management and ecological life. After describing the total picture of this new cultural context, I will investigate its practical value and meaning for local social agents in the contemporary Tibetan society while considering the impact of governmental policies in their daily life.

**Akira Nishimura:** Response

## **Re-framing the History of New Religious Movements: Dominant and Non-Dominant Religions in the Historical Imagination**

### **Panel Chair: Michael Driedger**

This panel addresses basic methodological questions in the study of New Religious Movements (NRMs). While diversity of methods characterize this field, scholars in it tend to assume that NRMs are groups that have emerged in the “modern” era and can be distinguished from traditional world religions (for example, see George Chryssides, *The Historical Dictionary of New Religious Movements*, 2nd edn, 2012). The four panelists address the field's basic assumptions, including the relationship between definitions and chronologies. The panelists' purpose is to consider whether such assumptions are helpful or whether they, in fact, inhibit understanding of both historical cases and contemporary religious movements. We expect one outcome of the panel to be a theoretical contribution

to broader discussions of “radical” religion and concomitant social and intellectual processes.

**Herbert Berg:** The study of Islamic origins and Nation-of-Islam-ic origins: chronocentric biases and normative claims in the modern and pre-modern dichotomy

When examining the formation of the Nation of Islam, scholars need not be “impartial” or “courteous.” One need not even consider it a religion. The opposite approach is demanded in the study of Islamic origins; scholarship that does not conform to the basic narrative provided by Muslim tradition is strongly criticized. I argue that the distinction between these modern and pre-modern religions is a chronocentric one. The NOI is new, Islam is older (though it was once just as new). The strangeness of NOI’s myths differs from its precursor only in familiarity, which is merely a variation of chronocentrism. This false dichotomy between modern and pre-modern religions assumes that the chronological priority of a traditional world religion gives it a normative priority. Maintaining this dichotomy requires scholars to make a judgment outside of their purview: to decide which religions are real (usually, the old ones with contemporary adherents) and which are not.

**Sita Steckel:** Re-evaluating religious movements of the Middle Ages

The term “religious movements” was firmly established in the study of high and late medieval Christianity by Herbert Grundmann’s 1935 study. Viewing orthodoxy and heterodoxy as relational ascriptions instead of intrinsic qualities of religious attitudes led him to view the new religious orders and new heretical movements of the high Middle Ages as closely related. The relational nature of heterodoxy/orthodoxy (or church/order/sect) ascriptions is broadly accepted by now. Yet the study of orders and heresies is still almost completely segregated within Medieval Studies, obscuring the nature of overarching dynamics. Furthermore, Grundmann’s perspective saw religious movements as transitional high medieval phenomena, though many similar phenomena appear during the Late Middle Ages and Reformations (usually studied as “reforms”). Using the example of the mendicant orders, the paper attempts to sketch a broader model of recurring waves of religious transformation instead, and tries to pinpoint dynamics and elements of “radicalization”.

**Andreas Pietsch:** The Family of Love as a sixteenth-century new religious movement

As has been shown by Goertz, the currents of the Reformation can be described as “religious movements”. Yet attempts to categorize them typically view them in hindsight: movements which were not gathered into larger denominations are viewed as “radical,” quite independently of their actual character. Where modern research followed contemporary labelings, groups defining themselves as

Catholic, such as the “Family of Love,” were seen as “sects.” This leads to an overall view of “churches” as static and “new movements” as dynamic. Taking up the categories used to describe NRMs, the paper argues that radicalizations should instead be studied across the modern categories of “church” or “sect” instead. It takes into account that many sixteenth-century movements were highly text-oriented and driven by reception processes: The texts produced by the Family of Love seem to have appealed to readerships within the established church as well as regional networks and small, sect-like communities.

**Johannes Wolfart:** Increasing religious diversity: a study in contemporary mythology

Many states are currently developing and implementing policies in conformity with expert academic advice on “religious diversity”. Preferred academic consultants insist that polities favored by global migrants are challenged by unprecedented levels of such religious diversity. Clearly, such historicist conceits have their political uses, but do assertions of a quantitatively different – and radically so – religious diversity stand up to intellectual scrutiny? What basic definitional presumptions vis-à-vis religious integrity or homogeneity (i. e., non-diversity) do they entail? What basic assumptions about the differences between past and present do they make? This paper proposes that a meaningful measure of “religious diversity” as a historical property must attend to the experience of religious difference. It concludes that in this regard early modern polities were no less “challenged” than their fully modern successors.

## Religion and Death

**Emanuele Lacca:** Buena muerte and postrimerías: how to explain in the seventeenth century the surviving of the individual soul after death

The concepts of buena muerte and postrimerías, developed by Spanish Jesuits in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, designate respectively the soul disposition that an individual needs to reconcile himself with God and the afterlife scenario that the individual will find at the end of his earthly life (death, judgement, hell, glory). One of the main aspects of this thesis deals with the continuity of soul existence between life and afterlife, and afterlife is completely determined by how earthly life has been lived. So, “die well” becomes the most important prerogative for a dying person. The goal of my paper is to investigate theological and philosophical elements that originated this theory, especially in the works of Luis de la Puente, Roberto Bellarmino, Juan Eusebio Nieremberg and Juan de Loyola, in which the authors, with advice directed to a “good death” and afterlife descriptions, help to believe in the reality of the “otherworld”.

**Ilja Musulin:** Death and religion in theory: a critical examination of the Rational Choice Theory of religion

The paper will examine the importance the Rational Choice Theory attaches to longing for immortality in its theoretical model of religion. A review of the past criticism of the theory, an analysis of its concept of religion and its perception of death-related religious beliefs, and the author's own critique will be presented. The paper will point out cultural and ideological elements in the RCT concept of religion that lead it to view beliefs in afterlife narrowly, excluding the actual religious diversity. The author will also try to demonstrate that this theory heavily relies on the notion that the greatest attraction of religion in general and the largest motivation behind religious faith is the fear-assuaging, comforting promise of afterlife, but that this basic theoretical tenet is adopted without due reference to empirical research on death anxiety and religion in the field of psychology, and is not fully supported by empirical evidence.

**Laura Follesa:** F.W.J. Schelling between philosophy and religion: the continuation of life after death

After the death of his wife (1809), F.W.J. Schelling composed a brief writing, *Clara*, about the continuation of individual life and personal relationships after death, which remained unpublished and uncompleted. The subtitle, *Über den Zusammenhang der Natur mit der Geisterwelt*, explains Schelling's thesis about a special "bond" between nature and spirit, as well as his involvement in Emanuel Swedenborg's ideas about the "world of the spirits" and the possibility of sensual relationships after physical death (e.g. *Conjugal Love*, 1768). Schelling presents the topic through a dialogue among several characters (a widow, a priest, a monk, a doctor), whose ideas often represent the different perspectives through which the author himself previously reflected on the problem. I will analyze these various positions, focusing on the author's ideas on "philosophy of nature," his "philosophy of identity," and other viewpoints leading back to different philosophical, religious and theosophical traditions.

**Shunichi Miyajima:** Thinking about Japanese spirituality in matters of life and death

The term "spiritual" can be taken to mean "religious", that is something universal and comprehensive, rather than as relating to a specific or traditional religion. Indeed, in modern times, we tend more and more not to follow or rely on notions of life and death as approved by a particular religion, but rather we are influenced in our views by contemporary thinking, mass media and so on. Such apparent diversity and modernism, however, is unlikely to lead to an immediate or radical change in the general attitude to life and death. In particular, people will not suddenly alter key life practices and ceremonies such as weddings and funerals. In Japan, for example, while there is a growing trend to-

wards more varied burial practices, such as adopting a Western style funeral, the long-established, orthodox Japanese form of funeral still predominates. Further, spirituality in Japan is often considered to be rooted in a particular Japanese perception or consciousness, but such a limited outlook is dangerous in that it can lead to the worst kind of nationalism. Accordingly, without dismissing tradition and custom out of hand, we should encourage and welcome the growing diversity of views and practices in Japan and elsewhere, even with such major issues as matters of life or death.

## Religion and Democracy in the Age of Globalization

### Panel Chair: Maria Marczevska-Rytko

It should be observed that the significance of the interrelation of religion and democracy is increasingly pressing as our interest drifts towards societies dominated by great, universalizing religions, Islam being only one of them. From the above, a question arises of whether the notions of religion and democracy, as mentioned in the title of the panel, are reconcilable within a single order in the first place. We can distinguish three types of such relations: religion favors democracy, is indifferent to democracy, or is harmful to democracy. In one point of view, religion is by nature contradictory to democratic order: it is in a sense its direct opposite. Supporters of an alternative viewpoint claim that in the long run, a democratic system is not viable without the basis of notions such as religion, and therefore religion does play a vital part in the social order. Finally, the third approach basically acknowledges the fact that no definitive claims can be made as to the possibility of agreement between religion and democracy. Nowadays, the concept of democracy is usually more specifically translated as liberal democracy, while democratic order is similarly equivalent to liberal-democratic order. While maintaining rationality, we may discuss the acceptance of democratic rules as a plausible basis for society. There are the issues stemming from various historical backgrounds and cultural roots. One of the most noteworthy questions is that of compatibility between the western type of democracy and the cultural conditioning of other civilizations. The above is in fact a significant question in these deliberations, as particular civilizational systems tend to turn to specific religious systems for the definition of roles to be played by the individual, the society, state and law in the established social order. We are interested in analyses connected with both theoretical and practical dimensions in the age of globalization.

**Maria Marczevska-Rytko:** Christian Democracy in the process of democratic transformation in Poland after 1989

The Christian Democratic movement invokes the principles of the social teachings of the Church. The problems of community, solidarity, subsidiarity and respect for private property are emphasized. The main hypothesis of the paper is that the Christian Democratic movement turned out to be internally differentiated both in terms of its program and its organization. Groups of centrist, right-of-centre and left-of-centre orientation can be distinguished. What is also important is the reconstruction of the general vision of the world presented by this political movement. It includes the main ideas and social conceptions of the particular currents of the Christian Democratic movement, particular attitudes regarding the role of religion and Churches, and social, political and economic questions in a modern democratic state.

**Marcin Pomarański:** The religious grounds of contemporary secessionist movements in the United States

Arguments justifying secession from the United States have been a feature of the country's politics almost since its birth. In the twenty-first century, dozens of different groups are seeking to achieve this goal. Among many social, political and economic factors that affect such decisions, religion played a special role. For a large part of the Americans involved in contemporary secessionist movements, religion remains the crucial component of local identity. The main goal of the presentation is to analyze the role of religion as a factor shaping contemporary secessionist movements in the United States. The author hypothesizes that in the case of American secessionist movements in the twenty-first century, religion could be used in two ways: as an integrating factor as well as a destabilizing one.

**Dorota Maj:** The Ecumenical Movement in Europe in the context of globalization

One of the most interesting phenomena in contemporary Europe is the Ecumenical Movement, which was launched in the late nineteenth century. The Ecumenical Movement is striving at global, regional, national and local levels for the unity of the Christian Churches. These efforts take the form of multilateral and bilateral dialogue. The modern ecumenical movement in Europe is mostly influenced by the relationship between non-Catholic organizations and the organizations of the Catholic Church. The scientific goal of this article is an analysis of the ecumenical movement in Europe in conditions of globalization, in particular: (1) the synthesis and analysis of historical, cultural and political aspects of ecumenical movement; (2) the description of the main ecumenical organizations in Europe; (3) the diagnosis of the contemporary state of the European ecumenical movement and the analysis of its possible future development.

## Religion and Economy

**Jelle Creemers:** Loyalty to God, trust in the state: adaptation and transformation in discourse on financial support in Belgian faith mission churches  
 Three Canadian Plymouth Brethren couples landed on Belgian soil in the 1970s to bring the Gospel to this Catholic nation. The “faith principle” was upheld, implying that support from newly established congregations was refused and converts were taught to trust God for all financial needs. Forty years later, a denomination with 26 churches (the Evangelische Christengemeenten Vlaanderen) is the fruit of this work. Ten Flemish Gospel workers now work fulltime in the ECV assemblies. The “faith principle” is still part of the theological discourse, but its meaning is shifting as ecclesial policies have changed fundamentally. Five of the workers are paid by a private foundation and the other five receive full salaries from the Belgian State as Protestant ministers. On the basis of interviews and archival research, this paper aims to uncover discursive evolutions regarding “the faith principle”, finances, and biblical hermeneutics in the praxis and principles of the ECV.

**Tetsuya Tanaka:** Regulating freedom of worship: Rani Sati temple management after the implementation of the commission of Sati (Prevention) Act in India

This paper analyzes the contemporary issue of the management of Rani Sati temple in Rajasthan, western India. This temple commemorates a legendary widow from the Jalan lineage of the Agrawal caste, who was alleged to have conducted a custom of widow immolation, namely Sati, in 1295, and who became one of the most famous Satimatas (deifications of the immolated widows) in India. Since the Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act was implemented to prohibit worship of the immolated widows in 1988, the temple has begun lawsuits to protect the basic right of religious freedom against public interference by the Rajasthan State. The precedents of court battles show that the legal legitimacy of the Act is ambiguous. While the Indian state must prohibit Satimata worship, it must also protect the right of religious freedom. This paper discloses multiple discourses of the “freedom of worship” in the regulated Hindu temple.

**Toshiki Shimizu:** Economic theology: constructing the concept of man-wealth relationship from calling to charity through early modern British religious discourses

I provide a systematization of “economic theology”. By this term I mean economic discourses within theology, specifically, on the man-wealth relationship and its connection to fundamental religious values, like God and salvation. My formulatory focus here is on secular labor as God’s calling and on charity as a religiously-sanctioned economic action, in other words, wealth-gaining

and wealth-using in faithful forms. My material focus is on eighteenth century British thinkers, especially on John Wesley, a theologian and leader of a popular religious movement. Max Weber mis-cited Wesley in his religio-economic history a century ago, and has thus been criticized. However, by extending Weber's views on the religious or aesthetic use of wealth, we can construct another new framework for religio-economic history. Wesley's "economic theology" – and comparing it in various traditions he inherited – clarifies the diversity in the early modern West, and helps in reconstructing the historical view of the religion-economy relation.

## **Religion and Education in the Age of Globalization: The Attempt of Education in Religious Culture in Japan**

### **Panel Chair: Kikuko Hirafuji**

The numbers of foreigners living in Japan and Japanese working abroad are increasing in the advance of globalization. This social change requires that Japanese have not only to understand foreign religious culture but also to obtain the ability of understanding and explaining Japanese myths and religions. Additionally, since the sarin gas attack on the Tokyo subway in 1995 problems with "cults" have become a topic to be addressed in education. A novel approach to these problems is a Japanese university program called "Education in Religious Culture". In this panel, we will illustrate the problems concerning myths and education as well as problems with "cults". We will explain the background of the necessity for an Education in Religious Culture and discuss its contributions for society. Finally, we will compare the Japanese religious situation with that of the German multicultural society.

### **Kikuko Hirafuji: Myth education from a global perspective**

Teaching mythology had been a taboo in Japanese education since 1945. Part of the reason was that in previous years myths had been taught to justify Japanese colonialism and to arouse nationalism. Nowadays, however, primary school students must learn about Japanese myths in Japanese language classes. In the context of Education in Religious Culture for college students, the main theme of our panel, mythology has been identified as one of the main topics to be studied. In addition to this, myths are very attractive elements known through pop culture. Thus, due to the advance of globalization many young people in an information society like Japan are familiar with myths from all over the world. In my presentation, I look back at the history of Japanese mythology, and explore perspectives for teaching myths and mythology in an age of globalization.

**Yoshihide Sakurai:** Religious diversity and university education to prevent cult problems

In contemporary Japan, traditional, new, and foreign religions have expanded religious diversity and activities, which are protected by the constitutions that guarantee religious freedom and prohibit political intervention in religious affairs. As an unintended result, however, cult problems cannot be easily solved in such a context. The Aum (its successor: Aleph), which killed 28 people up to 1995, still has more than 1,500 members. And similarly the Unification Church, which committed fraud that caused damage of approximately 115.6 billion yen since 1987, is still active. To protect students against cults' solicitation on and off campus, the University Network for Cult Prevention was established in 2009 and facilitated exchanges of cults' information among 160 universities. I will explain the agenda for cult prevention in freshman seminars and counseling in universities, and then suggest what we should teach in a university curriculum to protect religious freedom and recover trust in religion in the public sphere.

**Nobutaka Inoue:** Religious culture education seen from global perspectives  
The religious culture education concept was developed in Japan in the 2000s following comparative research on how religion is taught from a secular perspective in Japan, Korea, and elsewhere in Asia as well as Europe. The research showed how cultural and institutional differences influence education about religious culture. The concept is an approach that would permit teaching about religious culture in Japan even in public schools guided by the principle of church-state separation. The goal is to provide basic knowledge and appropriate understandings of domestic and foreign religions as the era of globalization demands. The Center for Education in Religious Culture was established in Tokyo in January 2011, and a system created for educators to obtain certifications as specialists in religious culture. This system is in keeping with Japanese educational and administrative precedents, however, and as such there may be limits on this model's applicability to other countries.

**Birgit Staemmler:** Comparing religious education in globalizing Germany and Japan

The religious landscape in Germany has changed considerably since the immediate postwar period when legislation regarding religious education in schools was promulgated. The traditional dual monopoly of the Roman Catholic and the Protestant Christian churches that had been put in charge of religious education at schools has been weakened through secularization as well as supplemented by growing Muslim communities. These changes are reflected by an increasing number of pupils taught in "ethics" rather than "religious education" and by heated discussions about suitable religious education for Muslim pupils.

This paper will complement the preceding papers by briefly introducing the religious education systems in German schools. It will then compare the Japanese and the German situations with special (critical) attention to religious education in the face of globalization and religious pluralism.

## Religion and Material Culture

**Dhrubajyoti Sarkar:** A prophet's sin city: revisiting materiality in nineteenth-century Calcutta

Piggyback on the material splendour of colonial Calcutta were extremely partisan reactions to its material practices. Manifestations of such partisan approaches could be found in the literary adulation of the city as the mythical sea of milk that houses the goddess of wealth Lakshmi (*kamalāyā*), on the one hand, to numerous others denouncing the sin city as a heap of corrupting materials. This paper proposes to look at the contemporary saint Sri Ramakrishna's attitude to material and material practices which can be an interesting study that manifests various contradictions and complexities of this "objective" interaction.

**George Ioannides:** The matter of meaning and the meaning of matter: explorations for the material study of religious discourse

This paper investigates the relationship between discourse and materiality in recent discursive approaches to theory and method in the study of religion. It responds both to Hjelm's (2014) and von Stuckrad's (2013) characterization of a discursive analysis of religion that simultaneously acknowledges that there is a material reality outside of discourse, affirming non-discursive practices. In so doing, it proposes a "new materialist" methodological approach to the study of past and present dynamics of religious discourse, utilizing contemporary critical theory (Barad 2007), separate from studies of "material religion", that has engaged materiality in its heterogeneous agencies and performative vitalities. By analyzing representations of matter and discourse in the case of the study of religious cinema, a medium simultaneously material yet immaterial, discursive yet non-discursive, this paper will show how new materialist theory presents the study of religious discourse and materiality with an alternative, yet more rigorous and integrated methodological approach.

**Marcela Garcia-Probert:** Amulets under the light of *ziyāra*

Amulets are widely used and play an important role in the popular religiosity of Palestinian Muslims. Amulets have mainly been studied from the perspective of magical practices where they have been considered, following a very general reading of the Sunni canonical discourse, as part of deviant practices from main-

stream Islam. Amulets, however, should also be understood as a means to get blessings within the context of ziyāra. Ziyāra, although lacking the authority of Scripture, is a widespread phenomenon of visiting tombs and shrines of holy persons that involves complex rituals and material culture. This paper aims to examine some selected amulets from the Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets obtained and used in connexion with the ziyāra rituals, analyzing their role in the religious life of certain Palestinian Muslim communities in connexion with their own practice and conception of Islam.

## Religion and Media in East Asia: Theories and Concepts

### Panel Chairs: Erica Baffelli, Stefania Travagnin

This roundtable will assess the state of the scholarship in the emerging sub-field of the study of religion and media in East Asia, and contextualize the contribution of this literature to the overall field of religion and media. Through a selection of studies from Japan, Mainland China, Taiwan, Korea, and Tibet, this panel will outline key concepts, theories, and methods that constitute the foundation for research on the theme, address issues such as relations and tension between offline and online religions and religious communities, and media challenges to religious authority. Furthermore it will discuss problems and questions for future investigations. The six speakers (from universities based in Japan, the Netherlands, United Kingdom and United States) have been conducting extensive study on the field and are a representative group of the larger research team “Religion and the Media in East Asia” that is virtually hosted in the Centre for the Study of Religion and Culture in Asia, University of Groningen.

Participants: **Amy Holmes-Tagchungdarpa, John Shultz, Paul Farrelly**

## Religion and Political Identity

**Eila Helander:** The changing role of national churches in the European Union: a case study of Finland

EU membership brings a new dimension to the research on state-church-relations. The changing role of the nation-state in the EU and the increasing transfer of powers to Brussels have put the national churches in a new situation. This paper focuses on how a national church, the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland (ELCF), perceives its role in the changing political situation and what kind of strategies it employs to secure its interests. Data consists of interviews and written documents. The public religion and advocacy points of view form

the theoretical framework. Results reveal that the ELCF shows signs of adopting a more proactive role in the political field than has been the case in the past. The deepening of Europe's integration cannot be overlooked when studying the role of religion in the public domain even at the national level; state-church-relations extend beyond the national boundaries.

**Gunilla Gunner:** Memory politics, materiality and collective identities: St. Catherine Swedish Congregation in St. Petersburg around the turn of two centuries

St. Catherine Swedish Congregation in St. Petersburg has been attributed properties and values, and formed an arena for a wide range of people from Sweden, Finland and other countries. There are major differences between the cosmopolitan St. Petersburg around 1900 and the post-Soviet city in 2000, but the common history with collective memories, and material remnants of buildings, archives and sites are conspicuous. The major political changes starting in the 1990s illustrate the altering history in this multi-religious city. This paper investigates and compares the role that this church has played in two periods in order to detect the political, economic and religious changes as well as cultural continuity. The building and its function as an arena for collective and individual memory and identity formation is the focus. Memory politics and analysis of political and religious use of history are combined with the international field called cultural memory studies.

**Maximilian Herchen:** Between politics and religion: the Corpus Christi Feast and the Day of the Proletarian Child in the First Republic of Austria  
My paper inquires into the relationship between politics and religion in the First Republic of Austria. In the First Republic the Social Democrats and the Christian Socials were the predominant social, cultural, and political forces contending for the power of interpretation and domination in society. In order to grasp these struggles, I will focus on selected public religious and secular festivals which I will analyze using approaches from ritual studies. Such festivals enable comparative analysis in the border area between religion and politics, and they allow us an insight into the rivalries as well as the conscious appropriation of the respective other's celebrations, symbolism, and language. My two case studies will be the public celebrations of the Corpus Christi Feast and the Day of the Proletarian Child in Vienna.

**Tomasz Niezgoda:** In the face of political nonbeing: sacralization of the Polish nation

It seems that for the history of Poland crucial factors are events of partition in the eighteenth century and the loss of independence in 1918. Since then the religious traditions of Poland refer to the meaning and persistence of the Polish nation. I would like to show two different cases of sacralization of the nation. The first

case is the messianism of the romantic poet Adam Mickiewicz who created a myth of Poland as the second Christ, the messiah of nations creating an eschatological realm of freedom. The second example is Antrovis, a contemporary Polish UFO NRM (New Religious Movement) founder. For Antrovis, the Polish nation is responsible for the restoration of all beings to unity with the universe. Despite the differences between these two movements one thing seems enduring – the sacralization of nation in the face of political nonbeing. In my paper I would like to discuss the nature of this sacralization.

## Religion and Public Space

**Albert De Jong:** The dissolution of religious diversity in the Middle East. Hardly any theory worth mentioning exists on the question of how religions die, and what the role of students of religion should be when they face the imminent disappearance of the communities they work with. Much can be learned, in this respect, from colleagues in linguistics, who have been debating “language death” for generations. These questions have become extremely urgent in the Middle East, since many communities that have existed in the Middle East for very long periods, largely by remaining unnoticed, now face almost certain extinction, for a variety of reasons, some external (displacement; persecution; rape, murder and slavery), some internal (the inability to bring outsiders into the community; difficulty in communicating what the religion means and how it should be practiced; the dissolution of the authority of specialists; self-Islamization). By focusing on small groups, I hope to set the agenda for the very large question of “religion death”.

**Kumiko Yagi:** Decontextualization in Islamic jurisprudence: the fatwa in public space

Globalization has changed the environment in which Muslims live and has nullified some of the bases of Islamic jurisprudence. Nevertheless, Islamic law remains a crucial component of Islam. What makes it as relevant to people’s lives today as ever? The key to this question is the increasing accessibility of the fatwa, the legal opinion issued by a jurist. A fatwa was originally personal in the sense that it was issued to a recipient as a piece of advice. However, as the educational level of the Muslim public improved and mass media developed, important fatwas were published. Personal information such as the recipient’s name was deleted, and fatwas in public space were no longer personal advice, but became general guidelines open to public discussion. This created a space where ordinary Muslims other than jurists could play an active role and enabled Islamic jurisprudence to become adaptable to changes in society.

**Martin Klapetek:** Mosque in the European urban environment: center and periphery

The paper is devoted to the typology of Islamic prayer rooms in contemporary Germany. The text focuses on the reconstruction of former profane spaces into temporary mosques. The interdisciplinary point of view shows mosques as part of the edges of urban space. It also pays attention to the basic possibilities of mosque location, e.g. residential areas in the center of the city or industrial zones at the outskirts. The author discusses the importance of non-conflict communication between the religious community and its neighborhood connected with the use of public backyards and exterior decoration of the building entrances.

## **Religion and Public Space in Contemporary Japan: The Reactivation of State Shinto and Buddhism as Public Religion**

**Susumu Shimazono**

The author will discuss that religious discourses and activities are occupying an increasing part in the public sphere in Japan in the 2010s. On one hand, State Shinto has manifested its presence, and a political movement to further its influence is in place. On the other hand, Buddhist and New Religion organizations in the Buddhist line are inclined to participate in the public sphere, presenting their discourses against nationalist tendencies. A conflict in religious discourses is coming to the fore between those advocating nationalism and those for humanity and peace. Relations between religion and nation in the Axial Age civilizations are not uniform in Western, Eastern Christian, Islamic, South Asian, African or East Asian civilizations. In order to have a better understanding of the religious situation of Japan today, the perspective of comparative civilization studies must be mobilized.

## **Religion Education Emerging Teaching Methodologies and Practices**

**Panel Chair: Johan Strijdom**

Scholars of religion working on religion education play two very distinct roles. Many are focused on religion as taught in schools, universities and other public platforms. They are critical observers of the transmission and promulgation of religion as a subject. They comment on the teaching of religion as a political project, as part of general citizenship, or as a crucial aspect of individual identity

development. Alternatively, scholars of religion are often engaged directly with teachers and public institutions on how to improve the quality of religion education, directly promoting religion education as a critical and empathetic study of religions. This panel is devoted to a critical self-reflexive exercise of how scholars of religions negotiate the challenges of working with teachers teaching religion education in a variety of contexts across the globe. How do they mediate their roles as textbooks writers, teacher training educators, and general promoters of religion education?

**Abdulkader Tayob:** Why post-colonial study of religion?

In 2003, a new religion education policy was adopted by the South African Ministry of Education. The new policy raised interesting questions about the conceptualization of religion education, and how to develop a critical yet empathetic approach to religious diversity. These reflections have turned our attention to the condition and role of religion in the post-colony. In this paper, we begin by looking at the condition of religion in colonial and post-colonial contexts, not as an aberration, or special case, or the inversion of the Euro-American experience, but rather as challenging traditional ideas about where to start when approaching religion in the post-colonial condition. Should we draw on the religious traditions of the periphery? Do we need then to reinvent terms or should we jettison existing terms and categories? This is a self-reflexive paper about the future of religion education in the modern, post-colonial society.

**Elaine Nogueira-Godsey:** Afro-Brazilian religious heritage and cultural intolerance: South-South educational perspective

In 2003, law 10.639/03 was implemented in the Brazilian educational curricula. The revised curriculum introduced African History in schools, with the intention to promote racial inclusivity and educate students about Brazil's rich African heritage. Despite these efforts many Christians feel that the teaching of African culture threatens their values and society. This tension is exacerbated by the inclusion of Afro-Brazilian religion in the teaching of African history. This paper looks at the backlash to the law and argues that more training is needed for teachers in order to combat racial and religious intolerance. The ongoing dialogue between scholars of religion education in South Africa and Brazil is an ideal resource for this training. In return, the use of these resources gives valuable information to scholars in Religion and Education about the efficacy of the methods used to employ them.

**Stefanie Sinclair:** Being digital: the impact of digital technologies within the discipline of religious studies in higher education

With a particular focus on the discipline of religious studies, this paper considers how digital technologies are impacting what is taught in higher education and how it is taught. It contemplates how digital technologies can be integrated

most effectively in learning design and reflects on the skills students need to be equipped with to recognize the challenges and opportunities of digital technologies and understand their impact on the changing ways in which religions are presented, studied, practised and experienced. Drawing on the author's experience of working for the Open University, it highlights the urgent need for the development of learning design and pedagogical approaches that make effective, resourceful and creative use of digital technologies and critically consider the complex impact of digital technologies on what is taught, how it is taught and what is assessed within religious studies in higher education.

**Nina Hoel:** Teaching methodologies and practices for embodied learning in the field of “religion and ecology”

Similar to other courses taught within the discipline of religious studies, the area of “religion and ecology” is interdisciplinary and multifaceted and thus requires diverse approaches and methods of inquiry. This paper is dedicated to discussing some of the teaching methodologies employed in the undergraduate course “Religion, Spirituality and Ecology”, taught at the Department of Religious Studies, University of Cape Town. By employing a self-reflexive lens, I wish to show how one can stretch the normative standards of undergraduate modules as well as to provide students with a range of registers through which to reflect on and critically engage the field of religion and ecology. The paper highlights the concept of embodied learning as an important methodological and pedagogical principle, which includes learning by doing, seeing and experiencing, while also taking account of the nexus between theory and praxis in a distinct South African context.

## **Religion, Human Agency and Change: The Importance of Intermediary Experiences**

**Kalpana Ram**

Anthropology has traditionally privileged a relationship between opening ourselves, as scholars, to the “emic” perspective of those whose experiences we write about, and our own scholarly critical discourse. Yet in relation to some of the more “extreme” phenomena such as spirit possession, magic, witchcraft and sorcery – which remain widespread across societies – we have managed to preserve ourselves and our critical discourse remarkably intact from their intrinsic challenge. More typically, we have represented spirit possessions as responses to social tensions, further intensified by social change (e.g. encroachment of capitalism, industrial forms of work, intensification of patriarchal control over women, migration, globalization). Seldom are they considered as

forms of change in themselves. This is despite the dramatic alterations in individual behavior, dispositions and forms of consciousness, all of which are hallmarks of the phenomenon. How might we shift our scholarly discourses on change and agency, particularly female agency, by allowing a more open attitude of attention to such dramas? Anthropology's privileging of long term engagement, which allows us to come to know individuals in intimate ways over time, adds further methodological potential for the study of change as well as religion. How does individual experience, taken over time, alter the way we view agency in possession? This is not only a matter of critically examining our own intellectual inheritances, but also of finding better ways of imagining and conceptualizing human experience as we find it. Possession may seem an extreme phenomenon – and it is that. But it also mediates between death and life, between the dead and the living. For scholars, it points in the direction of the importance of “intermediary” categories that can describe the bulk of human experience, which lies somewhere between the polarities of change vs. stasis, innovation vs. tradition, individual vs. society, agency vs. victimhood.

## **Religion in Cultural Imaginary: Exploration in Visual and Material Practices**

### **Organizer: Daria Pezzoli-Olgiati**

The international research group “Exchange on Media and Religion” presents the results of a project, which are to be published under the title “Religion in Cultural Imaginary: Explorations in Visual und Material Practices.” The presentation has three parts. First, D. Pezzoli-Olgiati (University of Zurich) introduces the central concept of “imaginary.” This term is discussed in order to capture the presence and circulation of religious references, symbols, and narratives in various social spheres, in politics, economy, arts, and popular culture. Furthermore, the imaginary is considered with regard to the reception and transformation of religious references through time and cultures. Considering the fascinating history of this term, the imaginary can be defined as a shared pool of mental images and material products, of ideas, symbols and practices that sustain meaning making processes and cohesion within a collective. The second part, led by A.-K. Höpflinger and M.-T. Mäder (both University of Zurich), takes up various facets of the theoretical reflection in a multi-media presentation that presents key aspects of the case studies involved in the project. Finally, W. Hofstee (University of Leiden) and B. Beinhauer-Köhler (University of Marburg) will respond

with a critical review. Discussion with the audience, moderated by Alexander D. Ornella (University of Hull), will conclude the presentation.

Participants: **Anna-Katharina Höpflinger, Bärbel Beinhauer-Köhler, Marie-Therese Mäder, Willem Hofstee**

## **Religion Intersecting De-Nationalization and Re-Nationalization in Post-Apartheid South Africa**

### **Gerald West**

What role has religion played in the post-apartheid transition to democracy and how will it be deployed in the period after 2014, the twentieth anniversary of South African democracy? This is the question that shapes this paper. Recent research has analyzed the political and economic dimensions of “the South African crisis”, arguing that this current moment in our democratic transition is shaped by simultaneous processes of de-nationalization and re-nationalization. However, while this research hints at the role of religion within these processes, there is no sustained and in-depth analysis of how religion inhabits and contributes to processes of de-nationalization and processes of re-nationalization. The paper is framed by the period 1994–2015, but focuses on a pivotal moment within these dual processes. When Thabo Mbeki, then the President of South Africa, delivered the 4th Annual Nelson Mandela Lecture in July 2006 the Bible was his central source. Mbeki used the Bible, alongside a number of other literary and political sources, to present a religious argument for both de-nationalization and re-nationalization. Given that Mbeki’s public pronouncements prior to this on religion in general and the Bible in particular had tended to be rather dismissive, this turn is significant, indicating a deliberate and strategic use of the Bible and religion. The paper analyzes this moment, locating it within a trajectory that was set in motion by Nelson Mandela, given clarity by Mbeki, and has been continued by Jacob Zuma (and other political figures and policies). The contradictions of our transition from apartheid to democracy are most apparent as we enter our twenty-first year of liberation and as we contend for the identity and trajectory of our democracy. Just as religion has shaped the conflicts and contours of our past, so it inhabits, constitutes, and shapes the kinds of democratic transformations that might constitute our future.

## Religion Renegotiated: Faith-Based Organizations and the State since the 1960s

### Panel Chair: James Kennedy

Christian faith-based organizations have long been regarded as constitutive to the functioning of civil society and hence granted a special position in both the communis opinio and legislation of European societies. However, rampant deconfessionalization and growing disbelief have undermined Christianity's societal position, and with Islam increasingly becoming the religion of European-born citizens and whilst visibility of Muslim communities has become more apparent, issues on the "proper" interlocution between state-religion-society are more than ever at the heart of public debate. Nonetheless, few issues are at once so central, and so understudied, as the relationship between faith-based organizations and the state. This panel will theoretically assess to what extent and how the boundaries between the state and faith-based organizations have been reshaped since the 1960s. The papers tackle these issues by an empirical focus on developments in social policy, the law and public debates in the Netherlands.

**Leonard van't Hul:** Serving the same sauce: fifty years of political debate on state-subsidies for faith-based organizations

Secularization theory, once the proud flagship of modernization theorists, finds itself in troubled waters. Paramount to the myriad of critiques is the notion that secularization is not an inevitable and self-propelling process, but that the religious landscape is highly influenced by political and legal actors. Here, scholars point at the profound secularist epistemology and interpretive logic of politicians and policy-makers which allegedly results in the gradual pushing of faith-based communities and organizations to the margins of society. This paper studies the ways in which the Dutch state has (re)shaped its institutional arrangements vis-à-vis the religious field since the 1960s, by mapping out and analyzing political debates that waged at different institutional localities on the tenability of state-subsidies for faith based organizations (e.g. churches and theological universities). Doing so sheds light on the continuities and changes in the conditions under which faith-based organizations operate in modern societies.

**Mart Rutjes:** (No) special relationships: public discourse on church-state relations since the 1960s

This paper outlines the ways in which state-church relations have been discussed and negotiated in public debates since the late 1960s. Generally, the scientific study of state-church interlocutions looks at synchronic constitutional and judicial arrangements. However, for a proper understanding of the position of religion in modern societies, it is imperative to take public discourse on the

role and position of the state vis-à-vis faith based organizations into account. Public discourses partly reflect and overlap with political arrangements, but also serve as powerful counter narratives that have helped to shape the development of state-church relations. In this paper I analyze the history of public discourse in politics and media regarding the question to what extent and for what purpose the state should support religious denominations. I will argue that Dutch debate underwent an important shift during the 1980s, and raise the question whether this shift exemplifies a broader international development.

**Hans-Martien Ten Napel:** The classical liberal approach to collective religious freedom: sectarian or inclusive?

In a recent paper Cécile Laborde argues that a religious freedom approach, in order to be inclusive, cannot be “sectarian” in the sense of singling out religion rather than protecting the generic value of ethical integrity. By providing exemptions and accommodations for faith-based organizations only, the classical liberal approach disadvantages the non-religious. Moreover, this approach is too “narrow”, in the sense that it focuses on orthodoxy instead of orthopraxy. The current paper will raise the question whether, to the contrary, a classical liberal approach to collective religious freedom doesn’t still have the potential of being more inclusive than the liberal-egalitarian approach advocated by Laborde (and others). The same question will be raised with respect to a third approach which, with a view to greater inclusiveness, wants to do away with the major ideals of liberalism, although admittedly states in general and public law in particular inevitably also affect faith-based organizations.

## Religion/State Relations in Contemporary Islam

**Syed Adnan Hussain:** Muhammad Asad and the post colonial Islamic state Islamic state movements currently unfolding in the Middle East frame themselves in opposition to the failures of the nation state. They argue that the post-colonial nation failed to secure either Islamic legitimacy or the loyalty of their citizens. By contrast, in the early period of South Asian post-colony, there were attempts to use the nation state as a means of disciplining better Muslims. One important and unusual ideologue of this early phase is Muhammad Asad. From his roots as a Jewish anti-imperialist journalist in Palestine to his conversion and activism in India for the creation of Pakistan, his legacy gives us a unique insight as to how the Islamic state was reimagined in “Islamist” thought as a tool to undo the humiliation of colonialism. My paper is a discussion of how these adaptations and transformations in the early post-colony period were shaped by his legacy.

**Syed Furrukh Zad Ali Shah:** Changing dynamics and globalizing patterns of public religion in Muslim societies: a case study of Pakistan

Human societies as systems of functionally integrated institutions pass through different evolutionary phases from simple to complex. The integrity and functionality of the system depends on mutual interaction with one another. Religion, being one of these institutions, offers its kind of value-system, providing legitimacy and constructing a unique identity among others, for the entire social system. Globalization, economic and cultural, has certainly transformed the role and place of religion with a strong emphasis on modernization and secularization. Although religion seems to have become less effective in these terms, in highly differentiated societies during the last centuries, yet in the face of rapid global social transformations and political crisis, religion has resurfaced again in the secular market to offer spiritual direction, identity-construction and life-meaning for some collectivities and individuals in different parts of the globe. The re-emergence of “right-wing” politics in the political landscape has led to new discourse on the validity of the “secularization” thesis. In Muslim societies like Pakistan, religion, i. e., Islam has been an integral component of the state-sponsored ideology, and cultural assertion among the masses. Furthermore, transnationalism of the Muslim diaspora in the West, maintaining a strong linkage with their home-culture and affiliation with their religious-value system, has further complicated this complex web of religious utility in the modern public sphere. This paper seeks to elaborate these changing dynamics and globalizing patterns of public religion in Muslim societies with a focus on Pakistan.

## Religions and Media

**Lee Scharnick-Udemans:** Between complaints and concession: The role of the Broadcasting Complaints Commission in the production and management of religion in post-apartheid South Africa

The Broadcasting Complaints Commission, as the independent judicial tribunal mandated with ensuring the protection of free speech and the promotion of a high standard of broadcasting, is arguably the most authoritative and consequently powerful media institution in South Africa. Hackett (2006: 75) proposes, “media institutions and representations may constitute an important site of conflict between religions and the state, and between religious groups”. In lieu of this assertion, this paper will provide a descriptive and analytical account of the relationship between the BCCSA and the representation of religion on public-service television in South Africa. By providing an overview of the cases about religion which have been heard by the institution since its inception,

this paper will provide a critical analysis of the ways in which the tensions between religion, politics and media, within a state which promises both the protection of human-rights and human-culture, are managed.

**Moshe Yitzhaki:** Religious communities' reaction to threats of new media: a case study of the Jewish ultra-orthodox community in Israel

Generally speaking, the Jewish population world-wide includes two distinct religious groups: modern orthodox and ultra-orthodox. Large communities of them live in Israel and abroad. Although ultra-orthodox society may seem monolithic, it actually comprises several subgroups with different customs and varying degrees of openness to the modern world. Nonetheless, these groups have much in common and are characterized by strict adherence to Jewish law and emphasis on family life and personal modesty. Justly claiming that content-wise no media is value-free, their spiritual leaders insist on exposure only to media and literature consistent with their values and lifestyle. Seeking to avoid consumption of "secular" media, including television and internet, which are considered as a serious spiritual threat, they have successfully developed their own sub-cultural media and recreation activities, entirely separated from the mainstream. This has resulted in an enormous ongoing demand for books and magazines, as well as in a successful conservation of their religious tradition, among both adults and youngsters.

**Mrinal Pande:** Mediating a religious performance: a case study of Morari Bapu's Ramkatha

This paper addresses the recent transformations of popular Hinduism by focusing upon the religious-cum-artistic practice of Ramkatha, i.e., staged narratives of the epic Ramayana. One of the most successful contemporary Ramkatha performers is Morari Bapu, whose career unfolded alongside the Hindutva movement in India, since the late 1980s. Today his performances reach widely dispersed audiences – live or televised across India and the Hindu diaspora. By focusing on issues of representation and social change embedded in the Ramkatha ethnoscape, I investigate how new media technologies re-contextualize religious practices and its public circulation of discourse and images. My paper demonstrates that an effectively framed tradition with media-aid becomes a transnational spectacle, and is used to produce religious beliefs and other adoptive strategies for community and national identifications. A multi-sited ethnography in Gujarat, California and Rome, provides the lens to understand the dynamic convergence of media practices and religious politics.

**Chikas Danfulani:** "Godfession tunes:" an analysis of religious caller tunes and messages of MTN Nigeria

Subscribers of Mobile Telecommunication Network (MTN) in Nigeria are increasingly experiencing a daily influx of text messages from their service provider. A

number of these messages are advertisements for customers to subscribe to certain products. Recently, emphasis is shifting from pure commercial products to include a catalogue of religious products presented as caller tunes, prayers, and specialized sermons. Responses to such advertisements are apparent in the use of religious caller tunes by subscribers. This raises questions such as why MTN, a purely commercial organization, provides religious services and what could account for the growing interest by subscribers. Using the market theory and the concept of everyday life to analyze data from text messages of subscribers and interviews with selected consumers in Jos, the paper demonstrates that the emergent interest in consuming religiously based MTN products is a response to increasing religiosity of Nigerians due to a number of factors.

**Giulia Giubergia:** Religious motifs, signs and symbols on the walls of Cairo after 2011

On January 25, 2011, the streets and squares of downtown Cairo became sites of multiple discourses, which were contested, embraced, transformed and often translated in visual form. Posters, installations, graffiti appeared in Cairo's public space, delivering a multiplicity of messages and engaging in a dialogical interaction with the streets and within themselves. The aim of this paper is to unpack the different levels of meaning of this variety of images, focusing on religious motifs, signs and symbols and how they are articulated, interpreted and contested on the walls and in the streets. Moreover, I will analyze how these visual signs transform Downtown Cairo in a material, performative and symbolic sacred space. In particular, I will focus on Mohammad Mahmud Street where Ancient Egyptian deities, Koranic verses, angel-like martyrs, and many other images share the same physical space (the wall), making this street an exemplary place of negotiation and contention.

**Kathrin Kohle:** Modern revivalists on a mission: televangelism, media and the transformation of American Evangelicalism

American Televangelism is as old as the widespread use of television itself. From the 1930s until today two aspects characterize(d) this phenomenon: the strong links to eighteenth and nineteenth-century Revivalism and the ability to progress and adapt to the enhancements of media. This paper seeks to present a short history of American televangelism by describing these two aspects by means of revealing different approaches of central televangelists. It will focus on questions such as: Which are the central narratives that are common? What role does the so called "prosperity gospel" play? How can viewers relate to televangelists and connect to their ministries? It will be shown how the activist/missionary component of evangelicalism and modern media such as television and the internet (homepages, Facebook etc.) establish ties between tradition and invention and how ideas are represented and reframed over time.

## Religions and Religious Studies in Korea

### Panel Chair: Chae Young Kim

Religious Studies as an independent academic discipline is not yet introduced fully in the international network of religious studies in spite of many foreign scholars' interest in knowing about the situation of religious studies in Korea. According to my research, though there are some studies of individual Korean religion(s) published in foreign academic journals and monographs in Europe and North America, I could not find any distinct informational research that has been done on the situation of religious studies as a modern academic discipline in Korea.

#### **Shin Ahn:** Pope Francis' visit to Korea and its religious meanings

According to the Korean Government census, Catholics were about 10.8% of South Koreans in 2005 and Protestants about 18.3%. Buddhists made up about 23% and those who do not have any religion reached 46%. These statistics have changed over the past ten years. Pope Francis visited South Korea in August 2014. Koreans responded to this historical event in various ways. Though a group of conservative Protestants held anti-Catholic demonstrations, the public image of Catholicism dramatically improved. The Pope met with marginalized people including Korean "comfort women", sexual slaves of the Japanese army during WWII. He also consoled family members of the victims of the Sewol disaster, the sunken ferry killing 304 people. Connecting the memory of early martyrdom with anti-Christian persecutions in the twenty-first century, he beatified 124 martyrs who died in persecutions between 1791 and 1888. After meeting leaders of other religions, the Pope celebrated a final mass of peace and reconciliation at Seoul's Cathedral. This paper deals with religious meanings by examining the public reactions to the Pope's visit to Korea.

#### **Ji-Yun Jeong:** The social idea and practice of Daesoon thoughts

Religion contains a universal belief system and principles of practice for the salvation of humanity. Here, the major cause of religion transmitting its own contents over long history can be found from the successful fulfillment of its religious duties through social practice. Hence, it would be in line with the success of accomplishing its religious object through major activities to find whether it actively responds to the various problems at hand in contemporary society. Hereupon, we reflect on Haewonsangsaeng: "resolving the grievances for the beneficence of all life" and "repaying the gratitude for the beneficence of all life" as a social idea of Daesoonjinrihoe. This paper will examine how these two social ideas express themselves as social practices corresponding to the needs of the times.

**Kwangsuk Yoo:** Korean religions and the International Religious Freedom Reports

Since 1998, the International Religious Freedom Office in USA issues reports about 200 countries every year. The reports on the Korean situation have a heavy influence on the relationship between religious groups and the government. For example, Jehovah's Witnesses are reported as a major victim of governmental and social oppression, and hence the Korean government is under pressure by the US embassy. This means that religious globalization leads to a global expansion of the criterion of religious freedom.

## **Religions on the Ground: Practices and Discourses toward Social Adaptation and Transformation in the Philippine Context**

### **Panel Chair: Arvin Eballo**

Embedded within complex cultures, characterized by social change and intercultural exchange, Filipinos constantly adapt to their changing environments, discourses, and institutions in dealing with their faith-expressions known as religious practices. These religious practices are indeed subject to social and cultural influences. They can also shape political and economic environments. They are invented and re-invented, imperceptibly transformed, reformed or emphatically defended by religious communities. How, then, do religious communities in the Philippines (through their religious practices) adapt to cultural change? How do they react to the threats of new media and globalization? How do religious practices of the Filipinos affect social transformation and public relations? How do they lead Filipinos to metanoia? To what extent do government and public laws affect religiosity?

**Mia Borromeo:** Devotion to Our Lady of Penafrancia and its contributions to the social transformation of the Bikolanos

The celebration of the feast of Our Lady of Penafrancia is one of the famous Marian feasts in the Philippines. It is held every September and pilgrims flock Naga City in Camarines Sur to pay their homage to the Blessed Virgin Mary under the title "Our Lady of Penafrancia". The celebration begins with the transfer of the image in a procession from the Basilica Minore to the Cathedral where it is given honor in novena masses until the fluvial procession through the Bicol River, which is the return of the image to her home shrine at the Basilica. Miracles were recorded and were shared by many, which prompted many people to turn to her for help. This paper will present how this devotion moved the Bikolanos towards solidarity and social transformation, particularly the public serv-

ants. This paper utilized textual analysis and interviews to validate the results of the exploration.

**Antonio Ingles:** Life with ease (Nakakaluwag): a hermeneutic-phenomenological study towards a pedagogy for sustainable living

This study aims, (1) to investigate through hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry how the Filipino value nakakaluwag: (a) provides conditions conducive to living sustainably in view of holistic relationality and (b) furnishes common pedagogical ground where top-down and bottom-up approaches to sustainable living reach synthesis; (2) to introduce the Filipino value nakakaluwag in view of holistic relationality as a pedagogically-oriented frame for a sustainable living; and (3) to propose sustainability initiatives towards justice, peace and integrity of creation in view of the above frame. A hermeneutic phenomenological approach will be utilized for this qualitative study that sought to understand the Filipino value nakakaluwag that is embedded in shared beliefs and embodied in shared practices. In the final analysis and reflection: “anumang nakapag-uugnay sa Diyos, sa kapwa, sa sarili at sa kalikasan ay nakakapagpaluwag sa buhay.” (Relationships with God, others, oneself and nature make for a life of ease.)

**Delilah Labajo:** In the image of Señor Santo Niño: a cultural history of post-war Cebu

One of the most celebrated fiestas or festivals in the Philippines is the Señor Santo Niño of Cebu. Two main frameworks are applicable to the study: phenomenology and hermeneutics. Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel believes that there are two types of forces which affect events in the phenomenal world. One is personal desire and ambitions of individuals while the other one is the Spirit that seeks to realize itself in the world through persons who have influence on a large number of people. Hermeneutics is initially applied to the interpretation, or exegesis, of scripture. Descriptive and analytical history will then be employed as well as textual analysis in examining songs, novena/prayers, and movies dedicated to Señor Santo Niño. Interviews and testimonies will be derived from pertinent persons. It is therefore hoped that this study will contribute to produce a clearer cultural history as experienced by the ordinary folks in Cebu.

**Joel Sagut:** Fidelity to a religious tradition and the question of moral agency  
The paper will discuss the issue of moral agency vis-a-vis one's fidelity to a religious tradition. This will respond to James Rachels' problematization of the concepts of moral agency and worship when he argued that worship is “a submission to the ‘worshipped being’ that totally dominates the worshipper's life,” while moral agency means the capacity to make autonomous choices – a tension that is echoed in modern liberal understanding of freedom. The response to Rachels' question will have recourse to Alasdair MacIntyre's understanding of the

virtuous life which theorizes on the possibility of maintaining both the virtue of fidelity and autonomous choice. The paper will examine the legislation of the Philippine Reproductive Health Law as basket-case for this tension. It will then argue that any believer remains reasonably free even if he exercises fidelity to a tradition. In fact, it is this fidelity to one's tradition that makes our decisions truly rational.

## **Religionswissenschaftlicher Mittelbau und Nachwuchs in Deutschland: Arbeitsbedingungen und Perspektiven**

**Organizers: Oliver Krüger, Ramona Jelinek-Menke**

Wie starten Absolvent\*innen der Religionswissenschaft in Deutschland in eine universitäre Laufbahn? Wie finanzieren sie ihre Promotion, die als erster Schritt auf diesem Weg gelten kann? Welche Arbeitsbedingungen erleben sie, wenn sie dafür eine der wenigen, begehrten Mittelbaustellen ergattern konnten? Diesen und weiteren Fragen zur Arbeitssituation des Mittelbaus und der Promovierenden der Religionswissenschaft in Deutschland widmete sich eine Umfrage des Arbeitskreises Mittelbau und Nachwuchs (AKMN) der Deutschen Vereinigung für Religionswissenschaft (DVRW), die im ersten Halbjahr 2015 unter den Befragten durchgeführt wurde. In dieser Open Session-Einheit möchten wir die Ergebnisse dieser Umfrage präsentieren und zur Diskussion stellen. In diesem Zusammenhang wollen wir des Weiteren gemeinsam mit Prof. Dr. Oliver Krüger (Lehrstuhl für Religionswissenschaft an der Universität Fribourg/Schweiz) über die Probleme und Perspektiven einer Universitätskarriere debattieren. Zur Präsentation der Schlussfolgerungen, die wir aus der Umfrage zu ziehen vorschlagen, dienen großformatige graphische Darstellungen der Umfrageergebnisse. Die Diskussion erfolgt im Dialog mit Prof. Krüger und den Sprecher\*innen des AKMN.

## **Religiosity among the Indian Diaspora in Southeast Asia: Adjustments or Compromise?**

**Panel Chair: Amarjiva Lochan**

The Indian Diaspora have made their presence felt in a phenomenal way in Southeast Asia in the past two centuries. While being away from native land mainly for seeking riches or on job assignments, their religious practice has undergone significant transformation in new lands of Southeast Asia. Their religiosity has been affected due to several reasons such as non-availability of materials

for their rituals and process of worship; the restrictions imposed by local situations and authorities for building a shrine; and also, the impact of other religions in their area of living. The present paper evaluates how Hindu religious practices which are understood to be codified by their classical texts (Shastra), traditions and injunctions are modified and adjusted in the modern context of their religious lives. It also analyzes the impact of local major religions (Buddhism in Thailand/Vietnam and Islam in Indonesia) in shaping their day-to-day religious practices and behavior.

**Le Thi Hang Nga:** Diaspora in Vietnam: religious adjustments or compromise?

In modern times, the first Indians came to Vietnam to the city of Saigon (present day Ho Chi Minh City) at the end of the nineteenth century, following the establishment of French rule. Saigon at that time was considered the “Pearl of the East” and was an attractive commercial centre. Most of these Indian traders came from French trading posts in India such as Pondicherry, and Karaikal in Tamilnadu. They were followed by the Chettiers who were money lenders. These two groups of Indians became the strong links between Indian culture and Vietnamese indigenous culture during the colonial period in Vietnam. During their stay, they built several Hindu temples in Saigon, namely the Mariamman, Sri Thandayuthapani and Subramanyam. The paper analyzes their socio-religious activities in the temple complex while addressing how the Indian community has had to compromise their religious practice to adapt to the situation in Vietnam.

**Mo Mo Thant:** Religion and Indian community in Myanmar

The earliest arrival of Indians in Myanmar can be traced back to the first millennium CE. However, in modern times, Indians poured into the coastal regions of Myanmar. The Indian Diaspora found it an easier time to live there when the colonial masters, the British, brought them in as a work force in then-Burma. Called ka-la during the colonial occupancy of Myanmar, Indians were used in the British administrative mechanism. As a result of their long stay, the Indians intermingled with the local Buddhist culture and their Hindu practices got mixed up with the Burmese Buddhist traditions. Some of them married native Buddhist people and created a Hindu-practicing-Buddhist way of life while still retaining their Brahmanical deities. The paper traces this socio-cultural situation in their religious behavior and their adjustments accordingly.

**Amarjiva Lochan:** Enlightened Ganesha or enlightened Indians? A case study of Indian immigrants and their religiosity in Nakhon Nayok, Thailand  
Though the question of who came first (Hindu or Buddhist) might sound like the egg-hen syndrome, it is but evident that religious practices of the Indian Diaspora in Thailand have undergone phenomenal changes in recent times. The

worship of Hindu gods and goddesses in a Buddhist set-up would appear strange for an arriving Indian but in the longer run, he or she would take it as an inescapable situation. The continuity of such syncretism in faith may sound queer but the Hindu-Buddhist phenomenon in urban religious scenes of Thailand has started experiencing the Indian immigrants getting into a religious mind set where Ganesha, their Lord, draws them to worship more than they might have ever done back home in India. The paper discusses it in reference to Nakhon Nayok, a provincial town where the world's biggest Ganesha statues are enshrined.

## Religious and Societal Transformations in Eastern Europe

**Georgeta Nazarska:** Young Women's Christian Association in Bulgaria: survival in times of change

This paper examines through historical analysis and social network analysis the history, structure and functioning of the Young Women's Christian Association in Bulgaria, a branch of the YWCA, in the periods of 1925–1944 and after 1991. The Association's place is analyzed in the context of religious, social and charitable activities, and the feminist movement up to WWII. Some qualitative methods to explore the YWCA's branch history after the political changes in the 1990s are used. The main accent is put on the preservation and adaptation of religious tradition in three different historical periods. The paper tries to compare its activity with those of other European YWCA branches.

**Katarina Novikova:** Religion and the contemporary Ukrainian national idea  
We try to analyze notions of nationalism, national identity and people, and the role and functions of religion in the formation of the Ukrainian nation, which became independent in 1991. Ukraine is a post-atheistic state, a former republic of the USSR, which has its own old and rich Christian tradition. One can notice the development of original nationalism as people attempt to create national myths. The typical Ukrainian feature is a pluralism of cultural and religious paradigms, therefore also a pluralism of the national idea. We analyze this topic through the comparison of confessions: Roman-Catholic, Greek-Catholic, Orthodox Church and Neo-pagan. Events of the Ukrainian public protest – Maidan, during the autumn and the winter 2013–2014 – are considered as part of the rise of the national idea. It was not only a turning point in the history of the Ukrainian state, but also for its religion.

**Maija Grizane:** Russian orthodoxy, old belief and Yedinoverie: coexistence and competition in Eastern Latvia at the end of the nineteenth century  
Historically Latvia was under the influence of Western Christianity, however since the middle of the seventeenth century its Eastern territories started to be occupied by the Eastern Christians, among them Russian Old Believers, who tried to escape from the restrictions of the official religious policy in the Russian Empire, and Russian Orthodox believers, who propagated the state religion in territories that became part of the Russian Empire. The two religions competed with each other to prove their right for existence in new areas, but from different positions: the Old Belief had to survive and Orthodoxy had to spread its influence. Yedinoverie was an attempt to unify Orthodoxy and the Old Belief, so as to control the latter. This paper analyzes the ways of adaptation of the Eastern Christian confessions and their transformation in the territory of the Eastern Latvia

**Svetlana Ryazanova:** Perm Krai: traditions and innovations in development of Orthodoxy

This research is bearing on the persistent features of Orthodoxy in the Russian provinces during the pre-revolutionary, Soviet and post-Soviet period. The main research question has two parts: first, is it legitimate to speak about an orthodox Renaissance in the Russian province since 1990; second, are there any peculiar features which are steadily reproduced in the local Orthodoxy during the last century. In the analysis of an orthodox community and of the clergy, a number of factors are considered: the peripheral situation of the region and the multi-ethnic composition of the population, the influence of the atheistic propaganda and secular education, and the co-existence of the traditional religions and the new ones. Two groups are considered: ordinary believers and the clergy. The features of an orthodox community are characterized by evidence from archival documents, a supervision of the liturgy during 2014, the carried-out questioning and two focus groups. The orthodox priesthood of the region is characterized by evidence from archival documents, content analysis of the regional press and sites, and some interviews.

## Religious Authority in Islam

### Panel Chair: Patrick Franke

Continuing earlier efforts to explore the phenomenon of religious authority in Islam, the panel brings together a number of papers elucidating this phenomenon from two different perspectives. Whereas some of them are based on social research and try to understand the phenomenon through direct observation in

a given milieu, others based on textual evidence aim to trace historical developments and societal debates revolving around religious authority in specific contexts. All of them have the common goal to refine and revise the terminology for the description of social processes related to religious authority within the world of Islamic norms and symbols. For activating such a process of refinement and revision of terminology, it is necessary to bring the theoretical languages of the social studies and the categorizations of the social milieus studied into relation with each other. It is this purpose which we are pursuing in our panel.

**Doris Decker:** Female authority in early Islam, illustrated by Muhammad's wife Umm Salama

The question of the legitimacy of female authority in Islam arouses heated discussions. Even the interpretations of female figures in the earliest traditions about the Prophet Muhammad are highly disputed. Nevertheless, the sources represent women in many different ways, including as authorities or policy-makers. This paper sheds light on often overlooked traditions about Muhammad's wife, Umm Salama, in order to demonstrate – with reference to the written record – that these women were considered authorities who played an intervening role as political advisors and mediators and were widely involved in socio-political affairs during the early Islamic period. Consequently, I argue that the narrators of the early Islamic traditions took female authority as well as female participation and intervention in socio-political decisions for granted, which will be supported by an analysis of texts by Islamic scholars such as Ibn Hisham, al-Waqidi, Ibn Sa'd, al-Bukhari, and at-Tabari.

**Patrick Franke:** The beginnings of the mufti institution

Whoever wants to study the phenomenon of religious authority in the sphere of Islam, cannot get around the institution of the muftī. Up to now, the mufti is generally considered the authority responsible for giving opinions on doubtful matters of religion, ethics or law. Although it is well known that the mufti institution goes back to the earliest days of Islam, its beginnings have never been thoroughly studied. Among the few studies paying more attention to this issue is H. Motzki's monograph on the beginnings of Islamic jurisprudence (1991), which, however, is very much focused on the development in Mecca. The planned paper aims to widen the horizon by adducing textual evidence on muftīs active at other places in Syria, Iraq and Hijaz in the first century of Islam. The guiding questions when analyzing these sources will be: what was the social position of these muftis, in which way did they interact with the persons asking for their opinions, and what was the nature of their relations with state authorities? It will be argued that some types of conflict and tension which are characteristic of this institution today have accompanied it from its earliest phase.

**Tilman Hannemann:** A fourteenth-century fatwa on learning: exclusion and authority in Sufi discourse

There is little known historically about Ahmad b. Idris (d. around 1359/760), mufti of Bejaia, “singular in his region” among the legal scholars, and founder of a still existing lodge in the nearby Kabyle mountains. Four of his fatwas survived in the pages of the well-known collection of North-African jurisprudence *Al-mi‘yar al-mu‘rib*. This contribution aims to analyze one of these fatwas and to determine relevant historical factors and social debates. Employing a style rather uncommon to legal reasoning, Ahmad b. Idris turns the formal framework of fatwa-giving into a Sufi lesson as he puts forward a parable transmitted from the Baghdadian *Sahl al-Tustari* (c. 818/203–896/283) against a challenge to the authority of the men of learning (“*ulama*”). The brief interaction between mufti and mustafti provides insights into the contested realm of formal religious education, as well as highlights the ambiguous function of the Sufi discourse that negotiates between renowned religious authorities and marginalized competitors.

**Rüdiger Braun:** The authority of the text regarding decanonization: contemporary Muslim approaches to religious difference and human dignity between literalism and historical criticism

The authority of the Qur’an has never been disputed within the context of Muslim scholarship. However, there have always been quite different views as to how its authority should be understood with respect to its hermeneutic implications. Recent Muslim readings of the Qur’an in response to the challenges of modern secularity that take into account the various paradigms for interpretation imply a decanonization, which impacts the understanding of the qur’anic authority in the Muslim canon of scholarship. With a focus on Muslim (self)-critical reflections on religious differences and exegetical eclecticism, this contribution examines the strategies of hermeneutic discourse that are used for religious authentication of secular themes, such as human dignity in speaking of humanity and humanization with respect to the Qur’an. Particularly enlightening for this analysis are reflections on the intertextuality of anthropologic discourse in the Qur’an in selected works of contemporary Muslim theologians in Turkey and the Arab World.

**Johannes Rosenbaum:** Going private: propagating Islamic ethics in advice manuals

What is the medium of the contemporary ‘Alim? Is it the fatwa, the sermon on the pulpit, the scholarly treatise? One as yet little studied genre is that of Islamic advice manuals which target lay Muslims and are concerned with improving everyday morals. This talk presents South Asian examples of the genre and dis-

cusses the aims they pursue, the rhetorical strategies they employ and the specifics of the genre.

**Gritt Klinkhammer:** Production and negotiation of Islamic authority within the Salafi movement

The lecture will present selected data from a fieldwork study amongst adherents of the Salafi movement in Germany, which is based on participatory observation and interviews and their public media presentations. The study was carried out in order to analyze their idea of Islamic authority. For understanding the dynamics and development of the movement it is important not only to focus on what kind of space they are opening, and what kind of inner dynamics of community building they foster in Germany, but especially on the boundaries they produce by claiming and practicing their ideas of Islamic authority within the Islamic communities as well as within mainstream society.

**Adela Taleb:** Reconstructing religious authority? Muslim Youth in Europe II “Muslim-ness” functions as a significant gateway to societal interaction for an increasing number of young people across Europe. This paper will outline strategies of young Muslims to actively engage in civil society and the various ways in which participation in norm-setting processes is enacted (Asad: 1996). In this regard, questions of religious authority and claims to representation play a crucial role and need to be analyzed in relation to their socio-cultural context. By looking at individuals and organizations on the local as well as the pan-European level, we outline mechanisms and structures that contribute to the (re-)construction of authority with regard to Muslim Youth in Europe. The paper will address the following questions: What notions of authority are negotiated and which new approaches to authority formation are developed? What kind of knowledge is generated and how is it being transmitted?

**Necati Alkan:** Religious authority in Nusayri Alawism

In this talk we shall, firstly, examine what religious authority in the Nusayri Alawi faith means and how it was passed among the founders of the sect. Secondly we will look at religious authority among the different subsects. A third aspect to be dealt with, albeit not religious, is secular authority among the Alawis which is important in the context of the Ottoman State of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

**Danijel Cubelic:** We Need to Talk: Saudi contemporary art as a new space for critique

The kingdom of Saudi-Arabia has become home to one of the Middle East’s pioneering art movements. Founded in 2003, the Edge of Arabia initiative connects more than thirty young artists from Saudi-Arabia and showcases their work in a series of much-publicized exhibitions from Jeddah to Istanbul and London. By positioning themselves as a voice of Saudi-Arabia’s “Generation in Waiting”

and seeking an active role in the conversation on the kingdom's social challenges, the group's artists are carving out new spaces for debates. The artists look at issues such as the ban on women driving, the radical transformation of Mecca, Saudi religious heritage and Islamic values while carefully curating their image as pious citizens – gently questioning the country's status quo without seeking direct confrontation with religious authorities. Taking their 2012 Jeddah exhibition *We Need to Talk* as a starting point, the paper wants to explore how Edge of Arabia artists are working with Islamic narratives and material culture to give legitimacy to their concerns and negotiate an emancipatory space to open up discussions on pressing social issues.

## Religious Change through Law in Roman Antiquity

### Panel Chair: Giorgio Ferri

Religion and law were closely connected in Rome in the key-concept of *mos maiorum*, the tradition of the ancestors. Every new cult was carefully examined and in cases approved and adapted to Roman religious concepts by state (Senate in *primis*) and religious authorities (particularly the pontiffs). From the origins to the case of the Bacchanalia (186 BCE) and the long phase of the conquests, up to the Codex Theodosianus (438 CE) and the Corpus Juris Civilis (528–534 CE), the Romans, “jurists by vocation” (G. Dumézil), faced an unending confrontation with other religious systems, hence a constant meditation on their own, in the context of a mutual exchange of influences and adjustments and of an unresolved polarity between religious innovation and extraordinary conservatism (*religio* from *religere*, “to choose again”). What part did law play in Rome (e.g. *senatus consultus*, *rescript*, *edict*, *general law*, etc.) from the point of view of religious change?

**Claudia Beltrão Da Rosa:** Religious change, law, and the *ludi scaenici* (third century BCE)

What part did law play in the ritual changes that occurred in the Republican space of the *ludi* in the third century BCE? Throughout the Republic Roman theatre is the theatre of game and ritual, a performance created by and for a religious ritual. The Republican *ludi scaenici* are *ludicrum*, but they are also *commissiones Graecorum*. Following the thesis of J. Rüpke, especially with regard to the control and production of theatrical performances as an instrument of aristocratic competition, my proposal is to analyze the development and consolidation of the *ludi* as a central space of public communication, questioning the intense legislative activity in the third century aimed at conforming and controlling this form of public religious activity.

**Richard Gordon:** The legal construction of an anti-religion: magic and Roman law

It is now accepted that there was no law against “magic” in the early Empire, beyond the language of “poisoning” in the Lex Cornelia. Nevertheless there are clear signs of attempts to extend the scope of the law to include other types of practice, which by the third century produced an explicit recognition of a crime of *magia*. Here is a case in which socio-political factors brought about the creation of a crime which had not previously existed.

**Gian Franco Chia:** How religion protects the landscape: “*leges sacrae*” against environmental pollution

The sacred laws contain not only norms concerning for example how the believers should make a sacrifice, be dressed or what they should have eaten before they go to the temple. These documents contain often norms concerning the defense of the natural environment around the sanctuary (rivers, woods e.g.) against human pollutions. These prohibitions, often connected to the religious practices of the sacred institution, can also be understood as the presence of a sensibility for a clean environment, important not only for the god, but also for the believers, who visit the temple, and for the priests, who live in the sanctuary. Through the analysis of a selected number of epigraphic documents, this paper aims on the one hand at reconstructing how these prohibitions are connected to an ancient sensibility for a clean environment and on the other hand at showing how these norms are used to create and defend a sacred landscape.

**Franco Vallocchi:** People, law and priests in the Roman public law

The priests organized in colleges are chosen by the members of the college in which they will be included with the system of cooptation; the other priests are chosen by the Pontifex Maximus. The Pontifex Maximus is selected from the members of the pontifical college. The terms of the choice of priests changed from 212 BCE onwards, when from the sources emerges the existence of the *comitia Pontificis maximi*, which provides for the election of the great pontiff (Liv. 25.5.2–4). Furthermore, in 103 BCE the tribune of the plebs Domitius Ahenobarbus had approved a plebiscite under which competence on the choice of priests organized in colleges is attributed to the *comitia sacerdotiorum*. With the introduction of the electoral principle in terms of the choice of priests, the distinction between priests and magistrates seemed less clear. But an examination of sources clearly shows that this distinction remains.

## Religious Communities and Ethics in Japan: Their Traditional Structure and Recent Changes

### Panel Chair: Yoshiko Oda

This panel focuses on religious communities and ethics in today's Japan. Three papers mainly discuss recent changes of Japanese religions and society. In spite of these changes, the traditional religious structure still survives in Japan. Oda explains the traditional religious structure by using J. M. Kitagawa's scheme. Kohara asks how the religious communities can contribute to today's ethical problems. Miyamoto explains the sufferings of isolated persons and shows some activities of religious groups. Inoue shows historical changes within Japanese Buddhism and questions its role today.

#### **Yoshiko Oda:** The religious soil in Japan

This panel focuses on religious communities and ethics in today's Japan. Three papers mainly discuss recent changes of Japanese religions and society. In spite of these changes, the traditional religious structure still survives in Japan, which Joseph M. Kitagawa explained as a division of religions in his *Religions of the East*. His explanation, if modified a little, is valid; i.e., most Japanese belong to Shinto as their local community religion, and to Buddhism as their family religion, and choose either one on a case by case basis. Kitagawa named the Japanese religious community the national community, but I call it the religious soil. It consists of Shinto. There many Buddhist sects, new religions and even Christian churches have established their institutions. As most of these religions, unlike monotheism, do not require a religious identity, most Japanese insist on their secularity. Their understandings of nature, life and death, nevertheless, are influenced by the religious soil. The most difficult problem is that most Japanese do not clearly understand what the religious soil is.

**Katsuhiko Kohara:** How can the religious communities contribute to tackling contemporary ethical problems?

I will clarify what kind of unique roles the religious communities in Japan can play in tackling contemporary ethical problems, focusing on the modernization process including the second advent of Christianity and the following controversy over morality and religion as well as some noticeable changes of the religious landscape after the 3/11 disaster in 2011. The 3/11 disaster prompted a change in the concept of religion and its role in the society. To delve into the "moral capital" latent in the religious communities, I will reinterpret the public interest or the common sphere from the religious aspect embedded in the Japanese tradition. At the same time I will deal with the rise of nationalism and the current move to introduce moral education into the public schools, both of which seem to be byproducts of the 3/11 disaster.

**Yotaro Miyamoto:** Suffering in muen shakai and network of compassion  
 Since 2010, when NHK started a campaign warning of muen shakai, or society losing bonds, the new coinage muen shakai has been used to indicate the various situations of contemporary Japanese society in which personal links weaken rapidly and individuals become isolated from social networks. It also implies that traditional communities such as *chien* (local community) and *ketsuen* (blood relation) have been losing their functions as bonds between each other in the communities. This tendency has also a close relationship with a decline of traditional faiths in Japan, especially Shinto and Buddhism. On the other hand, there are many individuals with various religious backgrounds who are aiming to support the people suffering in the muen shakai. Their activities are based on the network of compassion rather than the ethics of community. I will try to elucidate how the former changes and reconstructs the latter within the tension between each other.

**Yoshihuki Inoue:** What roles can Japanese Buddhism play today?  
 The term “Buddhist community” reminds us of the Japanese Buddhist institution (*Danka Seido*) established in Edo period, that a family as a unit belongs to a temple. In this system, each Buddhist temple has guided the funeral and other rituals of the dead as family cult. After the Meiji era, some Buddhist sects reformed their teachings, but left *Danka Seido* untouched. Some Buddhist scholars have criticized “the funeral Buddhism” because it commits to ancestor worship, never taught by a true Buddhism. Since the Meiji era, many farmers have moved to big cities leaving their family’s temples and tombs in their country home towns. Thus, they gradually become secular. In these decades, recent changes such as a highly aging society have made people more isolated, and the funeral oversimplified and secularized. However after the 3/11 disaster in 2011, many Japanese have recognized anew the importance of the mourning of the dead and the funeral. I will discuss what people expect of Japanese Buddhism today.

**Michael Pye:** Response

## Religious Community in Modern Ukrainian Realities

### Panel Chair: Yevgen Kharkovshchenko

Nowadays we can observe the growth of the number of believers in Ukraine. In 2013, the number of people who call themselves “believers” was 67%, in 2014 76%. 74% of respondents believe that the Church must protect the population from the government and its possible crimes. This data was confirmed by Euro-maidan, which is a specific marker certifying civil priorities of the Church during

the political protest movement. The church as a spiritual community of different religious organizations, groups of believers and clerics demonstrated its own civil nature. By praying together, the priests of different denominations showed real unity of different historical and religious roots in one political nation. Thus, the Church can make possible the establishment of peace in Ukraine: on the one hand, uniting the socially active individual believers, on the other, using the desire of different denominations to influence important public processes.

**Oksana Zadoianchuk:** Religious orthodox community in modern Ukrainian realities

Given the current socio-political processes in the country, combining the idea of a unified national church with the process of nation-building, there are heated debates in society about overcoming the split in Ukrainian Orthodoxy. The most numerous Orthodox jurisdictions participate in this dialogue: the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Kyiv Patriarchate, and the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church. Each of these religious communities is part of the overall process of mediatization of religion, socio-cultural division of the state and focus on the way to become a unified national church. Among the effective methods that the Orthodox communities use to find support from the people is the usage of media in their work, such as vigorous activity on the Internet, broadcasts on television and radio, and print media production. Therefore, during the current changes in modern Ukraine, Ukrainian religious Orthodox communities are also experiencing transformation, demonstrating the fact of responding to the challenges of our time.

**Denys Predko:** Religious faith: the path to understanding

The protest movement in Ukraine proved that the Church can be both mediator between protesters and authorities, and unifying factor for representatives of the different religions. Denial of human dignity has become a strong activator of religious faith, which in turn has consolidated the religious communities, shifting emphasis from church-state relations to the level of cooperation between themselves and society. Religious faith is, on the one hand, a belief in someone or something by identifying their truth and values, on the other, a factor by which religious truth is determined, even when there is no proof. Lawlessness of the government only reinforced adepts of different religions in their faith, strengthened their dialogue and opened space for the coexistence of different religious paradigms and, at the same time, space for an ecumenical paradigm, which constitutes the principle of tolerance as a construct of understanding, respect, and acceptance of others with a different outlook.

**Olga Iarotska:** Religious Catholic community in modern Ukrainian realities  
An important factor in the institutionalization of Roman Catholicism in the independent Ukraine was the revival of Polish national life. There was a resurgence

of the national and cultural life of the Polish minority through activities of Catholic churches and communities. This has contributed to the national and confessional identification of Polish Ukrainians, of which, according to the 1989 national census, almost 220,000 lived in Ukraine. Parish members of the Polish national associations and societies are primarily concerned with church cases, organization and registration of new religious communities, of which there were more than 1,000 as of December 1, 2014. Thus, since Ukraine's independence, the number of communities of Roman Catholics has increased almost twelvefold. In this way in recent years, newly created communities in the east and south of Ukraine (over 120 parishes) have built dozens of new modern churches.

## Religious Education

**Ahmed Khalid:** Islamic learning in Adamawa, Northern Cameroon between tradition and innovation: the life and career of Sheikh Mohammed Aly Dewa (1941–2013)

Sheikh Mohammed Aly Dewa (1941–2013) is probably one of the most influential Muslim scholars in modern Cameroon. The spread of the Wahhabi-Salafi ideology in northern Cameroon owes a great deal to him, a “hybrid” scholar, trained traditionally in Cameroon and modernly in Medina (1962–1969). Mohammed Aly devoted his career to reconciling the traditional way of learning with the modern one. This paper aims at exploring his long-life struggle in educating Muslims in the country through the Islamic Institute of Ngaoundere. It examines the roots of his religious thought and educational background and investigates how he was able to influence his society and appraises to what extent he was successful or otherwise in implementing his ideas.

**Laila Kadiwal:** Addressing sectarianism in Muslim societies: an innovative pedagogical approach to Muslim education

How do Muslims relate to the Muslim “other”? In light of the “new sectarianism” sweeping through many parts of Muslim societies today, this question requires greater attention than ever. Current scholarship does not sufficiently take account of novel pedagogical developments in Muslim education. This thesis investigates a group of Shia Ismaili Muslim trainee-teachers’ attitudes to plurality in their religious education programme. The Secondary Teacher Education Programme (STEP) is a two-year postgraduate course of the Ismaili Muslim community to train religious education teachers. The study shows that initially, the participants were inclusive of other Muslim communities and worldviews on “theological”, “humanistic” and “instrumental” grounds, but were selective about how they embraced them. Gradually, STEP’s “civilizational, normative

and humanistic” approach cultivated an “academically informed pluralism” in most trainee-teachers. It cultivated in the participants a degree of “intra-Islam competence”. The individuals were not “pluralist angels”, but they discursively participated in pluralism.

**Riina Keto-Tokoi:** The status of religion in the Turkish educational system after autumn 2012

In Turkey the ruling party, Adalet ve Kalkınma partisi (AKP), introduced a new 4+4+4 educational system in the spring 2012, and launched it in the autumn 2012. I will examine how it has changed the status of religion in the educational system. I will scrutinize this change by providing three examples from my fieldwork conducted in the autumn 2014: (1) opening the middle school level İmam Hatip-schools; (2) adding optional religious lessons to the middle school curricula; and (3) allowing the use of headscarf from fifth grade onwards. These changes in the educational system provoke the following questions: how do these changes affect the nationalistic mission of the educational system? How does this affect the construction of Turkishness in the educational system? By answering these questions I will examine what kind of role religious discourse has in constructing Turkishness in the educational system.

**Zuzana Cerna:** Reflection on religion and education with emphasis on the analysis of Czech textbooks for the secondary level

In Western Europe the role of religion in the process of education had begun to be discussed at the end of the sixties, but its importance has substantially increased since the events of September 11, 2001. Instruction in religion has become one of the main goals of the Council of Europe, as well as a focus of researchers across Europe. Not only the implementation of information about religion into primary and secondary schooling in European countries, but also developing suitable approaches useable in different countries have become the purpose of various recommendations published by the Council of Europe. Through the whole of Europe we can today identify three essential approaches towards the role of religion in education. The first is teaching religion as such (confessional education), where a particular religion is presented from the inside viewpoint. The second is teaching about religion, where the pupils are informed about various religions, independently of any particular tradition. The last one is called teaching from religion, where the pupils become the core of education through answering existential questions. Pedagogical approaches such as the interpretive approach invented by the team of Robert Jackson, integrative religious education suggested by Wanda Alberts, or the ethnographic approach by Eleanor Nesbitt declare themselves as impartial approaches towards particular religions, based on the scientific results of Religious Studies. What may be interesting for the Czech environment is the fact that part of those educational

approaches is sharing various religious experiences among students. Some authors such as R. Jackson and W. Alberts present their approaches with some changes as applicable in various countries all over the world. Through the analyses of chosen Czech schoolbooks I examine the methodological ground of the above mentioned approaches. I reflect on the problem of religion in general and show that despite the common assumption, religion is not a universal phenomenon. It is, though, a primarily accepted universalism of religion, which allows authors to raise the demand for universal application of their methodology. I suggest that this notion of universalism is rooted in Christianity, therefore the developed approaches are not religiously impartial, but religion is only covert. I also show that Eurocentrism, which has been stressed in the criticism of western authors, has been in Czech textbooks connected with Christianity until today. Furthermore, despite the proclamation of Czech atheism, I will show how important a role religion plays in the analyzed Czech textbooks.

## Religious Identity and Practice in Migration

**Frances Kostarelos:** The Greek Orthodox Church in North America: continuity and transformation

This paper discusses tradition and transformation in the Greek Orthodox Church as it adapts to pluralism in North America. This ethnographic account examines challenges rooted in nationalism carried to America by Greek Orthodox settlers throughout the 1900s who founded parishes to serve the needs of an imagined ethnic enclave. The legacy and lasting impact of ethno-nationalism has given way to a Church that is struggling with its identity and purpose in the pluralistic American religious landscape. The paper examines institutional changes resulting from inter-faith and inter-ethnic marriages and converts who seek to move the church beyond the parochial boundaries while sustaining the imagined unbroken Apostolic past they seek in the Orthodox Church.

**Norihito Takahashi:** Multicultural coexistence and faith-based organizations in contemporary Japan: a case study of support activities for Indochinese refugees

In this study, I consider the relationship between Tabunka-Kyosei, a concept of multicultural coexistence (or symbiosis) peculiar to Japan, and faith-based organizations (FBOs). In Japan, many organizations have conducted support activities based on the concept of Tabunka-Kyosei for foreign residents, especially for newcomer immigrants whose numbers have increased since the 1980s. Various FBOs, including the Catholic Church, have actively engaged in these support activities. Such activities, however, have been rarely examined through the per-

spective of religious studies. Therefore, I consider the support activities offered by FBOs to Indochinese refugees for their protection and resettlement in Japan since 1975. In addition, I discuss conflicts and problems requiring resolution in order to build better relationships between Japanese FBOs and foreign residents where Tabunka-Kyosei has not yet been achieved.

**Sajida Fazal:** Does tolerance increase through migration? A case study on Pakistani Muslim migrants in Germany

This paper is going to examine to what extent intra-religious boundaries and differences as perceived in Pakistan transform in the diaspora. It will explore how far Sunni and Shia relations are altered and which perspectives and constraints are discernible in the new environment. For this purpose the affiliation to the denomination and organizational structure will be examined by asking whether religious rituals and rules are maintained, abandoned, or substituted by others from different sub-denominations by the migrants. In this respect, the transnational networking of migrants will be considered in order to explore the impact of religious authorities in the homeland and in the diaspora. In the scope of this qualitative research twenty narrative interviews were conducted in Germany in 2014 with Pakistani Muslim migrants, and analyzed based on a grounded theory approach. This paper argues that the interactions of diverse Pakistani Muslim migrants contribute to foster tolerance among them in the diaspora situation.

**Tine Vekemans:** Moving the Jina: Jain religious practice and conduct in new global environments

This paper aims to assess different trajectories of development in Jainism in the context of migration. Today, about 5% of the adherents of this South Asian religious tradition live outside India. Being away from the context in which their tradition developed has pressed Jains to articulate, negotiate and adapt elements of their religious practice and conduct. Migration may hinder daily temple visits, change the way festivals and ceremonies are celebrated, and make taking *darś* an of monks and nuns impossible. It may also confront parents with dilemmas concerning the (religious) education of their children, act as a catalyzer for gender equality, and impact upon food habits. Using data drawn from interviews conducted in different locations and from a dataset on Jainism online, this paper will explore the dynamics and (dis)continuities in the ongoing processes of religious change and attempt to differentiate general factors and factors specific to Jainism.

## Religious Minorities in Islamic Settings

### Panel Chair: Yahya Sabbaghchi

This panel focuses on religious minorities in Islamic contexts. The panel aims to address the status of such religious minorities from varying aspects. This includes (but is not limited to) the historical settlement, demographic patterns, socio-economic status and success, religiosity, and gender dynamics of religious minorities in Muslim societies. The potential contributions may focus on a single religious minority (for instance, Christians) or on several religious minorities in an Islamic context. Further, the field of study of the potential contributions may be a single Islamic society or it can include religious minority/minorities in several Islamic societies. This panel welcomes papers based on either quantitative analysis or qualitative study.

**Hadis Jahani:** Embodying sacred emotions and performative construction of identity: Jâm ritual practice and the process of identity formation among Yâresân in Iran

In this lecture, I want to introduce my PhD project which is about the Yâresân. In Yâresân tradition, music plays an important role in their main rituals. Jâm ritual practice is sometimes very intense emotionally: by playing Tanbûr it is intended to evoke and make the Sûltan present. In my project, I will consider the Yâresân Jam ritual and I will apply the performative approach. In this study one of my central questions is how Yâresân religion constructs its sacred world (emotions, experiences, conceptions,...) through Jam ritual performance; how, creatively and performatively, the Yâresâni invent their cultural meanings and how they are able to transform their reality of being Yâresâni, as a religious minority dominated by Shia discourse in Iran.

**Yahya Sabbaghchi:** Jezia: compulsory or voluntary? A revision on the concept of Jezia in Islam

Based on the legitimacy of offensive war in Islam, the ahl-al-kitab (mainly the Christians and Jews) are asked to make a choice: converting to Islam or paying jezia, otherwise they would be killed. In such a context, jezia is proposed in a compulsory situation, as rejecting it may result in death. But it seems that the concept of jezia during the prophet's life did not include such a compulsion. Rather, it was mostly a treaty of peace-making or an agreement of support, proposed by some societies or tribes who needed to become united with the Muslims – as a powerful society – in order to enhance their defense power against their enemies and guarantee their survival. In a few cases, it was a solution to end a war initiated by the non-Muslims. Such a viewpoint challenges the legitimacy of offensive war in Islam. This paper tries to find the original concept of jezia.

**Tineke Rooijackers:** Fitting in, standing out: Coptic dress in Egypt  
Coptic Orthodox Christians in Egypt today, like the members of many other religions, do not wear distinctive dress – they are only recognizable from a small cross tattoo customarily placed on the right wrist. Christian women in most areas of Egypt do stand out, however, because they do not wear what in the past thirty years has become the prevalent marker of Islamic women: the Islamic headscarf. Nonetheless, their dress is subject to comparable religious and cultural discourses that emphasize the importance of modesty. For men's dress other considerations, notably their social position and an emphasis on fitting in, play an important role. This paper discusses how societal (and sartorial) changes in Egypt in the past fifty years have influenced Coptic dress practices, how Coptic men and women today negotiate diverging discourses and norms on dress, and what role dress plays in the construction of a distinct communal religious identity.

## Religious Places in Urban Space

### **Panel Chairs: Marian Burchardt, Maria Chiara Giorda**

Mounting evidence that many cities are vibrant centers of religious innovation forced social scientists to interrogate and partially reject earlier generalized assumptions about the secularizing effects of urbanization and diversification: religious lines of difference are reshaped rather than eclipsed. This raises questions about how religions and urban space are mutually reconfigured in the age of globalization, transnational migration and religious diversification. This panel explores anthropological and micro-sociological questions about the place-making practices of religious communities: How is religious diversity experienced in everyday life in relation to other markers of cultural difference in cities? How is this everyday life experience shaped by regulations of religion and cities' religious identities? How are religious communities located within social, cultural and physical space?

**Francisco Diez De Velasco:** Minorities vs. majorities: making visible religious diversity in Madrid (Spain)

The purpose of this contribution is, using the legal framework of the religious minorities in Spain as the main classification criterion, to share views, providing some images and examples from which to reflect on the increased visibilization of the non-Catholic religious groups in Madrid. From their almost total invisibility in Franco's time there has been a process of increasing presence in Spanish urban spaces, and Madrid is an interesting example of the combination of marginalization of minorities (in some cases), but also of extreme visibilization of

some other religious groups due to the emblematic space that is Madrid as the capital of Spain.

**Avi Astor, Marian Burchardt, Mar Griera:** Minority religious expressions and the politics of urban space in Catalonia

From July to September 2013, more than 400 Muslims participated in the five daily Islamic prayers that were held in front of the municipality building of a Catalan town as a “pressure tactic”. Local Muslims complained against the local policy on places of worship that forced them to relocate their mosque out of downtown to an industrial park. Taking this case as a point of departure and putting it in comparison with other similar ones, the paper explores the role of these public religious performances as sites of negotiation and contestation between religious actors, political authorities and civil society. We will argue that these religious expressions are crystallizations of the changes in religious, social and cultural life in Catalan society. At the same time they become the arena where new public meanings and understandings are being created.

**Matilde Cassani:** The case of the Italian Sikh rural communities

In Italy, the construction of a place of worship is regulated by a plurality of normative sources that are mainly regional, fragmentary, chaotic and inorganic from the legislative and the administrative point of view. Urban change and the use of space happen much more swiftly than any change in urban planning policies, tools and regulations. In major cities, not having objective social and physical visibility, sacred places are not localizable by the authorities, nor recognized by the citizenship. The countryside hosts an incredible variety of cultures since the economic importance of immigrants and the availability of space seems to guarantee more rights in terms of construction of places of worship. For these reasons, the Italian new religious landscape becomes evident mainly within the countryside. The focus will be on the twenty Gurdwaras (Sikh Temples) which are spread over the Italian agricultural region.

## Religious Pluralism and the Plurality of Religious Identity

**José Ramón Matito Fernández:** Dynamics of theological interpretation of religious diversity

One of the current sociocultural phenomena that better reflects the changes in religious dynamics is the acute and widespread awareness of religious pluralism. This new perception is also the cause of changes and transformations that not only lead to new forms of religiosity, but also drive the search for new methodological approaches to interpreting the effects of that awareness of religious diversity in society and in every religious tradition. The theology that analyzes this set

of problems has been changing over the last years, trying to find a theological significance to the facts of religious diversity and its consequences for religious practices and beliefs. Through this paper we will try to design a map of the current representations and interpretations of religious pluralism and concomitant phenomena (such as religious symbiosis, religious syncretism or religious hybridity).

**Risa Aizawa:** The reconstruction of the concept of “religion” by followers of Kaharingan in Central Kalimantan, Indonesia

This presentation will examine the process of the establishment of Kaharingan’s status as an official religion (agama) and the reconstruction of religious ideas and practice. Kaharingan is the folk religion among the Dayak people in Central Kalimantan. During the Suharto regime, communism was prohibited, and from this time thereafter Indonesian citizens have been obliged to belong to one of the agamas. Many of the followers of religions falling outside agama converted to one of these official religions, however some still requested official recognition of their specific religions. Kaharingan is an example of the latter and was accepted as agama through integration with Hinduism in 1980. Apart from the codification of doctrine and rituals, they have organized an educational regime in support of Kaharingan. Through analyzing the process of its integration with Hinduism and education about Kaharingan, I will show the reformation of their ideas of religion and religious systems.

**Shawn Arthur:** Understanding plurality of religious identity in China: efficacious assistance and auspiciousness

Chinese culture has always recognized religious pluralism as well as the importance of multiple religious perspectives and although the Communist Chinese government has suppressed religious activities, Daoism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and folk traditions continue to play significant roles in the lives of Chinese people. Based on recent ethnographic research in China, this presentation discusses how pluralistic religious identity functions in China, how the Chinese worldview supports and promotes pluralism, and why pluralism remains a cogent religious reality in contemporary China in spite of the influx of exclusivist monotheistic religions. I argue that a focus on lay activities and goals, rather than on clergy-based ideals, can provide significant insight into this issue because of their ability to fluidly move between traditions in search of efficacious assistance and signs of auspiciousness from other-than-human active agents in attempts to improve their lives and to gain support and a sense of hope.

## Religious Reform in the Medieval and Early Modern Christian West: Gender Dynamics and Spiritual Renewal

### Panel Chair: Danielle Dubois

The thirteenth century was a period of intense religious renewal for the Medieval Latin Church. The growing urban population demanded forms of religious life beyond traditional monasticism. Although much has been written about Franciscans and other male orders, the ideals and practices of religious women pursuing the apostolic life is a more recent topic of research (Lester 2011; Stabler-Miller 2014). This panel focuses on the role of individual women and their texts. How did women, often portrayed as marginalized by their contemporaries and by twentieth-century scholars, influence the broader religious reform? To what extent did gender dynamics, governed by hostility or cooperation, shape this reform? And how were works, initially met with resistance, innovatively repurposed by ecclesiastical leaders in order to meet the spiritual needs of future generations?

**Pablo García-Acosta:** Making Angela orthodox: textual transformations of the *Memoriale*, from manuscripts to canonization

The recent canonization of Angela of Foligno (†1308) marks the end of a historical process of acceptance by the papacy of a profoundly controversial text. In this paper we examine how this normalization has been developed: first, we analyze certain fragments of the most reliable branch of transmission of the *Memoriale*, the family of the Assisi Codex, which could have related it with heterodox groups such as the Franciscan Spirituals. Secondly, we compare this manuscript transmission with a later metamorphosis of formative and didactic character: on the one hand, the main Northern branch of manuscripts, rewritten and used in the context of the *devotio moderna* and, on the other, the Spanish translations commissioned by Cardinal Cisneros to evangelize the New World. We will try to demonstrate how, step by step, these different historical texts tried to shape Angela's book as a more readable tool from the point of view of orthodoxy.

**Robert Stauffer:** Marguerite Porete in England: the transmission of the *Mirror of Simple Souls* across the Channel

Much has been made about how Marguerite Porete's *Mirror* might have found its way from France into England. Some have suggested political connections such as the one between Michael Northburgh and Walter de Manny, a soldier who served in Phillipa of Hainaut's train as she traveled to her marriage to Edward III in 1326. Some point to the commerce of monastics traveling back and forth to establish monasteries and convents in England throughout the fourteenth century, such as the Carthusians and the Bridgettines. Some point to the lay interest in pilgrimages in Europe and the Holy Land in the latter half of the century. This

paper will explore, through the example of the transmission of the *Mirror*, the development of lay readership, the desire among the laity for translation of works of spirituality, and the Church's resistance to this development throughout the fourteenth century.

**Danielle Dubois:** Marguerite Porete's *Mirror of Simple Souls*: pastoral work and spiritual transformation

Burned as a heretic in 1310, Marguerite Porete is best remembered for her singular and unorthodox ideas. This paper shows that her thought is better understood as part of the religious reform underway in this period. I argue that her book, *The Mirror of Simple Souls*, encouraged a spiritual revolution that was aligned with the Church's general intent. Porete's teachings on virtue, the Trinity, and the soul demonstrate that her ideas were shaped alongside those of her scholastic male counterparts. Like her clerical contemporaries, she saw religious instruction as the way to spiritual revolution. In this sense, the *Mirror* should be read as a pastoral work that exhorts the laity to spiritual transformation. Unlike mainstream pastoral works however, Porete shifts the focus from external acts to internal purity. This can be verified, for instance, by her discourse on virtue.

## Religious Reform Movements, Historical Aspects

**Cyril Orji:** Tradition and innovation: a semiotic approach to Christian transformation

Innovations needed to move Christian theology forward in contemporary cultures are dogged by methodological problems. This paper argues that the science of semiotics holds the key to unlocking this methodological logjam. Bernard Lonergan (1904–84) revolutionized Christian theology when he suggested that the odyssey of the Christian gospel allows for transcultural communication and pluralism of expressions. He suggested correctly that the Church must devise new methods of communicating the Christian message to its three publics (to use David Tracy's term): the academy, the church, and the society. Lonergan also recognized that it can no longer be denied that the Church exists in cultural forms and, since Christianity continues to move southward, the modern scientific notion of culture suggests that the theologies inherited from the churches of the north Atlantic can no longer meet the changing needs of pluralities of cultures of the global south. The Christian message, therefore, has to be re-thought in light of the new findings in anthropology and the social sciences. The interdisciplinary approach, which Lonergan suggests for transposing the Christian message, finds resonance in the science of semiotics. Drawing from C.S. Peirce and Clifford Geertz in anthropology, the paper argues that the conceptual logjams

that have hindered innovations in Christian theology can be overcome if careful attention is given to the kind of innovation that Lonergan suggests, an innovation that is supported by the science of semiotics.

**Sandra Nickel:** How “Beëlsebubu” got his second “u”: the development and significance of the Yorùbá Christian vocabulary

The nineteenth century saw not only a spread of Christianity throughout Africa, but also the translation of Christian texts into local languages. In what today is Nigeria, a small group of Anglican African and European missionaries translated the Scriptures into Yorùbá and documented their thoughts in journals and letters. Using examples from the Yorùbá Christian vocabulary, I reconstruct the considerations behind the translations and the often unexpected religious and political repercussions of missionary work. I show that the missionaries, by developing the Yorùbá Christian vocabulary, reinterpreted native theology and cosmology. Frequently, political and religio-cultural considerations influenced linguistic choices and thus shaped Yorùbá Christianity. However, the act of translation also meant that Yorùbá Christians were not mere passive recipients but also active and empowered creators of the message delivered to them. Interreligious contact, the missionaries’ correspondence shows, meant relinquishing interpretative authority over the message and allowing for culture-specific reformations and adaptations.

## **Religious Representations, Interpretations and Manifestations in Romanian Arts and Politics**

### **Panel Chair: Bulent Senay**

The panel brings together three papers which complete and complement each other, convening in one point: they all deal with the use of religious (Christian Orthodox) symbols to convey political messages in Romanian history. The first paper deals with the representation of the enemy in mural art by use of religious symbols in fifteenth century Moldavia (with the message “all our enemies will go to hell”); the second with the use, misuse and abuse of religious symbols and manifestations in Romanian WWII politics (despite its religious guise and message, Romanian fascism – just like other fascisms – was in fact a political religion, not a religious movement); and the third with the use of religious interpretations to obtain political outcomes during the Romanian Holocaust (despite their open anti-Semitism, convinced by the Chief Rabbi’s religious arguments, the main Romanian Church leaders intervened with the political establishment to try and save the Jews from certain death).

**Bulent Senay:** Representations of “infidels” and “heretics”: Jews, Turks, Tatars and Armenians in the paintings of sixteenth-century Orthodox monasteries in Bucovina

The first half of the sixteenth century represented an intense period for Orthodox art in Moldavia. During this period, an innovative type of iconography developed: the churches and monasteries commissioned by the rulers were fully decorated on their outer walls with large scenes. But beyond their scale, what is intriguing about these scenes is their message. In striking examples of “otherness/otherizations”, the representations not only expose a mobilizing anti-Ottoman/Turkish and anti-Tatar manifesto but also depict Jews as infidels and Armenian Christians and sometimes Catholics as heretics in scenes of the Last Judgment. Yet, despite the interest this should raise, there are not enough studies to provide articulate analysis of this unique case. Indeed seven of the Bucovina monasteries, considered masterpieces of Byzantine art, were added to the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1993, but little scholarly literature is available to explain the phenomenon. This paper therefore attempts to fill a gap by exploring the process whereby some of these monasteries, with all their architectural beauty, became a means of “otherization” for not only religious, but also cultural, economic, and even political reasons.

**Mihai Chioveanu:** Cherumbims of a modern political apocalypse: the ultra-nationalist mysticism of the “Legion of the Archangel Michael”

Based on a case study of the Iron Guard, this paper intends to re-examine Romanian fascism’s use, misuse and abuse of quasi-religious Orthodox ceremonies, symbols, and liturgical language in politics, in order to attract followers. Despite its mysticism and irrationality, intolerant dogmas, apostles, martyrs and sacred rites, by offering total explanations, demanding unwavering dedication from its adherents, claiming permanent affirmation and enthusiasm, and punishing the heretics and non-believers, the Iron Guard was, and has to be analyzed as, a fascist political movement of protest and integration – forging new elites of messianic nationalists, which made extensive use of religious representations and manifestations – and not as a religious sect or a theocracy, else not only would we Orientalize Romanian fascism, but also sanitize it. The selected themes and interpretation thereof aim to first explore and then synthesize various aspects that have so far been neglected, rapidly discarded or, conversely, overemphasized by historians when analyzing the religious disguise of political objectives.

**Felicia Waldman:** Making use of Christian Orthodox interpretations to save the Jews: Chief Rabbi Alexander Safran in WWII Romania

In his attempt to save his congregation during WWII, Romanian Chief Rabbi Alexander Safran appealed to the most important figures of the Romanian (na-

tional) Orthodox Church, trying to persuade them to intervene with the political leadership of the country to stop the persecution of the Jews. From the Patriarch, Nicodim, to the Metropolitan of Bukovina, Tit Simedrea, and the Metropolitan of Transylvania, Nicolae Balan, Safran approached each and every Church leader possible to ask for their help on the most diverse issues affecting the Jews, from the obligation to wear the yellow star to the deportations to Transnistria or the death camps in Poland. The paper traces the arguments brought by Safran in these meetings, in a review that will show how the wise use of Christian Orthodox interpretations was able to help save part of the Jews of Romania.

## Religious Space and Boundaries in Roman Imperial Times

### Panel Chair: Marlis Arnhold

Religion in the city of Rome and its immediate surroundings was a subject for study in many works from various disciplines. Most of these are marked by a strong focus on monuments, buildings, and actions, that is, specific locations and what happened in and around them. Space, and this also applies to religious contexts, cannot simply be imagined in terms of sites and function only. Spaces are always determined by sensually perceivable boundaries which implies not only a physical presence of the latter (for instance in form of walls and built structures) but is valid for any presence perceivable through senses such as sight, hearing, and smelling. Focusing on the boundaries of spaces in regard to sites, monuments, and actions generally connoted as religious, the panel asks how far such a shift of attention can contribute to our understanding of religion – and particularly the embeddedness of religion – in the urbs and the towns in its vicinity in Roman Imperial times.

#### **Marlis Arnhold:** Viewing and communicating the Roman triumph

The paper focuses on the emergence and temporality of sacred spaces outside of sanctuaries by means of processions moving through the city according to pre-set routes. Not only did the processions cross various boundaries on their way, for instance when leaving or entering a sanctuary, but they also formed boundaries towards the spectator. This is particularly evident in case of Roman triumphal processions which among others included theaters in their route that allowed for a strict separation of participants and spectators, whereas in other cases, the in- and outsides of the processions were more fluid. Given the variances in the availability of space at various points of the routes and changes within the way the processions moved (even which elements they included) both their appearance and their relation to the spectators were under constant transforma-

tion. Where one stood and what one saw was crucial for the way in which the actions were perceived and experienced.

**Kristine Iara:** Invisible boundaries between urbs Roma and its suburbium  
The proposed paper deals with the existence and the crossing of boundaries between urbs and suburbium within religious festivals in Imperial Rome. Although immaterial, these boundaries were nevertheless highly important in religious terms. Using the example of the festivals of Magna Mater, of Dea Dia and the Transvectio equitum, the paper will focus on the role of boundaries in these festivals. Their particular developments in the course of time on the one hand, specific cultic requirements on the other, resulted in differences in significance, perception and handling of the aforementioned boundaries. By not dealing with built structures, but rather with the space in between, and in particular focusing on reasons for and consequences of these differences regarding the boundaries within these festivals, the paper will shed light on the tight interdependence of urbs and suburbium concerning Rome as one coherent space of ritual activity.

**Johanna Stöger:** Space designated to memory: ritual depositions in urban contexts

The proposed paper is concerned with “ritual deposition” in urban contexts and concentrates on the space, the material culture and the labor dedicated to the production of specific places of memory. Two case studies from Ostia will be closely examined to address the spatial significance of such instances of private devotion and commemoration. By critically examining the material evidence for intentional deposition, the spatial parameters and the archaeological contexts, the paper aims to shed new light on an area of religious practice which is hardly ever associated with Rome’s principal port city. The paper will focus on the “conservative currency” these designated spaces had in antiquity and how their “preservation” influenced the development of urban neighborhoods in the long-term.

**Juraj Sarkisjan:** The utilization of bulk finds for a better understanding of the mysteries of Eastern cults

The fact that the main part of the rituals of Eastern cults was performed behind closed doors puts scholars, who try to reconstruct the mysteries, in a very difficult position. This paper therefore stresses the importance of re-evaluations of the bulk finds, with sufficient technical support from ceramicists, data miners and experienced archaeozoologists. The area of the re-investigation was set to the Upper Danubian Roman provinces, which had very different geographical and demographical settings. This selection was especially beneficial for the cults of Jupiter Dolichenus and Mithra. The pottery shards were analyzed directly from the excavation reports and compared with similar temples in their proximity. This comparison was based on a similar principle which was used by Will

Heisey from Oxford who specializes in the francophone area and province Britannia. This paper also introduced the possibility of data mining usage on a huge amount of rims of pottery, especially the Karasik and Smilansky method and their predicative module, which could improve the results of ordinary pottery analysis based on comparison.

## Religious Stereotypes

**Bilal Rana:** The Islamic bomb: nuclear orientalism as a CDA methodology  
A study of the cultural industry can help us to understand the discourse practices towards nuclear weapon technology. The potential of Time magazine articles to reach a global and American domestic readership makes it an influential player. Nuclear orientalism can provide an appropriate framework for this research. A critical discourse analysis will be used to unpack the discursive practices embedded in the text of Time magazine articles. Time magazine articles regarding Pakistan's and India's nuclear weapons programs will be critically analyzed to trace down the nuclear orientalism. The dichotomy of the discourse will further help us to draw a comparison of the coverage of India and Pakistan. This study will also provide a framework for the critical discourse analysis in the light of nuclear orientalism. Neo-Marxist critical media theory, the relation of discourse with power, and van Dijk's concept of the ideological square will be used to investigate the ideological structures.

**Fredrik Jahnke:** The construction of sharia in the European parliament and Muslim identity in Europe

The EU has several ongoing programs to increase plurality and diversity within the Union and to fight e.g. racism, xenophobia and Islamophobia. This presentation is based on a study of how sharia is constructed in the plenary debates in the European Parliament (2000 – 2011), and how that might affect Muslim identity processes in Europe. I will argue that it would be profitable to change the focus and instead of asking questions like “how Muslims can be included in the European society”, concentrate on what a self-chosen and mouldable Muslim identity could (or is allowed to) contain. The European Parliament is a political and democratic institution and has as such an overarching responsibility to promote unity and diversity. However, my study shows that sharia is constructed as something e.g. archaic, threatening, inhuman and misogynistic. Obviously, this makes it harder to use sharia as “raw material” in a Muslim identity process in Europe.

**Jun Fujii:** Discourses about “exclusive monotheism”

After the September 11 attacks, in the regions under the strong influence of Asian religions such as Shinto and Hinduism, we often find a popular argument that “monotheism is exclusive, so civilizations with tolerant polytheism will be more required.” I think that the notion “monotheism” has been formed in modern religious studies, and that such a notion has led to the above mentioned argument. The concept “monotheism” has played a role with a sense of superiority to the other religions of the non-European world. Actually it has been pointed out that Judaism, Islam and Christianity, which are called monotheistic, have also polytheistic elements. For example, Christianity has beliefs in the Virgin Mary and saints. And the percentage of Christian believers who believe strictly in only one God is low. I want to demonstrate the notion of monotheism, not by conventional views, but by academic analysis.

**Marika Rauhala:** *Prava religio: constructing religious prejudice through literary representations in pre-Christian antiquity*

Even though Graeco-Roman religion was receptive to external influences, the basic openness of polytheism was not synonymous with tolerance, and pious respect for all deities did not automatically include their worshippers. For the elite, the preservation of ancestral religion and the control over divine communication were a major part of their self-perception as well as foundations for their elevated social status. Hence, religious prejudices could be mobilized to buttress the elite’s authority against rivalling claims. Various images of otherness, loss of self-control, and political machinations played a central role in the construction of religious bias in pre-Christian antiquity. Representations evoking social disapproval could be associated with any unwanted religious activity, and they justified the elite’s bid for religious control as well as guided the audience’s interpretations of acceptable religion. Through example cases, I will discuss the nature and uses of religious prejudice in ancient sources.

## Religious Theories of Religion

### Panel Chairs: Jörg Rüpke, Michael Stausberg

Theories of religion are conceptual and metaphorical narratives that seek to account for and/or explain religion. In particular, theories of religion account for the specificity, origin, function, and structure of “religion” (what it is, how it comes about, what it does, and how it works). Academic theories of religion need to satisfy the criteria accepted by the respective scholarly community; different disciplines may vary in their criteria. In addition, theories of religion can emerge in other discursive contexts. In this panel, we wish to explore the forma-

tion of theories of religion that may have emerged within different religious traditions, even though they obviously will not have used our term “religion” (or an apparent cognate term that might address problems which are only part of or more embracing than the range of cultural practices defined as coherent by the term “religion”). Are there such theories? How are they structured? How do they argue? When have they emerged and how have they changed?

**Steven Engler:** “There is no greater plague”: a Brazilian neo-Pentecostal theory of religion

Edir Macedo – leader of Brazil’s largest neo-pentecostal denomination, the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (IURD) – preaches that “there is no greater plague on the face of the Earth than religion, even evangelical religion.” Other neo-pentecostal groups hold comparable views: e.g. according to a pastor of the World Church of the Power of God, “The word of Jesus is not a religion. Religion catches you up in dogma. With Jesus, you get caught up in the Word.” Macedo goes further by defining “religion” not just as the other of evangelical Protestantism but as the other of his particular denomination. In one sense, this is simply market positioning, given the IURD’s recent drop in adherents. However, a religious theory of “religion” emerges if we analyze Macedo’s views in terms of the link between ritual and agency in his particular variant of the Gospel of Prosperity. For Macedo, only one path of action leads to salvation: “true sacrifice” (tithing as “challenge”) that invokes God’s purifying agency; all other paths invoke the agency of demons. “Religion” is a worldly economy of counterfeit soteriological goods, motivated “from the cradle” (not “from on high”) by “natural faith” (not “supernatural faith”) and characterized by demonically oriented beliefs and ritual. The IURD’s recent Christian Zionism makes sense, in these terms, as a further turn away from “religion.”

**Harald Matern:** Hybrid theories of religion

Protestant-theological theories of religion are hybrid discourse phenomena. On the one hand, the academic tradition of German-speaking Protestantism leads theologians to stress the scientific character of their theories. On the other, the relation between academic theology and institutional and individual religious practices is not contingent: theology strives to describe personal faith – and to give it a normative shape when trying to direct the structure and the actions of its institutions. Theological theories of religion tend to be “scientific” and “religious” at the same time. On the one hand, “religion” is used as a normative concept addressing both the religious subsystem and the general public. On the other hand, the use of the concept (or its substitutes) intends to describe a “reality”. An analysis of protestant theological theories of religion can describe this ambiguity as an essential aspect of the history of the concept “religion” itself. It can, furthermore, describe the prismatic function of the concept (all theo-

logical discourses concerning the general public are discourses on religion) and show the process of its transformation (intensional or extensional) or substitution (or suppression: cf. the “religious” critics of “religion” in Ragaz and Kutter) as both a result of (historical) conceptual possibilities, societal (and religious) transformation. Hopefully this analysis of theological theories of religion can by such means contribute a specific aspect to the history of “religion” itself.

**Ramona Jelinek-Menke:** Religion as “race care”: early twentieth century’s religions and their conception of religion as eugenic instrument

Religious theories of religion are often related to non-religious ideas of man and history. At the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, the fear of “degeneration” as well as the claim for “eugenic actions” became very popular in European and North-American societies. Several religions incorporated as much as stimulated these ideas. Accordingly, Otoman Zar-Adusht Ha’nish, head of the Mazdaznan Religion in the early twentieth century, wrote: “Race care constituted an utterly important, effective and race cultivating element of primordial religion”. Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels, founder of Ariosophie, argues: “[In past times] religion, art and science had to serve the art of consciously procreating”. Additionally, Protestant, Catholic as well as Jewish authors were convinced that the duty of religion was the improvement of the race(s), its moral conduct, quality of health and, as a consequence, the achievement of salvation. This paper shows, firstly, that several religious authors at the beginning of the twentieth century linked their conception of religion, of its diversity and evolution, to hierarchically structured categories of “race”. Secondly, it argues that for those authors religious practice was the central instrument for shaping mankind according to eugenic ideas. Thereby, it outlines the interdependence between religious and non-religious conceptions of religion, man and history.

**David Zbiral:** Medieval inquisitors’ theory of sects

This paper focuses on how thirteenth- and fourteenth century inquisitors conceived of the beliefs, practices, and functioning of non-conformist Christian groups. The inquisitors’ view of what constitutes a heretical sect and how it works was relatively specific in at least two respects. First, it was strikingly historical: besides genealogy – the traditional historical strategy of explaining the existence of a particular movement as well as its similarities to other movements – the inquisitors were interested in changes that particular heretical rituals, doctrines, and communities undergo in time. Second, inquisitors, driven by their need for hard evidence meeting procedural requirements, somewhat shifted the notion of heresy and error from inner beliefs to observable rituals and habits. At the same time, however, inquisitorial trial records abundantly demonstrate that they were well aware of how precarious it is to draw a straightforward causal link between inner beliefs and outer actions. Based on a selection of trial re-

cords and manuals for the inquisitors, this paper examines how medieval inquisitors conceived of heretical sects, of their change in time, and of the relationship between religious beliefs and actions.

**Christiane Altmann:** Reconstructing Judaism in a time of deformation

In the scholarly community Judaism is commonly considered as a subject of studies of religion. At the beginning of the twentieth century Mordechai M. Kaplan formulated a new theory of Judaism to make a stand against assimilation and growing self-hatred among the Jews. He redefined Jewish religion in a functional sense and attempted to reconstruct Judaism as a civilization. His concept sought to interrelate the Jewish denominations by creating a Jewish identity in a society of multiple identities. His modern vision of being Jewish took up contemporary problems, which scholars of today discuss in the context of secularization, multiple identities and pluralism. The presentation seeks to retrace his ideas by asking whether his ideas represent a kind of a religious theory of religion. How did the theories of religion of his time affect Kaplan's own one about Judaism? How has his "theory of religion" evolved to the Reconstructionism of today?

**Cristiana Facchini:** Jewish religion and Judaism as a civilization

In historical descriptions notions of religion often compete with concepts like "culture" or "civilization". The same holds true for concepts of religion developed within Judaism. "'Judaism' and 'Jewish religion' are not synonymous terms. 'Judaism is more comprehensive than 'Jewish religion', for 'Jewish religion' is only a part of 'Judaism'", writes rabbi Mordechai Kaplan, the founder of Reconstructionist Judaism in the United States, who formulates as *ex ergo* of Judaism as a civilization (1934). Mordechai Kaplan was born in Lithuania and emigrated at an early age to New York, where he attended the Jewish Theological Seminary and Columbia University. The Reconstructionist movement in Judaism followed the path of American congregationalism, and mainly influenced groups of intellectuals, among them the reknown Israeli sociologist Shmuel N. Eisenstadt. This paper aims at analyzing new conceptualizations of the notion of religion in their role for and interaction with new modes of conceptualizing Judaism in the wake of the great changes that affected American and European societies in the early 1930s.

**Rahul Parson:** All things being relatively equal: Indic accommodations of religious difference and the category of general religion

Many scholars (van der Veer, Dundas, Doniger, etc.) have noted that there is no term in any Indian language corresponding exactly with the word "tolerance", an idea that emerges in the context of the European Enlightenment. Despite the absence of the term, there are irenic intellectual positions within Indic traditions that attend to "otherness" and the accommodation of religious difference.

Some of these, *anekāntavāda* (non-absolutism), *syādavāda* (maybe-ism, relativism), *madhyastha* (standing in the middle), have been lauded as religious “tolerance”, and yet they maintain a complicated relationship with religious difference. This paper focuses how so-called Indic notions of religious “tolerance” can fathom the contours of what counts as “religion” or *dharma/dhamma*, and how it is determined. For example, *madhyastha*, literally positioned in the middle, is an approach to divinity and doctrine from a position of neutrality, which allows the viewer to see another religious path “objectively”, and potentially grant it a place in *sāmānyadharmā*, a general theory of religion. Yet this other path must “qualify” by having a legitimate perspective, and – my central claim – it is these requirements that suggest what may be religion.

**Darja Sterbenc Erker:** Ancient Greek and Roman theories on religion

In the paper I am going to present indigenous alternatives to modern concepts of religion in the ancient Greek and Roman world. Some metaphorical narratives on religion, exegetical endeavors and “theories” on religion had a place in intellectual debates of Graeco-Roman antiquity which was similar to our modern religious studies. The aim of the paper is to present the formation of intellectual reflection on religion in Graeco-Roman antiquity. Its typical characteristics include individual ways of rationalizing knowledge on religion, traces of which can be found in the plurality of opinions in intellectual elaborations on religion. Important strands in the incipient theorising were the formulation of questions introducing the notions of “essence of religion”, “nature of the gods” and the “meanings of rituals”. These different building blocks of Roman notions of religion can be identified and are brought together in Varro’s model of “three types of theology”. Special emphasis will be given to the conceptualization of religion in sceptical theories on religion (Euhemerus) and in criticism of myths about gods.

## REMID

**Organizer: Martin Radermacher**

The “Religionswissenschaftliche Medien- und Informationsdienst” (REMID e. V.) introduces itself at the IAHR Congress. REMID serves as a way to make information obtained in the field of religious studies available to the public. Thus the association pursues its objective to reduce prejudices and to further mutual understanding. REMID is committed to a peaceful development of a pluralistic society founded upon respect and tolerance. To pursue these goals, REMID has at its disposal a network of scholars, a documentation centre and archives. REMID is not affiliated with any religion or institution, thus maintaining the highest pos-

sible degree of independence. On this basis REMID is able to offer its resources to the public.

## Remote Effects of Secularization in East Germany

### **Panel Chair: Jenny Vorpahl**

The panel deals with ritual behaviors and official worldviews in East German society and will investigate whether these can be seen as repercussions of a forced secularization by the communist regime in East Germany. It is to be verified whether the rehabilitation of the East nowadays can be seen as a reaction toward the idealization of the Western lifestyle a quarter-century ago. Considering the current nostalgia for East Germany, expressed in products and norms, it seems obvious that East Germany preserves a heritage of GDR-worldviews. The persistence of “Jugendweihe” (youth-consecration) events supports this assumption. Likewise this heritage could explain the adaption of church wedding traditions within German civil wedding ceremonies. Similarly, some positions in political parties nowadays seem to be offshoots of the “scientific atheism” in the GDR. The panel will investigate whether the forced secularity propagated by the East-German state was replaced by a voluntary secularity.

**Hans-Michael Haußig:** Secularity in East Germany: changes and continuities

The official policy of the communist regime in East-Germany was to diminish the influence of all kinds of religion. In order to strengthen the social integration of the East German society, the state propagated a strongly simplified Marxist-Leninist ideology as well as trying to establish new kinds of rituals, which in some way can be seen as surrogates of traditional religious practices. This led to a far-reaching alienation of the majority of the East Germans toward traditional religion. After the collapse of the socialist regime, most of the East-Germans remained at a distance from the traditional religious institutions. Although there was no prescribed ideological orientation after 1989, they nevertheless continued some of the surrogate practices formerly promoted by the socialist state. The paper will analyze the changes and continuities between the secularity in East Germany before and after the collapse of the socialist regime in 1989.

**Jenny Vorpahl:** Civil marriage in Germany between secularization, ritualization and individualization

Just 25% of German marriages are performed by the churches. The number of all marriages has been low, but stable for 15 years. Although there are hardly any obligatory elements for the legal act, one can observe increasingly splendid weddings in church-like settings. It seems that deregulation triggers a search for in-

dividual understandings of marriage and appropriate acts for this change of status. The presentation analyzes and contextualizes processes of ritual-design by investigating wedding-guidebooks from East and West Germany and handbooks for registrars. The material will be examined concerning the role of institutions in the imparting of ritual knowledge and conventions, and forms of individualization and secularization by adaptations or replacements of religious traditions. It needs to be proven if, in contrast to West Germany, ritualized civil weddings are standard in Eastern Germany as a heritage of the GDR.

**Johann Evangelist Hafner:** Jugendweihe: a ritual losing its content

The “Jugendweihe”, a public ritual of adolescence, is one of the most visible heritages of the GDR. After fierce critique by the churches, it is commonly accepted today. The lecture will show the path of the Jugendweihe from a Soviet-loyalty oath in the early 1960s to an initiation of socialist personality. By the participants, the state-oriented celebration was subsequently regarded as a family feast and – after 1989 – as an individualistic biographical event. This seems to be one reason for its survival. In the years after the reunification the Jugendweihe was redesigned by retrieving its early humanistic tradition. The numbers are decreasing, but one has to ask why a ritual prevails although it has lost not only its ideological profile, but also lacks specific content. Perhaps because it became a self-referential ritual: youth, parents and organizers celebrate the fact that they can organize a celebration.

**Dirk Schuster:** Remnants of the research on atheism in the GDR?

In 1956, the first academic workgroup for research on the significance of atheism for the development of a socialist society system in East Germany was created at the University of Halle. By the end of the 1960s further research associations were established, so that in 1964 a new university chair for academic atheism could be established at the University of Jena. In terms of content, the researchers were dealing with the socialist debate on Christian moral ethics as well as the formation of religion and its social importance. The presentation will take a closer look at whether these ideas have found a new home in the programs of left-wing parties nowadays, especially in the papers and regional discussions of parties at the regional level (Landesverbände).

## Representation of Religious Other

**Bulent Senay:** Bucovina monasteries and representation of the religious other

This paper looks at the unique paintings on the exterior walls of some of the fifteenth century Orthodox monasteries in Southern Bucovina (northeastern Roma-

nia) in the context of religious representation and otherization. The “Other” has been depicted in human discourse in many ways and forms – conversation, meta/narratives, plays, war, politics, religion. The representation of the other in religious language, art and culture has thus always made an interesting research subject. One might delve deep into literary and cultural theory, or even psychological and psychoanalytic studies, to explore the notion of otherness and othering, or perhaps turn to postmodern philosophical discussions to explore “alterity” or to modern philosophical discussions to consider the concept of alienation. The Christian and Islamic places of worship and the faith routes represent one of the most important examples of the cultural heritage.

**David Bradna:** The conceptualization of Shintō in Western literature  
 This paper intends to present the results of testing Balagangadhara’s hypothesis that Asian religions like Buddhism, Taoism, Shintō, etc. are not real entities but a product of a western, i.e., secularized theological framework. (1) Engelbert Kaempfer fabricated the very existence of Shintō as an individual system in the late seventeenth century on the basis of biblical theory: Shintō was supposedly the original Babylonian monotheism (while Buddhism the idolatry originated in Egypt). This idea was uncritically accepted by the Enlightenment intelligentsia, and secularized into an – on theology independent – ethnographical fact. The fabrication of individual systems also brought about pseudo-debates concerning religious freedom, and combination of practices. At the end of the nineteenth century, Chamberlain transformed these originally intriguing questions into a neutral description of the Japanese religious life. The current debates on Shintō (i.e., the non-existence of Shintō as an independent religion in pre-modern Japan) kindled by the Japanese historian Kuroda can be perceived as a direct heir of the theologically biased conclusions. (2) The idea that Shintō was the original Babylonian monotheism (“corrupted” by Buddhism) possessing the knowledge of a Supreme Being remained mainstream conviction in the primary western literature until the 1840s, when von Siebold transformed it into the “original Japanese monotheism”. As late as the 1860s Shintō became the “original Japanese religion”. Abandoning one definiendum of Christianity after another was made, in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, many scholars concluded that Shintō was not a religion. The following debates on whether Shintō was or was not a religion, however, took place purely at the level of the definition of Christianity, and the western cultural intuition. Even though those debates remained inconclusive, they eventually began to be ignored: a state that has not changed until the present.

**S.M.Mehboobul Hassan Bukhari:** The “other” in South Asian Islamic discourse

Popular narrative discussing Islam revolves around colonial/modern categories. Colonial classification posits modern dialectics of “other” such as Said’s (1978) critique of the Western classification of Muslims as “Orient,” Rippin’s (2005) identification of modernity as “internal” to Islam, and Lewis’ (2003) declaration of the failure of “Muslim modernism”. Interestingly, all representative “styles” of Islam, no matter if traditionalists or secularists, hesitate to contest the premises of the global capitalist market. In other words, these “styles” partake in the maintenance of global capitalism. This paper hypothesizes that the “other” has disappeared in the theorization and practices of south Asian Muslims in the postcolonial milieu. It investigates the discourse by using Deleuze’s “control societies” as a starting point which culminates in Hardt and Negri’s “Empire”. Both texts postulate the capitalist market as a model to illustrate new forms of imperial sovereignty. Furthermore, this study seeks to unpack the presumptions of Muslims’ arguments and map out their socio-political ramifications.

## **Representations of Nature in Text, Image and Practice: Tradition and Innovation**

**Panel Chairs: Bodil Liljefors Persson, Heike Peter**

This panel wants to investigate the dynamics and innovations of representations of the theme of nature within historical cultures in different geographical settings, such as Sumer, Anatolia, and Mesoamerica. Within the panel historical religions from various cultures with extensive visual and textual material, archaeological and archival records are explored aiming at a comparison in order to analyze and specify knowledge traditions on the theme of nature-culture. The papers in this panel focus on cultures that show similarities but also differences in geographical settings and in societal structures, and at the same time they all differ in culture and religion. Thus we anticipate a discussion of a general interest regarding representations of nature in different cultural settings, aiming at furthering the development of useful theoretical perspectives.

**Heike Peter:** Drumming thunder and weather talk: ritualization of weather in changing Hittite contexts

How is nature represented culturally in ritual space? Weather gods belong to a group of very important gods of Mesopotamia and Anatolia and they are highly represented in text and exemplified in images. They are both individualized and generalized by the frequent combination of different writing styles marking both a group affiliation on the one hand and personal names – individuality – on the

other. Weather then again has also been taken care of ritually, i.e., in thunder rituals. In this paper I want to investigate how weather has been designed and spoken about in ritual space from Old Hittite texts to the New Kingdom, thus in different historical settings. Is it possible to detect changes during these times and how may changes be interpreted? By focusing on weather and combining material culture, ritual activity and discourse I want to illuminate a possible process of “culturization of nature” beyond structuralism.

**Milan Kovac:** Man and animal: origin and transformations of Maya nagualism

Nagualism is a frequent belief widely distributed in all Mesoamerican cultures supposing a close relation between man and animal and also special possibilities to transform human beings into animals. At a theoretical level possible relations between nagualism and totemism have been widely discussed, resulting in the confirmation of an autonomous state of nagualism. The paper focuses on the ancient origin of Maya nagualism and its flexibility till today. The author is dealing with the reconstruction of this phenomenon in the past (including the pre-Classic and Classic periods) and he is analyzing contemporary Maya myths and beliefs, especially among the Lacandons. The author reveals its connection with boundaries between the world and underworld. Conclusions based on the Lacandon model can contribute to the understanding of the roots of nagualism and the reason for its pivotal role in Maya religious thinking.

**Bodil Liljefors Persson:** Challenges and negotiations on spirituality and ritual practices in Yucatec Maya religion

This study focuses on how ritual practices are connected to certain natural and cultural places in Yucatec Maya (con-)texts. Representations of nature and spirituality in texts, images and rituals are highlighted. Classic Maya iconography, early colonial and Yucatec Maya texts, the books of Chilam Balam and ritual of the Bacabs will be analyzed to grasp the intricate patterns of cosmology and ritual in Maya religion. Which processes of change and patterns of continuity are negotiated? Aided by a contextual approach and discourse analysis, this paper focuses on these questions from Yucatec Maya perspectives. Christian influences are analyzed in order to explore the boundaries of Yucatec Maya religion. Today, rituals of healing and harmony are promoted alongside with ecotourism. Is this only a way of attracting modern tourism or can we track these rituals back in time?

**Therese Rodin:** The birth-giving earth and the hero: a mythological theme in Mesopotamian literature

A recurrent theme in Sumerian and Akkadian literature is that the earth gives birth. Sometimes she gives birth to heroes who are understood as good and sometimes to creatures that are understood as evil. When the progeny of the

earth is evil, a hero wages war against it and thereafter creates a new world. This hero is always connected to order and to the Mesopotamian kingdom. In this article the birth-giving earth and her creatures as well as the hero will be discussed from the perspective of their connotations of nature and culture as well as power relations. These three parties will also be investigated regarding how their connotations are transformed over time, as seen in the literature. As a point of departure in the analysis, I will use the theorizing of anthropologist Sherry Ortner in her well-known article “Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?”.

## **Representations of Nature in Text, Image and Practices**

### **Organizers: Bodil Liljefors Persson, Heike Peter**

This open session wants to discuss dynamics of representations of nature within historical cultures. The intention is to deal with the issue of different geographical settings and their input on practice and discourse from different theoretical points of view. The session relates to the former panel and is organized as a round table debate starting with empirical presentations of historical religions followed by a discussion of possibilities to compare these different cultural settings. Christian Prager introduces patronage deities in local tradition focusing on the dynamics of local belief in Classical Maya religion based on his research project on gods and kings at Copan followed by short presentations on Maya, Sumerian and Anatolian religion. Is it possible to specify knowledge traditions by comparing these diverse religious surroundings? Is it possible to trace any general patterns looking both at practice and discourse beyond phenomenology of religion and structuralism? With an open conversation with all participants we hope for new insights both theoretically and in the field of religion geography engaging further cross-cultural research projects.

Participants: **Bodil Liljefors Persson, Heike Peter, Milan Kovac, Therese Rodin**

## **Representations of Otherworlds in Japanese and Western Literature**

### **Panel Chair: Kazuo Matsumura**

Literary authors who shape our notions of the Otherworld often write stories that seem to contradict the views of the dominant religions of their society. Their aim is often to compose a secular or a syncretic text that fulfills the religious desires of potential readers who long for afterlife and the Otherworld, and by doing so,

they also add an alternative religious dimension to their own lives. In this panel we shall address several different genres of literature in Japan and the West and attempt a comparison of the idea of the otherworld as an alternative religious world, and the related concepts of death and life. More concretely, we shall examine the formation of intellectually constructed worlds that contain a variety of religious motives in the following genres: dialogue, comedy, essay, fairy tale and animated cartoon.

**Yutaka Kitazawa:** Otherworld stories and death: an examination of the contemporary Japanese situation of death

Dante's "Divina Commedia" is famous as a masterpiece depicting the otherworld after life, but even before that, about sixty visions of the afterlife had already existed in Europe. They were written between the sixth and thirteenth centuries and show us how eagerly people in the Middle Ages searched for the meaning of death. I think, however, people's attitudes toward death have not changed since then. Gothic novels, romantic literature, fantasy novels and science fiction are in this literary tradition. The mystery of death and terra incognita are the main concern of this literary genre. Otherworld stories were written in various cultures to overcome the sadness and fear of death, but today this sadness is not well acknowledged. In modern medical treatment, death seems to be acceptable and we tend to ignore this sadness. In this paper I will consider the history of modern Japanese otherworld stories and the contemporary situation of death.

**Chieko Osawa:** Religious views of Hayao Miyazaki in his fantastic stories for children

Hayao Miyazaki is a famous Japanese cartoon director whose masterpiece *Ponyo on the Cliff by the Sea* was strongly inspired by Hans Andersen's *The Little Mermaid*. Andersen in his fantasy created a mystic eternal world different from the concept of the Christian Paradise and refused to believe that little innocent souls go to hell, in case of premature death, because of inherited sin. Miyazaki's creation too is infused with spirituality and has been influenced by children's literature. Both stories contain symbols that function as a connection between the real and the other world. Suggesting that one can live in this world while also living in eternity is a special feature of children's literature and may be regarded as the basic matrix of contemporary fantastic stories. This paper will analyze religious motifs in Miyazaki's work and show that it is a quest for a new view of death and life that motivated the two authors to create fantastic stories for children.

**Hiroto Doi:** Plato and the Other World

In Plato's works, as is often said, much mention is made of the other world. For example, "the Myth of Er" in his *Republic* (Book X) and the myth in *Phaedo* are well known for the story about life after death. Though such myths are interest-

ing from the viewpoint of religious studies, we must also consider the philosophical aspects of Plato's myth. In order to inquire into the subject, his *Timaeus*, who is famous for ancient cosmology and cosmogony, should be important because both religious and philosophical aspects are treated. In this paper I discuss Plato's view on stars and planets (including the sun and the moon) as the intellectual residents of the other world for human beings.

**Ilja Musulin:** Rethinking death, transitoriness and old age in Yoshida Kenko's *Essays in Idleness*

This paper seeks to achieve a more accurate understanding of the medieval Japanese author Yoshida Kenko's attitude towards death. In literature and Buddhist studies in Japan Kenko has traditionally been viewed as a revolutionary figure who offered a more accepting and positive view of life's transitoriness than other religious thinkers and writers of his and previous ages, who seem to have been preoccupied with death and held the view that human existence was not only fleeting but profane, unsightly and meaningless. However, Japanese scholars have had problems squaring that positive attitude toward life with Kenko's purported wish to die before reaching old age. This paper will examine Kenko's concept of death and transitoriness and the way it has been perceived by Japanese scholars, and offer a critique of previous scholarship by using a theoretical framework derived from psychology which views anxiety towards old age as a manifestation of death anxiety.

## Representations of Religions

**Clarissa Blume:** Depicting the belief: Roman Endymion sarcophagi and their allusion to the transmigration of the soul

A small number of Roman sarcophagi showing the myth of Selene falling in love with Endymion stands out in one striking detail: Hypnos who gives eternal sleep to Endymion is not shown having wings with feathers but butterfly-wings. Since these – also to the ancient observer – clearly derived from the iconography of Psyche, with that code an allusion to Endymion's soul was made. While this myth was usually chosen because of the closeness of eternal sleep and death, those sarcophagi bringing in the aspect of the deceased's soul must have had the intention to display the idea of psyche and nous separating from the body after death. Due to the mythological frame of the moon and the mortal, it is worth considering that this adjusted iconography was chosen as allusion for the Pythagorean and Stoic idea of the transmigration of the soul from the body of the deceased to the moon.

**Erik Alvstad:** Feasting on the flesh of monsters: the messianic banquet in Rabbinic tradition

In the rabbinic literature the biblical monsters Leviathan and Behemoth are associated with the idea of a grand feast in “the world to come”. During this messianic banquet the two monsters will provide the righteous with food and entertainment: not only will the monsters amuse the righteous by being engaged in a wild-beast contest, but when they have fought and eventually killed each other the spectators are supposed to dine on their meat. This paper interprets the banquet motif by reference to a notion associated with Bakhtin and Burke, viz. the “carnavalesque”. According to Burke the three main themes of the carnival were food, sex and violence. Other important themes were reversal and renewal. It will be shown that these themes are pivotal to the vision of the eschatological banquet. Through an examination of the banquet’s carnivalesque aspects some important cultural meanings conveyed by the motif will be discussed.

**Nao Kaneko:** Robe selling ritual in the context of Chan funeral rites

The robe selling ritual is one of funeral rites described in Chan/Zen pure rule texts (Qinggüi). In the ritual, dead monks’ personal belongings or properties are put up to auction and bid on by colleague monks. Most detailed descriptions of the ritual are found in a Chinese Chan pure rule text named “Chixiu Baizhang Qinggüi”, which was compiled in the fourteenth century, Yuan dynasty era, and has been estimated as the compilation of all pure rule texts written up to those days. It was confirmed from Chinese Chan pure rule texts that when a monk died, his personal belongings were to be sealed and placed under the control of a monastery. In the course of funeral rites, the monastery’s officials judged their value and prices, and a part of these belongings were put up for auction in the robe selling ritual, in which they were bid on by the dead monk’s colleagues. I have studied Chinese Chan pure rule texts for these years and made inquiry into the economic effects that a dead monk’s mementoes or properties and the robe selling ritual could bring to a monastery he belonged to. In my paper, I would like to examine the meaning of the robe selling ritual and what it generated in Chan/Zen monasteries based on the analysis of “Chixiu Baizhang Qinggüi”, not only from an economic point of view, but also from the perspective of Chan/Zen funeral rites, in the course of which the ritual in question might have been carried out.

## Re-Presenting and Re-Defining the Other through the Ages: Images, Objects and Texts in Interreligious Encounter

### Panel Chairs: Daniela Bonanno, Paola von Wyss-Giacosa

Since antiquity, the confrontation with the Other has been an extraordinarily productive and effective laboratory for the construction of self-identity. Self is banally defined both in relation and in opposition to an often marginalized, or discredited, or even worse, demonized otherness. Within the framework of a more general debate about the relationship between identity and alterity, the participants in this panel will focus their attention specifically on the function that images, objects and texts play in the encounter with the Other. The main questions, posed both synchronically and diachronically, are: which representations of the Other do these media transmit as they are taken from one cultural context to another, or possibly from one religious system to another? What emotions are viewing or reading them meant to elicit and what reactions do they actually provoke? How do these media modify an image of the Other or a system of ideas?

**Daniela Bonanno:** Looking like Aphrodite, punishing like Nemesis: how objects can express a religious change, a case study from ancient Rhamnus. According to a passage of Pausanias' *Periegesis*, the statue of Nemesis in Rhamnus was made by Phidias from a piece of Parian marble, which the Persians had brought along at the time of the battle of Marathon to build a trophy, sure as they were of conquering Athens. According to another tradition the statue was originally an Aphrodite, sculpted by Agoracritus of Paros, Phidias' pupil, in a competition against the Athenian Alcamene. Agoracritus became angry with the Athenians because they preferred the work of their fellow-citizen, so he decided to sell his work to the Rhamnusians, calling it Nemesis. All these traditions left marks in the iconography of the statue, which looks different from other images of the goddess Nemesis in the Greek world. This paper aims at understanding how an object, going from one cultural system to another, can be (re-)invented in order to respond to precise needs and even promote or express a religious change.

**Francesco Massa:** The mystery cults and Christian constructions of the other in Eusebius of Caesarea. Regardless of the changes which take place in the first half of the fourth century, Christians carry on living in a multi-cultural and multi-religious empire, while conflicts against enemies inside and outside the Empire contribute to define the borders of their religious identity. The aim of this study is to investigate the role of Greek and Roman mystery cults in the works of Eusebius of Caesarea: on the one hand, they represent one of the main controversies of the *Praeparatio evangelica*; on the other hand, in *Demonstratio evangelica* and in the *Life of*

Constantine, the author takes advantage of the language of the mystery cults in order to speak about rites (baptism and eucharist) and Christian doctrines. The example of mystery cults illustrates how, by creating a construction of the Other, Christians think and model their own identity, in an uninterrupted exchange between religious competitions and identity constructions.

**Daniel Barbu:** Normative inversion: on Jesus and the origins of Christianity in the Toledoth Yeshu

The Jewish Life of Jesus (Toledoth Yeshu) provides us with an unusual and mischievous narrative of the life of Jesus and of the origins of Christianity. According to this “anti-Gospel,” Jesus was an illegitimate child (a mamzer) who managed to trick the crowds of Galilee by usurping magical powers and working pretend miracles. His deceptions revealed, he was condemned to death and hanged. His followers, however, continued to stir up trouble in Israel: they were thus cut loose from the rest of the people by Jewish “double-agents” who gave them laws and customs contrary to Judaism, hence transforming them into a separate religion, i. e., Christianity. The foundational myths of the Christian tradition are here overturned and replaced by a “counter-history,” inverting the respective power positions of Judaism and Christianity. In this paper, I will seek to explore some knots between emotion and identity in the Toledoth Yeshu, and try to assess anti-Christian feelings among medieval and early-modern Jews.

**Dominik Fugger:** Foreign and yet familiar: the study of northern paganism in the early modern age

If it is true that one cannot think of identity without alterity, of one’s own without the foreign, then the history of pre-Christian paganism represented an extraordinary challenge for scholars in the early modern age. Indeed, as Christians – most frequently as learned theologians – when writing about paganism, they were writing about religious stages, the overcoming of which they considered to be a crucial element of their own identity. Paganism in this perspective appears as the Other, as the necessary opposition, without which one’s own being cannot be discerned. At the same time, this Other cannot be totally dismissed as evil, because it represents the beliefs and deeds of one’s own ancestors. As such it is part of one’s own past and proof of one’s own historical existence. This tension crucially influenced the early modern discourse on historical paganism, as I intend to explore in my paper by means of select examples from the history of the pre-Christian religion of the North.

**Giovanni Tarantino:** The uses of the Other in the early modern English Catholic community

The pitiless memoirs of Gregorio Panzani, the papal emissary to England during the reign of King Charles I, demonstrate how the deep rivalries among Catholic missionaries in England, especially between regulars and seculars, only showed

signs of dying down when there was talk of a Protestant hostility directed implacably against them. Yet for the most part English Catholics and Protestants lived on good terms within their local communities. They had the same lifestyle and interests. In periods of crisis, many Protestants actively assisted their Catholic neighbors and friends. It is most likely, then, that the emphasis placed by the regulars on an inflexible and indistinct Protestant enemy, regarded by Panzani in his *Memorie* as a specious position, served to preserve the fragmentation of the English Catholic community. The rhetorical construction of a distant religious Other was intended to bring about, for reasons relating to a political power struggle within the Catholic Church, a delegitimation of the nearby Other.

**Paola von Wyss-Giacosa:** Struggling with strange idols

One of the key seventeenth-century discourses on idolatry dealt with its origin and development through time as a misguided form of religion. The scholars drew upon a broad range of material for their investigations: *antiquitates sacrae* were considered as a point of departure, but empirical information on the cultures of Asia and Mesoamerica, a significant part of which came from travellers' and missionary writings, played an increasingly important role. This paper explores thoughts and theories that revolve around cult images. These are described in ethnographic accounts rich in observations of "idolatry in practice". Some of the objects were brought to Europe and regarded as valuable for comparative studies and interpretations. I will present aspects of a historical discourse on contemporary "idolatry" based on material culture and more generally on the visual representations thereof. In doing so, I will also demonstrate the epistemological significance and specificity of illustrations and argue for their relevance as source material.

## Representing Death and Life: Transitions, Diversities, and Contemporary Significance

**Panel Chair: Masaru Ikezawa**

Death has always been an important theme in religions and Religious Studies. Therefore, when the new discipline called "Thanatology" or "Death and Life Studies" developed in 1960s, it was deeply related with religions and Religious Studies. However, this new discipline was not only an academic discipline, but also a movement aiming to change the ways of death and dying, and in fact, it has been influential enough to change the contemporary scenes of death and dying. In this situation, it is not enough for us to make death the subject of our researches; it is necessary to consider the religious significance of academic discourses on death. From these points of view, this panel will try to re-consider

the religious phenomena related with Death and Life Studies, such as contemporary representations of death, burial, mortuary practices, and bioethics.

**Kana Tomizawa (Kitazawa):** Eighteenth-century obelisk-shaped tombs and the plurality of funeral culture in colonial India: a Death and Life Studies perspective

In the study of modern India, investigations of death tend to fall into two contrasting analytical categories. While representations of the deaths of rulers are analyzed as imperial functions, those of the ruled are the object of efforts to salvage them from elite history. Such post-colonial perspectives critical of Orientalism are important, but the complex history of mourning cannot always be reduced to such a simple dichotomy. This paper will focus on the complex history of obelisk-shaped tombs built in British India. Western obelisk-shaped tombs are often said to have emerged in the wake of Napoleon's campaign in Egypt, but we can find many obelisk-shaped tombs predating the nineteenth century in India. They developed as a result of a complex mixture of images from around the world, and their history shows that Death and Life Studies can contribute a new perspective to colonial history.

**Masaru Ikezawa:** The religiosity of bioethical discourses: an examination from the viewpoint of cultural diversity

Even in the modern and secular era our ways of thinking are, unconsciously or consciously, influenced by traditional and religious views or "feelings." This is one form in which religion exists in the contemporary world. This paper will discuss this kind of diffused religion by examining its influence on bioethics. As is well known, the underlying logic of European bioethics has diverged considerably from that of the United States. The approach of the former is represented by the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights. Henk ten Have, who was involved in the drafting of the Declaration, admitted that it was influenced in some ways by religious ideas. Currently, in China (mainly Hong Kong) there is a movement seeking to establish clinical practices compatible with Confucianism. This paper will discuss the influence exerted by traditional religion and culture in these cases.

**David Eaton:** Mourning, digital presence, and the space between spaces  
Why do some mourners sense the presence of the deceased on Facebook? And what do their continued conversations reveal about contemporary British expressions of religiosity? This paper examines the phenomenon of digital presence through exploring notions of the digital embodiment of self, implicit understandings of digital ontology, and the significance of emerging online mourning practices.

## Representing Judaism: Narrating, Visualizing, Performing, and Feeling a Religion

**Cristiana Facchini**

In the last thirty to forty years, historians of religion have dealt from a variety of point of views with the notion of representation, entertaining themselves with the symbolic dimension of the religious imagination, increasingly interacting with disciplines such as cultural anthropology, art history and literary criticism, at times with semiotics, in order to depict the religious cultures of the past. Often they fully reconstructed segments of religious systems, as they focused on rituals or performances; in other cases they have tried to unearth segments of their symbolic universes starting from the study of visual or other languages. My lecture is focused on representations of Judaism that emerged at the onset of the modern era, and the more or less self-conscious processes of their construction. As Jews were greatly challenged by different paths of modernity, and precisely because they lived in the diaspora, the way they conceptualized their tradition and history bears the traits of a complexity that has been often overlooked. This complexity has to deal with a number of negotiations that Jewish intellectuals (and Jewish institutions) had to face with the rise of modernity. I will therefore present different representations, framing them against the background of a geographical setting on the move, which will enable me to explore the dimensions of a diaspora religion. Moreover, I will integrate the discursive and descriptive dimensions of these representations with other devices, meant to integrate the visual and performative dimension of religion, its materiality and capability to create emotions.

## Representing Religion in Modern Media

**Assia Harwazinski:** The reception of “primitive religion” in modern dance as metaphor and paradigm for social change: “Le Sacre du printemps” by Igor Stravinsky

“Le sacre du printemps” was first composed as a musical piece by Igor Stravinsky. “Le Sacre”, both musically as well as in dance-form, broke with all the rules of commonly accepted stage performance. Dancers moved in skin-colored costumes “naked” on stage to new, scattered music full of disharmonies. Stravinsky was inspired by a pre-Christian Russian myth about the necessity of a virgin human sacrifice to ensure the successful recurrence of spring. Hence, he symbolically cited the political situation of radical change in Tsarist Russia and staged it as a ballet, featuring radical choreography by Vaslav Nijinsky. Modern dance

thus became a vehicle for challenging acknowledged social norms, and a medium for the communication of concepts such as “primitive religion”.

**Gabriel Badea:** Mircea Eliade and art as a spiritual experience: a complementary view to the aestheticized hermeneutics and interpretation of art as a historical phenomenon

The proposed paper is structured as follows: first, I will focus on Eliade’s ideas regarding art and creation as types of religious experience, especially in traditional societies. Then, I will put these ideas in relation to the main discourses on art in the modern context (aesthetics and art history, the system of modern art). A major feature of Eliade’s hermeneutics is the “primeval” perspective on a work of art and its metaphysical origins, as a means of access to the sacred. His approach may be similar to that of other scholars, such as Rudolf Otto, Ananda Coomaraswamy or Gerardus van der Leeuw. It should be noted however that while their contributions remained in the field of the sacred art or the syncretism between art and religion, Eliade was interested also in the recent changes imposed by literary and artistic modernism. Secondly, I will follow Eliade’s impressive reception of Brancusi’s sculpture, by emphasizing the profound link between anamnesis and artistic creation and the modern avatar of the syncretism of art/religion. Finally, I will insist on the reception of Eliade’s “aesthetic” ideas and their relevance for present-day debates.

**Ruth Illman:** Tradition and change in contemporary Jewish song practices  
Jewish musical practices stemming from mystical sources have since the turn of the millennium notably increased in popularity inside as well as outside Jewish communities in Israel, Europe and North America, relocating and reframing traditional practices for a late-modern, urban, liberal and liquid spiritual milieu. This development has been met with mixed responses: some valuing it as a vitalization of Jewish worship, others dismissing it as vulgarization and commodification. This paper presents an ethnographic study of the contemporary practice of niggunim among progressive Jews of various backgrounds in North London. The Hasidic tradition of singing niggunim – wordless spiritual melodies – is currently experiencing a renaissance as part of an experience-based, un-dogmatic, emotionally saturated and border-crossing form of Jewish spirituality. The presentation discusses the ethnographic research and in relation to a theoretical framework combining Judaic Studies with a vernacular religious perspective on religious change, embodiment, the arts and creativity.

## Researching Religions & Politics: Young German Perspectives

### Panel Chair: Ulf Plessentin

Political conditions often had and still have a profound influence on religious groups. Likewise, religious groups endeavor to impact politics, policy-making, and politicians, both in past and present times. Topics in the nexus of religion and politics are therefore an integral part of any scientific study of religions. Novel and interesting research has been conducted by sociologists, political scientists and scholars of religious studies over the last decade. Due to their cross-cultural and historical perspectives, religious studies can contribute fruitfully to ongoing academic discussions. In order to provide a platform that unites different approaches, a working group on religions and politics was founded within the DVRW, the German section of IAHR. In this panel, young scholars present their research, especially on processes of adaptation to and transformation of political structures. Additionally, the mechanisms by which political conditions foster innovative or traditional religious structures and practices shall be discussed.

**Thomas Jurczyk:** Religious and political semantics in the first two Books of the Maccabees

The major aim of this paper is to identify possible indications of a distinction between the two (modern) societal spheres of “politics” and “religion” in pre-modern societies. This shall be achieved by analyzing the semantics of the first two books of the Maccabees. For instance, the examination of the use of semantic fields related to the terms *hagios/hieros*, *basileuō*, *ho nomos*, and to *kratos* might point to a differentiation between the above-mentioned societal spheres. By analyzing a concrete historical example, this study hopes to contribute to the much debated question of potential societal differentiation in pre-modern societies.

**Katharina Neef:** Churches, chapels, clubs: legal dimensions of and their implications for religions in twentieth-century Germany

The paper discusses the possibilities of small religious groups to become (at least legally) accepted religions in the German federal states of the twentieth century. Often, the precise legal formation affects not only the hierarchical and bureaucratic organization in question, it also influences the conception of the group itself. Communities and their members begin to understand themselves and their organization as religious or non-religious, they locate themselves in specific relations to other participants in the (religious, political, scientific or societal) field, and they act and communicate in specific ways.

**Ulf Plessentin:** Syriac-Orthodox Christians in Sweden and Germany: adaptation to and application of democratic principles

Since the mid-1960s, Syriac-Orthodox Christians have migrated to Europe, especially to Germany and Sweden. In the first decades after their settlement, new church communities were founded, often with the assistance of the established Churches. Over the course of the last years, a new generation of Syriac-Orthodox Christians grew more powerful and increasingly visible by advocating their own interest with politicians and in the public of both countries. This shift would not have been possible without adaptations to the conditions and roles which actors can play in democratic and open societies. This paper will render a twofold perspective: on the one hand, it will show how Western societies have changed European Syriac Orthodox communities. On the other hand, it will examine how Syriac Christians successfully exert influence on politics in their own interest both for their European communities as well as for those in the historical regions of origin.

## **The Response of Ukrainian Muslims to the Challenges of the Crisis Year 2014**

**Panel Chair: Sergii Ismagilov**

Events of the year 2014 in Ukraine have issued a set of challenges concerning Muslim organizations and have compelled them to adapt to life in conditions of occupation, acute changes in legal frameworks, ideological and worldview standards, and a crisis of Ukrainian Muslim discourse over all. Every major Muslim association has demonstrated peculiar dynamics in the taking of an official position, either from a political angle or in matters of inter-Muslim and interreligious dialogue established during the year 2014. The most significant thing is that armed and political conflict has covered the regions of Ukraine where an overwhelming majority of Ukrainian Muslims live. During the workshop we will look at examples of the public position dynamics of different Ukrainian Muslim communities during the year 2014.

**Mykhaylo Yakubovych:** Ukrainian Muslims after Maidan: recent changes and new developments

The recent history of Islam in Ukraine is closely interrelated with Ukrainian independence, since before the late 1980s no single community officially existed in this part of the USSR. However, already by 2014 around seven hundred registered Islamic communities were gathering Muslims for common prayers, also in the Crimea. However, the deep political crisis and military conflict of 2014 resulted in the appearance of a new phenomenon in the history of Ukrainian Muslim

communities: that is, internal refugees, ethnic and religious persecutions as well as the rise of new Muslim organizations based on political loyalty. Moreover, after the Russian annexation of the Crimea, local Muslims entered into a completely other legal and political reality. The same is true of Muslims of the Eastern Ukraine, who, as well as other parts of the local population, continue to suffer from the protracted military conflict. The study shows how Muslim communities answer to these challenges.

**Ruslan Khalikov:** Christian-Muslim dialogue against the background of the war in Ukraine

Communication between Christians and Muslims in the territory of the Ukraine has an age-old history, and remained quite intense during the times of the existence of an independent Ukrainian State; however it was not a dialogue in its direct meaning – certain local conflicts were sometimes present between Christians and Muslims. At this time of revolutionary events and the recent conflict that has covered regions of the largest concentration of Muslims in the Ukraine, the Christian-Muslim dialogue has moved to a new level: Ukrainian Christian and Muslim religious organizations have united in the threat the Ukrainian society faced; however relationships in the occupied territories have come to a head as far as a necessity to define coexistence in a new legal framework and cooperation with the new administration goes.

## **Rethinking the History of Religions in Postwar Japan from a Post-Secular Perspective**

**Panel Chair: Jørn Borup**

In 1947 a Constitution for postwar Japan was enacted as a direct result of Japanese defeat in the Asia-Pacific War. Subsequently the relationship between the nation state and religion in Japan changed dramatically, as Japan moved away from the Meiji Constitution. Effectively, the Constitution (drawn up under the Allied Occupation) shifted away from what has been termed “State Shinto” (under which mandatory shrine visits were imposed upon subjects, especially during wartime) to a secularized framework based on the principle of separation between church and state. However, when looking more closely at the relationship between religion and politics in postwar Japanese society, it becomes apparent that the separation embodied in the Constitution is unable to fully capture the empirical reality found at the ground level, and is subsequently superficial. Therefore, this panel aims to develop a more subtle and nuanced appreciation of postwar Japanese religious history from a post-secular perspective.

**Kiyonobu Date:** Politics and religion in postwar Japan: focusing on the relationship between political parties and religious groups

To understand Japanese secularism, one needs to closely examine the relationship between political parties and religious groups. Research in this area, despite its importance, has been limited. Besides growing secularization of postwar Japan, one of the factors inhibiting religious issues from entering public discussions seems to be the constitutional principle that politics and religions should be separated. After introducing different types of connection between political parties and religious organizations, I will focus on the evolution of partnership between the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and the Komeito Party. It is common knowledge that the latter has been supported by Soka Gakkai, but the influence of Shinto Seiji Renmei on the LDP remains largely unknown. I would like to propose that State Shinto has haunted the memories of this organization and that, recently, Komeito has shown tolerance towards the right to collective self-defense proclaimed by the LDP while its alliance, Soka Gakkai, is committed to upholding peace.

**Masayoshi Sumika:** Christian prime minister Masayoshi Ohira's political philosophy

It is well known that the proportion of Japanese Christians – those who have been baptized and are currently regular churchgoers – to total population is less than one percent in Japan. On the other hand, three baptized politicians, Tetsu Katayama, Masayoshi Ohira and Taro Aso, have served as prime minister of Japan. If Taro Aso's grandfather Shigeru Yoshida, who received baptism after death, is reckoned as a Christian, then four out of thirty-four Japanese prime ministers in the postwar period were Christians. Christian prime ministers account for more than ten percent of the total. This amount is intriguing enough to research, but there are few studies about their Christian belief and policy. This paper examines Masayoshi Ohira's belief and his political philosophy as a first step of the research into Christian prime ministers of Japan and their policy.

**Akira Nishimura:** Spirits and remains: on the relationship between Chidorigafuchi National Cemetery and Yasukuni Shrine

Chidorigafuchi National Cemetery, established in 1959, inters the remains of the unknown fallen soldiers of the Imperial Japanese Army. It is a secular institution, but nonetheless holds memorial ceremonies officiated over by various religious groups. Yasukuni Shrine served as the Japanese government's central war memorial and became highly relevant as a religious body after Japan's defeat in WWII. It won't allow the presence of physical remains of the deceased based on the Shinto idea that the dead body is polluted. The cemetery and shrine could be understood as contrasting sites: Chidorigafuchi contains the physical remains of the ashes of the deceased, whereas Yasukuni enshrines their spirits. In this

paper however, I would like to decipher the nexus of relationships between the cemetery and the shrine. These will be analyzed through case studies that illuminate the recovery of the remains and the memorial services held in former battlefields.

## Retraditionalization, Anti-Foundationalism and Glocalization in a Post-Islamic Muslim World

### Panel Chair: Carool Kersten

Since the 1990s, some researchers of the contemporary Muslim world have been predicting the end of political Islam – introducing the term Post-Islamism. This does not mean the end of the role of religion in the Muslim world. A wide spectrum of religious practitioners, Muslim activists and intellectuals, ranging from social conservatives to critical progressives, propose innovation through critical and appreciative engagement with the Islamic tradition. The vacuum in the centre is filled by a trend towards “retraditionalization”. These include strategies to rehabilitate local Islamic traditions and regimes of knowledge promoted as more pious, authentic, or progressive and tolerant. More “adventurous” intellectuals advocate different forms of Muslim cosmopolitanism and worldliness, drawing inspiration from the 1980s Heritage Thinkers and writings of anti-foundationalist philosophers and postcolonial theorists. In contrast to reactionary Islamism, proponents of these trends seek an alternative Muslim future while retaining an “Islamic referent”.

**Cecilie Endresen:** Pagans and pantheists: pluralist new age Islam in Albania

This paper explores Islam-oriented ideas promulgated by a number of adherents of “Pelagian” theories, a multifaceted Albanophonic discourse based on conspiracy theories, rejected knowledge and an esoteric impulse. A tenet is that modern Albanians through their “Pelagian” ancestry and language possess the key to recover a lost wisdom tradition, which is contrasted with others’ religious “fanaticism”. This Pelagian *Ur-Religion* is well preserved in Albanian culture, above all in one’s own religious heritage, which is endowed with global and cosmic significance. The backdrop is secularist, under-siege nationalism, and current visions of European integration and Western recognition. A main inspiration are nineteenth-century efforts to refashion the Sufi Bektashiyya tradition into a kind of pantheist, pagan-Christian pro-Western Islam. “Pelagian” interpretations of Islam are idiosyncratic and unorganized, often with a pantheist, panentheist or polytheist twist and a neopagan character, with elements from UFO religions and an increasing similarity with New Age in the West.

**Carool Kersten:** Alternative regimes of knowledge for a post-Islamist world: pragmatism, anti-foundationalism and hermeneutics of alterity

This paper examines the use of pragmatist/anti-foundationalist philosophies in challenging the totalizing and teleological tendencies in contemporary Muslim thought by analyzing the writings of two Iranian-born but US-based sociologists of knowledge: Dabashi's 'hermeneutics of alterity' is a counterpoint to the metaphysics underlying the false binary of 'West' vs. 'the Rest', and rejects the inherently violent totalitarian ideologies undergirding the French Revolution, Bolshevism and Islamism. He proposes an alternative decentered, postcolonial, postorientalist and postwestern world, using Arendt, Gadamer, Deleuze and Vattimo for a new 'geography of liberation' that restores the worldly cosmopolitanism found in the literary humanism of the Muslim past. Ali Mirsepassi identifies non-Islamic elements in the 'philosophies of despair' manifested in Persian nativism and Islamist ideologies, traceable to the totalitarianism of Jacobin Enlightenment and Heideggerian authenticity. Mirsepassi's alternative 'philosophy of hope' draws on the appreciation of everyday experiences in British Enlightenment and Dewey's pragmatism for realizing human freedom and deliberative democracy.

**Ali Paya:** Critical rationalism vs. doctrinal dogmatism and violent radicalism: Muslim intellectuals in Iran

Faced with the sad reality of misrepresentation/misinterpretation of the teachings of Islam, a group of Muslim intellectuals in Iran have tried to promote critical rationalism (CR) as an antidote to misguided interpretations of Islam and as an intellectual tool for developing a sound Islamic outlook. At the heart of CR lies the thesis that "all knowledge is conjectural and yet it is not impossible to get closer to a true knowledge of reality by learning through our mistakes." CR is against all justificatory and foundationalist approaches. CR argues that it is through a never-ending process of critical examination of our interpretations of Islamic teachings that we can hope to develop an "Islamic outlook" that is fit for the twenty-first century. In my discussion I shall critically assess the efforts of Iranian Muslim intellectuals to develop their new approach.

**Émilie Roy:** Educating pious citizens in Bamako's Médersas: sacralizing daily life and Islamizing the public sphere

The arabisants of Bamako's médersas have constructed, occupied, and controlled a social space within the officially secular Malian public sphere by constituting a class of self-conscious Muslims, pious and productive citizens. They are at the forefront of a re-traditionalization of the public sphere where Islam is claimed and celebrated as both a factor of internal cohesion and of social peace. The choice for the arabisants was never between modernity and Islam, but rather between an Islamicized and a Westernized modernity. Malian arabisants have fo-

cused their activism on moralizing the daily lives of Malians through “Islam mondain,” a form of sacralization of daily life that allows one to live as a pious Muslim in a secular, pluralistic, and democratic environment. This paper thus illustrates the agency of the arabisants in defining their activities, rendered Islamic, in the public sphere in light of Bayat’s theorizing of daily life as politics (2010).

**David Vishanoff:** Hermeneutics and the traditional Islamic sciences in Indonesia today: continuity, rhetoric, or creativity?

Numerous recent Indonesian books on Qur’anic hermeneutics present their adaptations of modern and postmodern Western theories as reformulations or extensions of the classical Islamic disciplines of exegesis (tafsir), legal theory (uṣūl al fiqh), and the Qur’anic sciences (‘ulūm al qur’ān). This essay will consider several scholars such as Aksin Wijaya, whose “new direction in the study of the Qur’anic sciences” includes a reformulation of the classical Ash’ari doctrine of God’s eternal speech in terms of modern communication theory, and Sahiron Syamsuddin, who recasts classical exegesis as a hermeneutical system comparable to modern and postmodern western hermeneutics. It will be argued that while these scholars distort or modify the classical disciplines quite seriously, they are not just using them as a rhetorical strategy to mask their divergence from tradition, but are engaging them in substantive and creative ways, and treating them as real intellectual resources on a par with their modern western counterparts.

## “Returning the Call”: The Impact of “Foreign” Missions in Europe

### Panel Chair: Pamela Klassen

Historians have long recognized the crucial role of Christian missions in disseminating Western culture and science. This is hardly surprising given that missionaries in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries saw spreading Western “civilization” as their *raison d’être*. What historians of mission have often neglected, however, is the extraordinary and concurrent impact of missions on their country of origin. In other words, Christian missions also facilitated the flow of ideas, objects and people in the other direction, back into Europe and North America. Moreover, mission societies and their supporters often wielded significant political power at home. David Hollinger has used the boomerang as a metaphor to describe the important impact of returning protestant missionaries on American post-war liberalism. Through several case studies, this panel will examine whether something similar has taken place earlier in Europe as well. In what

ways did missions shape the political, religious and intellectual environment in their countries of origin?

## Revisionisms and Diversifications in New Religious Movements

### Panel Chair: Eileen Barker

New religious movements tend to start their lives with a number of unequivocal statements, not only of a theological nature but also about the world and appropriate behaviors for the believer. Yet these apparently inalienable Truths and their interpretation frequently become revised, “adjusted” or selectively adapted by different believers. This panel explores different ways in which, as new religions develop, stagnate, fade away, or abruptly ceased to exist, certain orthodoxies and practices have, for one reason or another, been dropped or radically altered. Sometimes such changes are adapted by only a section of the movement, resulting in schism.

**Eileen Barker:** The changing ways and means and beliefs of New Religious Movements

Concentrating primarily, but not exclusively, on the Unification Church (the “Moonies”), the Children of God/The Family International, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, and the “Exclusive Brethren”, this paper will compare ways in which these and other new religious movements have changed their beliefs and practices as a result both of inevitable demographic changes (such as the death of charismatic leaders, the ageing of converts and the arrival of second and subsequent generations) and other internal dynamics (such as failed prophecies), and of external pressures (such as attention from governments, the so-called anti-cult movements and the media) and general external changes, such as the fall of the Berlin Wall and the introduction of the Internet.

**Gordon Melton:** Revisionism in the New Age movement

Significant change in the belief/practice of religious movements can be attributed to a variety of agents both internal (leadership changes, fresh revelation) and external (social pressure, failed expectations). The New Age movement inadvertently set itself up for change by erecting beliefs on falsifiable claims capable of refutation by both the nonappearance of predicted events and scientific research. Such claims within the New Age movement of the 1980s included broad predictions of social change (the coming of a New Age) as well as particular changes such as the many predictions made by channelers or the claims of vast power stored in crystals for healing. By the end of the 1980s, however, the falsification of a spectrum of New Age claims resulted in a host of revisions of its

beliefs, a massive loss of credibility, and ultimately the end of the New Age movement.

**Massimo Introvigne:** “The Sounding Cosmos” revisited: Kandinsky, the theosophical tradition and religious/artistic innovation

Prominent artists’ association with new religious movements was once regarded as disreputable, and revisionist accounts of the career of painter Wassily Kandinsky (1866–1944) were produced, where his association with the Theosophical Society, anthroposophy and other alternative religious traditions was downplayed or edited out. In 1970, however, Finnish historian Sixten Ringbom (1935–1992) published his influential book *The Sounding Cosmos*, where he argued that Kandinsky’s artistic innovation was crucially influenced by the Theosophical Society’s esoteric tradition. In fact, so influential was the book that a new historical revisionism gradually emerged, making Theosophy the main, if not the sole interpretive key for most of Kandinsky’s innovations. Recent studies and exhibitions show an evolution toward a more balanced approach, identifying the esoteric tradition, including Theosophy, as one source among others of those innovations of Kandinsky that effectively created the modern concept of abstract art.

**Erin Prophet:** Revisionism in Church Universal and Triumphant and related groups

Revisions of doctrine and transformations of authority in Church Universal and Triumphant (founded 1974) and The Summit Lighthouse (parent organization, founded in 1958) will be reviewed, with a focus on legitimacy, charisma and response to internal and external pressures. The review begins with the definition of authority for the leaders (Mark and Elizabeth Prophet) and early members culled from groups such as the “I AM” Religious Activity and the Bridge to Freedom. Both Prophets claimed Messengership, a concept which originated in the “I AM.” How they negotiated the tension between their own inspiration and the individual inspiration promoted in their theology will be reviewed, along with doctrines on race and sexuality. Finally, the paper will review transitions of authority, first after the death of Mark (1973) and the retirement of Elizabeth (1999). Issues will include the routinization of charisma and the rise of new “messengers.”

**Beth Singler:** When galaxies collide: Jediism’s revisionism in the face of corporate buyouts and mythos “retconning”

In 2001 thousands of people wrote in “Jedi” for the religious question in censuses around the world. While for many this was a joke or parody, small groups of genuine believers have formed their own Jedi religion, both on- and offline. This paper explores their revisionism in response to the rewriting, or “retconning”, of the Star Wars Universe by George Lucas, its creator, and by Disney, which bought that universe in 2012 for \$4 billion. In 1999 Lucas introduced micro-organisms as

the true indicators of Jedi ability. Disney's purchase of Lucasfilm has led to a large reduction in the size of the universe itself as the new owners make and release new films. This paper will discuss and contextualize the coping strategies of the real world Jedi in response to these changes.

**Christian Uhrig:** The masters and the many paths: revisionisms and diversifications in Theosophy and beyond

The masters of wisdom, a supposed group of supernaturally gifted men located in the Himalayas, are one of the founding myths of the Theosophical Society which was founded 1875 in New York by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (H.P.B.) and Henry Steel Olcott. H.P.B. claimed that her writings on and insights into the cosmos and deeper meaning of all things came directly from these masters. They were one of the key elements in the attraction of the Theosophical Society. Surprisingly the decline of theosophy did not cause a simultaneous decline of the belief in the masters. The various shifts, schisms and the lively scenery of modern spirituality adopted the idea and altered it remarkably. In some groups a notion of the theosophical backgrounds of the idea can be found, but more often the masters are mentioned without recognizing their origins. Also a lot more masters exist than those named in H.P.B.'s original conception. In my paper I concentrate on the reception of the concept of the masters in the Theosophical Society, the I Am Activity and Share International.

**Graham Harvey:** From democratized esotericism to edgy animism: revisionism among Pagans

Exemplary mid-twentieth century founders of contemporary Paganism drew significantly on the ritual repertoire of esotericism. Early Wicca and other movements within Paganism illustrate Wouter Hanegraaff's categorization of a range of "democratized esoteric" developments. That is, they simplified the hierarchies and, perhaps, the arcana of groups like the Golden Dawn. As Wicca and other Paganisms evolved, their ritual praxis became increasingly linked not merely with (romantic or esoteric) "nature" but with ecological perspectives and activities. At the turn of the millennium the term "animism" took on new resonances among some Pagans – paralleling similar linguistic changes in academia. Animism's association with "spirits" (e.g. of trees, rocks or ancestors) diminished in favor of associations with the personhood of a larger-than-human community. Such revisions are aspects of changing Pagan origins stories which have removed claims about witchery and fertility and claimed indigenizing trajectories.

## Revisiting “Secularization” in Japan: A Historical Perspective (1850s-1890s)

### Panel Chair: Orion Klautau

Although the idea of “secularization” has been applied to the Japanese context since at least the Meiji Period (1868–1912), it was not until the postwar period, with the dissemination of Weberian Theory, that it became a central notion for speaking of both historical and contemporary religions in the archipelago. While the debate over “secularization” continued throughout, towards the end of the twentieth century Japan scholars were less prone to utilize it as a valid framework for describing concrete historical realities. In the past decade, however, with the increasing popularization of studies on the history of the term “religion” in Japan, “secularization” has been revisited from a yet different perspective, that is, from the viewpoint of discourse theory. In light of this new type of scholarship, the present panel session intends to revisit the idea of “secularization” in Japan by focusing on historical cases of the latter half of the nineteenth century.

**Kiri Paramore:** Secularism not secularization: the interactivity of modern ideologies of religion between China and Japan

Most scholars of early-modern Japan agree that something resembling a process of secularization had already occurred in Japan around the late sixteenth century. For an early-modernist like myself, therefore, the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are remarkable not for any process of alleged secularization, but rather for the rise and dominance of a modern political ideology of secularism. This paper argues that the crystallization and deep influence of a modern ideology of secularism not only in Japan, but also in China, occurred through transnational interactions between Chinese and Japanese intellectuals during the late nineteenth century. Although very different ideologies of religion arose in the very different Japanese imperial and Chinese republican states which emerged from westernization, both shared a deep secularism which was related to their shared pre-modern histories, and which went on to influence shared aspects of East Asian modernity – notably scientism.

**Makoto Hayashi:** Asylum practices and the dissolution of priestly status in modern Japan

The 1970s were the heyday of “secularization” theories in Japanese academia but, even then, scholars hesitated to fully adopt the concept. For instance, the historian of religions Hori Ichirō suggested that Japan had never experienced “secularization”, since religions in the archipelago had always been “secular” to begin with. While it is true that as a subcategory of “modernization” the idea of “secularization” lost much of its effectiveness in recent years, it is still

possible, to an extent, to use it as a framework for comparative history. Here, I will focus on the process through which Buddhist priests were deprived of their privileged status by the Meiji Government (1868–1912). This meant that priests became subject to tax collection and conscription, and that temples lost their societal role as sites of sanctuary. In my perspective, the demise of these “asylum” practices is central for reconsidering “secularization” in the context of modern Japanese Buddhism.

**Seiji Hoshino:** Considering the “religious” and the “secular” in Meiji Japan During the 1890s, a discourse emerged in Japan that emphasized the autonomy of the “religious” as a sphere independent from the “secular.” However, in the previous decade, there predominated among Japanese religious intellectuals, namely Christians, yet another type of discourse which, emphasizing God’s orderly running of the cosmos, left no place for dualistic distinctions such as “religious” and “secular.” Influenced by deism, these holistically informed intellectuals reinterpreted the idea of God in light of indigenous frameworks, such as the concept of ten (“heaven”). Furthermore, Christian apologetic works published in Chinese around the mid-nineteenth century also had a strong impact on their arguments. In this paper, I will examine the continuities and ruptures between these two types of discourses between the 1880s and 90s, and discuss how the establishment of a modern education system around the same time influenced the conception of the “secular” among the academics in late nineteenth-century Japan.

**Trent E. Maxey:** Response

## Ritual Dynamics

**Frederick Brenk:** Adaptation and transformation: animal worship and the temple of Isis at Pompeii

The community of Roman Isis worshippers was embedded within a complex culture characterized by social change (hostility, then acceptance) and intercultural exchange. This involved extensive adaptation. Animal worship was not viewed favorably by most Greek and Roman authors. Yet, hybrid human-animal creatures were common in Greek religion, some Greek philosophers attributed a sort of reason to animals, and some historical authors treated Egyptian animal cult sympathetically. No statues of sacred animals were found in the Pompeian temple. However, depictions of clearly sacred animals do receive some prominence, particularly in the “sacrarium”. The depictions involved a very artistic Roman style of painting, as in the main meeting room, depicting the animals only obliquely as sacred, and cruder paintings, more directly presenting the an-

imals as sacred, in the “sacrarium.” Thus, animal worship was “negotiated” so as to maintain something of the essentials of Egyptian animal worship without offending Graeco-Roman sensibilities.

**Ludivine Beaurin:** Studying an ancient religious ceremony: the example of the Isiac ceremonies

At the heart of ancient religious practice, ceremonies raise quickly a methodological problem for those who want to study them: how to restore a phenomenon of which we cannot recreate the experience anymore? Contrary to ethnologists who attend and record the progress of a religious ceremony, it is unfortunately impossible to apply here the method of participating observation: the historian of religions has to content himself with indirect sources. This contribution proposes to consider new coherent interpretative frames for ancient ceremonies. In regard of the Isiac example, subject of my thesis, we have to wonder what a religious ceremony is in antiquity and we may propose a key for reading them which can be applied to other cults. For that purpose, it is necessary to try and combine the approaches of the human sciences (anthropology, sociology etc.), of the archaeology of the ritual, but also of the individualization of religious practice.

**Renata Salvarani:** Preserving and changing to survive: Jerusalem Christian liturgies in eleventh and twelfth centuries

Christian liturgies' development in eleventh century Jerusalem outlines how continuity and discontinuity can combine and alternate to ensure a religious community's survival, even in deeply modified contexts. In 1009, when Fathimid caliph al-Hakim ordered Holy Sepulchre's total destruction, architectural space for worship disappeared. Thus celebrations continued as in the past (Anastasis Typicon swears to this persistence) and allowed the building's reconstruction. In the meantime Christian communities identified in the same worship survived as a religious group during Islamic rule, keeping frequent external contacts, mostly with the Greek world (mid-eleventh century). From 1099 Latin conquerors introduced prominent elements of discontinuity in the city life and in Christian liturgy itself (regular canons and Latin hierarchy had predominant roles and positions, and brought along their language, hymns and chants). Crusaders' yard at Holy Sepulchre received a general makeover in the area. Nevertheless some continuity with hagiopolite liturgy had been ensured by specific worship, especially during Holy Week and paschal triduum: processional liturgies performed across the whole city became places of common worship for different and antagonistic, but coexisting Christian communities (Greeks, Armenians, Siri, Ethiopians, Coptic, monks, hermits). If Latin liturgies became prevalent, Christian non-Latin liturgies had their parallel persistence (*antique et nova consuetudo*), allowing the whole cosmopolite population to take part in celebrations and ensuring Christi-

an worship's continuity long after the crusader kingdoms fell and after Latin and "western" inhabitants' banishment in 1187.

## Rituals as Media and Content of Religious Education in Later Antiquity

### Panel Chair: Ilinca Tanaseanu-Döbler

The panel focuses on ritual and religious education in two closely related ways. On the one hand, it inquires into how knowledge about rituals and ritual competence are transmitted, how rituals are "taught" and "learned". How important is discursive knowledge about the purported meaning(s) of ritual in different religious traditions? Are there any purposeful processes of instruction, or does one learn ritual exclusively by doing or by experience? What about rituals that are performed only once in a lifetime? On the other hand, we focus on the use of rituals as an effective, because performative and multisensory, medium employed to impart and engrain doctrinal or discursive knowledge. We study examples from later antiquity (second to fifth century CE), a period in which the ritual panorama of the Roman Empire experiences important changes, such as the rise of Christianity with its newly designed rituals and the decline in public animal sacrifices. In doing so, we aim both at a better understanding of these historical processes by looking at them from the vantage point of religious education and at refining our terminology and approaches for theorizing religious education from a history of religions perspective.

**Christoph Auffarth:** How to unlearn pagan rituals in Christian times: the case of sacrifice

Sacrifice is regarded as the central ritual in ancient religions, a Mediterranean *longue durée* (B. Gladigow). But in late antiquity the ritual ceased to be performed. In part, the Christian rejection of animal sacrifice is one cause for the end of sacrifice: at least the legal prohibition of sacrifices by the Christian emperors. There are, however, other causes, which are not connected with the rise of the Christian religion. Concerning the question of learning and unlearning, the paper will analyze how rituals are learned and, if they are rejected and forbidden, how they can be unlearned. Are there other rituals, which may serve as equivalent, such as the Eucharist as "bloodless sacrifice" (ἀναίμακτος θυσία), drawing on the metaphors of breaking the body and shedding blood? And did Christians change their diet to a vegetarian one?

**Martin Döbler:** Teaching the Eucharist East and West I: Ambrose's *De mysteriis* and *De sacramentis*

While over the last decades religious education has been studied mostly in and from contemporary contexts, current research has opened a historical and systematic perspective on this topic. Tanaseanu-Döbler/Döbler proposed an analytical frame for the study of religious education. Drawing on that framework, this paper will examine one aspect of late antique Christian religious education from the fourth to fifth century CE: the central ritual of the Eucharist. How was this ritual taught? To what addressees? Did the ritual itself serve as a medium for religious education? The paper will follow these questions by concentrating on Ambrose of Milan and two works on the sacraments attributed to him. This case study from the Latin West is the first part of a joint presentation; the second part will focus on the Greek East.

**Ilinca Tanaseanu-Döbler:** Teaching the Eucharist East and West II: the Greek East

This paper is the second part of a joint presentation on the Eucharist as content and medium of religious education in late antiquity and focuses on two types of sources from the Greek-speaking East: post-baptismal instructions to the neophytes and liturgical regulations. How is the ritual taught? What aspects are emphasized for which group of addressees, and what are the aims of instruction – e. g. ritual competence for participation or the engraving of doctrinal knowledge? What role does the ritual context of post-baptismal instruction play in the process of teaching about the Eucharist? And finally: can the ritual of the Eucharist be considered not only as a content to be transmitted, but also in its turn as a medium for imparting further religious knowledge and competence? By exploring these questions and relating the answers to the results of the corresponding study on the Latin West, we will gain on the one hand a better understanding of the dynamics of late antique Christian ritual in its historical context. On the other hand, our findings will contribute to the theorizing of religious education from a History of Religions perspective.

**Silviu Anghel:** The role of rituals in the civic identity and Hellenic education in late antique Athens

Ancient Athens is perhaps one of the most important centers of education in the Roman Empire. Education did not take place only in classrooms or libraries, but through public festivals and religious rituals, for Hellenism, for Athenians, embraced literature, history, philosophy as well as religion. Hellenic rituals are attested in Athens throughout late antiquity. Leading Athenians gladly – and publicly – financed and organized Hellenic rituals on behalf of the city. Why were rituals so important for Athens when they seem to have been neglected, forgotten or even banished in other cities? The answer is connected with the role rit-

uals had in Athenian Hellenic education and civic identity. The present paper will explore the connection between education, civic identity and rituals. It will first discuss some particular rituals and religious feasts, from literary evidence, as well as some archaeological and epigraphic testimonia. This survey will provide a brief introduction to rituals in late antique Athens, focusing on how they were shaped and taught within a circle of highly educated intellectuals. Public and civic rituals performed in turn by leading citizens had an important educational and formative value. The last part of the paper will explore to what extent the preservation and the transmission of rituals was due to the Hellenic identity and strong sense of local history of the citizens of Athens.

## **The Role of Gender in the Distinctions between Religion, Secularism and Spirituality**

### **Panel Chair: Kim Knibbe**

In recent years, a large body of literature on “the secular”, secularism and secularity has emerged, showing how “religion” emerges as a category in relation to the secular. However, the relationship of the category of “spirituality” to the secular is not discussed very often. This panel intends to broaden the discussion about religion and secularity to include the category of what is popularly recognized as “spirituality”. Furthermore, we intend to use the lens of gender to discuss the ways these categories are related to each other in diverse contemporary cultural contexts. Religion is usually associated with conservative gender politics, whereas secularism prides itself on promoting gender equality. Meanwhile, spirituality often acts in specific ways on both the “patriarchal” tendencies of religion and the disenchantment of secularity. How do these generalizations attached to each of these categories influence the lived realities of participants in various cultural contexts?

**Lauren Zwissler:** “Spirituality” as feminist third choice: gendering religion and the secular

If we approach the “secular versus religious” dichotomy as a contestation between political and religious institutions for control of public space, then it becomes logical that not all social categories would easily fit themselves into such a divide. Women, historically denied access to public power in either arena, yet policed by both, are such a category. Based on fieldwork with feminist activists, who also participate in religious communities (Catholic, United Church Protestant, and Pagan), in Toronto, Canada, this paper investigates their use of the language of “spirituality.” I argue that their political engagements and religious practices require them to confront conflicts between “religion” and “secularism,”

yet, by articulating their own worldviews as “spiritual,” they create a third alternative. Further, such naming may be particularly powerful for feminists who critique structural inequalities, such as gender-based violence, homophobia and Islamophobia, that they understand as jointly perpetuated by both religious and political institutions.

**Brenda Bartelink:** Exporting disenchanted sexualities: religious/secular dynamics in humanitarianism

Religious humanitarian organizations are generally seen as an example of how religion continues to play an important role in an assumed secular public domain (Clarke and Jennings 2007). It has also been suggested that, because they cut across categories of religion and the secular, these organizations more easily mediate between sanctifying and secularizing tendencies in humanitarian contexts (Barnett and Stein 2012). However, sexuality and gender are highly symbolic in historical and contemporary discourses on secularism in Western Europe (Scott 2011). Based on empirical fieldwork, this paper explores how Christian development organizations from the Netherlands propose to understand and tackle problems around young people’s sexual and reproductive health in Uganda. It investigates how these discourses interact with how Christian organizations in Uganda understand and approach sexuality education for young people.

**Anna Fedele:** Goddess spirituality and its entanglements with religion and secularism

In recent years several social scientists and religious historians have observed that a growing number of individuals in Western society state that they are not “religious” but “spiritual”. These individuals refuse to consider themselves as part of established religions and prefer to create their own spirituality. Does the end of religion predicted by the social scientists in the 1970s and 1980s imply not secularization but rather a sort of “spiritualization” of religion? Is “spirituality” indeed something that can be distinguished from “religion” on an analytical level? Does spirituality represent a way of “formatting” religious ideas and practices making them acceptable to an increasingly secularized society? These questions will be explored drawing on ethnographic data about contemporary Goddess spirituality in Southern Europe paying particular attention to gender and corporeality.

**Kim Knibbe:** A global view on the role of gender in relating and dividing religion, secularity and spirituality

It seems that whereas the last decade of the twentieth century after “the end of history” was marked by the unexpected (and global) rise of ethnicity as a source of contention, nowadays religion seems to have taken over that role. There is one common factor in these conflicts that deserves more attention: gender. There

seem to be two camps: those who espouse secular projects of emancipation and depart from a non-essentialist notion of gender, and those who feel (often backed up by a religious tradition) that biological sex should determine one's position and behavior. To complicate things, a third category has emerged with its own take on gender: that of contemporary spirituality. This contribution will discuss some of the recent developments in the role of religion and secularism worldwide in the development of sexual nationalisms as well as how the option of spirituality attempts to overcome the religious-secular divide while working on gender ideologies.

## The Roman Emperor's Divine Body

### **Panel Chairs: Dorothee Elm von der Osten, Darja Sterbenc Erker**

The transition from a sceptical attitude towards the deification of mortals in the late Republic to the cult of deified emperors and empresses represents a major religious change in ancient Rome. The panel wants to trace literary discourses surrounding and shaping the dynamics of this religious innovation, the invented or reinvented religious traditions involved, and their subtle transformations. Recent scholarly debates exploring the corporeality of gods focused on the interdependency of divine images and human imagination (e.g. Borgeaud/Fabiano 2013). The relevant interdisciplinary studies, e.g. of epiphany, often do not, however, refer to the complex problem of how to present the emperor as god (Platt 2011). In the proposed panel we would therefore like to draw on these studies and shift the focus towards the corporeality of divine emperors (Meister 2012 does not focus on divinity). Each paper on the panel will treat different aspects of imagining an emperor's or an empress's divine body in texts. Literary representations aim at the visualization of the divine body, e.g. via the stylistic figure of ekphrasis, and thus could create a textual epiphany. In emperor-panegyric this technique might invite readers to imagine a god-emperor with an ageless body, whereas texts on "bad" emperors stress how their bodies were maculated for example by infamous sexual practices. Tracing the literary and religious discourses surrounding this religious innovation and its establishment is understood as a contribution to the study of the dynamics of religion and at the same time places a topic centre stage, which is in need of an approach which takes into account literary, visual and religious studies.

#### **Darja Sterbenc Erker:** Augustus' divine body in Ovid's *Fasti*

In Augustan Rome new patterns of perception and description of persons approaching the divine sphere emerged. This paper analyzes the images of Augustus in Ovid's *Fasti*. Ovid refers sometimes to images of the emperor (and em-

press) spread through Rome (e. g. on reliefs and coins). Sometimes his poetics of illusion create completely new images of the divine Augustus. The paper will focus on the question of how Ovid depicts divine bodies, especially Augustus' body. On the one hand postures of Augustus' body when performing rituals will be analyzed and on the other his identification with divine mythological figures will be discussed.

**Dorothee Elm von der Osten:** Emperors' divine bodies in Latin panegyric Descriptions in panegyric evoke images, visual experiences in the imagination, and mental pictures which can be matched to works of imperial art. This paper engages with the image of the emperor's sacralized body that these descriptions evoke: its divine features, its human features, the way his gender and age are imagined. It draws on such descriptions in Statius' and Martial's verse panegyric, depicting an emperor enjoying an endless *iuentus*, but also takes Pliny's *Panegyricus* and other orations in the corpus of Latin Panegyrics into consideration. It thus traces the dynamics of change in imagining bodies of gods for emperors, and the subtle interplay of tradition and innovation involved.

**Patrick Cook:** Contesting divinity through the bodies of Roman emperors The bodies of deified Roman emperors proved fertile ground for contesting the boundaries of humanity and divinity. The body of Augustus was transformational, his ageless portraits defying previous conventions in displaying the human body at Rome. A closer reading of Suetonius, however, suggests that the body of Augustus points in a variety of directions, to humanity as well as divinity. The same tension between the divine and human found in the body of Augustus may be seen in descriptions of the bodies of "bad" emperors, but it is here highlighted as critical writers pointed to discrepancies between the divine image of the emperor and what they alleged to be a more flawed physical reality. This paper will look at ancient explorations of the flawed bodies of "bad" would-be divine emperors, focusing on Suetonius' description of the body of Caligula and on the *Apocolocyntosis*.

**Meike Rühl:** Divine and not so divine bodies: aspects and strategies of corporeality and character presentation in Tacitean narratives

During the principate Roman literature showed an increasing interest in body descriptions. For genres like epic, satire and drama, much work has already been done to elucidate several aspects of corporeality: by illustrating the aesthetic values displayed within the text, for example, or by highlighting the pragmatic or cultural purpose of detailed descriptions of the ugly and grotesque body. Historians have furthermore examined changing corporeality from the Roman republic to the principate by comparing the embodiment of aristocratic performance and the *habitus* of the divine emperor. My paper therefore follows a

twofold approach. Analyzing Tacitean narratives, which present divine as well as human bodies, I would on the one hand like to show that the description of the body is an aspect of character presentation and could function as a pattern of dynamic development in the progress of narrative. On the other hand I hope to illuminate the deeper cultural perceptions of the emperor's habitus.

## Sacrifice

### **Celia Schultz:** Sacrifice among the Romans

The “insider-outsider problem” has made almost no impact on the study of religion in pre-Christian Rome. Classicists generally assume that modern conceptions of prayer, belief, and even religion are identical to Roman notions, encouraged by the close linguistic relationship between our vocabulary and theirs. I argue that this apparent continuity is illusory by looking at one Roman habit, sacrifice (*sacrificium*). The etic notion of sacrifice as a ritual killing of an animal that is later served to humans and gods has blinkered scholars to nuance in Roman ritual. It is clear that *sacrificium* included vegetal and inedible offerings (this last undermines the argument for a close link between sacrifice and dining). Nor is *sacrificium* the only Roman ritual that can have living victims. Roman *sacrificium* is thus both less and more than the typical etic notion of sacrifice, and this calls into question master narratives that apply that notion universally.

**Hideki Teshima:** Promotion of the sacrificer through the ancient Indian kingship rituals

The *Rājasūya* (royal consecration) and the *Aśvamedha* (horse sacrifice) are the most well-known kingship rituals of the Vedic tradition. And we recognize that, in general, the former is to be celebrated for being a king, and the latter for promoting a king over other kings. But it is still obscure how the different status is reached by the *Aśvamedha* from that by the *Rājasūya*. This report aims to clarify from a fresh viewpoint that the sacrificer of *Aśvamedha* obtains “political superiority”, and also “religious authority” especially by entrusting his kingship to the chief priest as well as by plundering the Brahmin people. In this way we will make clear the transition of the sacrificer's status between the *Aśvamedha* and the *Rājasūya* which simply endows political superiority to the *Rājanāya* rivals, especially through several ceremonies of competitions.

**Naoko Sakamoto:** The sacred horse at the Grand Shrine of Ise

In Japan horses are understood to have a deep relationship with Kami (deities). At major Shinto shrines horses designated as Shinme (a sacred horse) are often present. In the Grand Shrine of Ise (Jingu), a Shinme is brought in front of the

Kami three times a month. This ceremony is called “Shinme Kenzan”. Focusing on the Grand Shrine of Ise, known as Jingu, this paper will examine the relationship of horses, Kami and Shinto shrines. The paper begins with a brief history of the dedication of horses at the Grand Shrine of Ise. Next, it reviews the ceremony regarding the horses. Finally, it considers the significance of the sacred horse at Jingu.

## Science and Religion

**Johannes Bronkhorst:** What is missing in the cognitive science of religion? The cognitive science of religion (CSL) is unanimous in its rejection of the idea that religion is something *sui generis*, dealing with the “wholly other” and *homo religiosus*. As a result CSL is disinclined to construe a general theory of religion: religion is rather to be explained in terms of ordinary human behavior; it is natural (see e.g. McCauley 2011; Pyysiäinen 2013; Stausberg 2009). Religious experience, sometimes thought of as exclusive to religion, is regularly avoided as an object of study, or explained away (as in Taves 2009). Those few scholars who do take religious experience seriously, tend to admit that “none of the extant cognitive or neuroscience models of human nature or of the mind/brain can adequately account for the range of behavioral and cognitive phenomena associated with religion” (McNamara 2009: x). This paper sympathizes with CSL’s general opposition to the reification of religion, but fears that it throws away the baby with the bathwater. Rather than reducing religion to ordinary behavior and thus banalizing it, religious behavior (especially in its more extreme forms) should be seen as a challenge that may throw new light on human behavior in all its forms, both religious and non-religious. The paper will make a suggestion as to how to proceed, starting from the central role that mental absorption plays in religious phenomena. Some few scholars realize its importance (e.g. Glicksohn & Barrett 2003; Luhrmann, Nussbaum & Thisted 2010; Luhrmann 2012; 2013), but no one appears to have attempted to develop a theoretical model into which it finds a place. McNamara’s “decentering” points roughly in the right direction, but remains imprecise and does in the end not explain much (neurological parallels being of only limited help).

**Neil George:** A failure of nerve in the study of science and religion  
The relationship between science and religion has been a hot topic since bursting onto the scene in the late nineteenth century. Although the early theories of inevitable conflict between science and religion have come into academic disrepute in recent decades, the scholarship has failed to live up to the implications of its own theoretical commitments. What little has been written on method and

theory in the study of science and religion has largely embraced scholarship critical of the concepts of both “religion” and “science.” This veneer of sophistication, however, does not hold up in the face of the rampant essentialism employed and the repeated fallback to the convenient crutch of a classically formulated world religions paradigm. A study of science and religion possessing appropriate nerve, however, is one that can advance the field by not studying science and religion at all.

**Shuhei Fujii:** Potentialities and problems of religious theories in biology and cognitive science

This paper examines scientific theories for studying religion based on biology and cognitive science. In recently developed evolutionary psychology and cognitive science of religion, various research methods concerning religion have been elaborated. This paper first clarifies the historical background of these methods. It then focuses on a common feature shared by such scientific theories. These theories are undertaken to explain the nature of religion in general based on the idea that religion is produced by a universal mentality of humankind. This point of view is shared by theories proposed in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, rather than in recent postmodern-postcolonial discourses. This means that it would be necessary to reexamine classical religious theories including those of Tylor, Frazer, and Eliade. In conclusion, the author argues that although the scientific theories have some problems due to their premise, they would make a valuable contribution to the study of religions.

## **The Scientification of Religion: Discursive Change via Religion-Science Relations**

**Panel Chair: Laura Vollmer**

Departing from the observation that “religion” is not a reified object, this panel explores the conceptualization of religious change via the social and discursive construction of “religion” as it relates to “science.” Engaging case studies from the nineteenth to the twenty-first centuries, the participants examine the process of the “scientification of religion,” as the co-constitution of “religion” and “science” in a relative perspective. “Scientification” is variously treated: as an intellectual, cultural, and discursive negotiation in which “science” is self-referential rather than a signifier for a set of practices; as the discursive change of religion in scientific environments; and as the discursive construction of religion as a scientific object. The panel provides an opportunity to explore different approaches to scientification, as well as the commonality of the analysis of religious change

as a relational process, whereby certain constellations of meaning, though dynamic, reveal specific structures that guide the construction of “religion.”

**Benjamin Purzycki:** Representational models of gods’ minds in eight diverse societies: an ecological account

Some attempts to explain the ubiquity of god concepts suggest that because they have “socially strategic knowledge”, they are especially salient and memorable. From a cultural ecological framework, a compatible but more nuanced view predicts that as religion minimizes the deleterious effects of locally specific problems of coordination and cooperation, and gods function as difficult-to-verify sources of motivation and reminders, what the gods care about should correspond to such problems. Up until now, there has been a dearth of reliable and comparable cross-cultural data attending to representational models of gods’ concerns and the degree to which they overlap with local cultural models of the socially strategic. With data collected on fifteen different gods from eight diverse societies, we present evidence that what the gods care about are important indices to understanding the function and evolution of religious systems and highlight the impact that local ecological problems have on religious cognition.

**Tim Rudbøg:** The scientification of religion in the long nineteenth century Exploring and problematizing the “scientification of religion,” this paper asks which “religion” and “science” are being constructed in this process. The plurality of science discourses in the “long nineteenth century” and how the relation between “religion” and “science” was negotiated are examined in three significant cases: German Idealism, the Science of Religion, and the Theosophical Society. All three cases differently merged “religion” and “science” in relation to the specific epistemé of their intellectual contexts, which determined their relationship. Given these different contexts and constructs what is the “scientification of religion” and how do we approach the variety of constructs? In addition to directing attention to the plurality of connotations and denotations of the terms involved, this paper seeks to pose a solution to the above question and offer insight into what characterized the “scientification of religion” during the long nineteenth century.

**Kocku von Stuckrad:** Carl Gustav Jung and the psychologization of religion The institutionalization of psychology as an academic discipline at the turn of the twentieth century has led to a profound discursive change when it comes to “religion,” the “soul,” the “self,” and related concepts. Presented and legitimated as “science,” academic psychology presents a telling example of the process of the scientification of religion. The paper analyzes this process with regard to the impact of Carl Gustav Jung. In his work, Jung turned religious and esoteric concepts into psychological language and linked them to intellectual discourses of the humanities and the natural sciences. By doing so, he psychologized not

only religion but also science. Looking at Jung's collaboration with Wolfgang Pauli on "synchronicity" in particular, and at Jung's concept of "archetypes," it is demonstrated how influential the re-entanglement of psychological, religious, and scientific discourses has been for the development of religion, astrology, and alternative spiritualities in the twentieth century.

**Laura Vollmer:** God on the brain: the cognitive scientification of religious experience in the twenty-first century

In problematizing "religion" relative to "science," "science" has conventionally been constructed as "not religion," employing various dichotomies (physical/spiritual, natural/supernatural, etc.) to establish such differentiation. As "religion" became an object of natural scientific study, it increasingly became discursively reconstructed as "science," divorcing it from the previous signifiers. This culminated in the cognitive science of religious experience, which was largely conceived as wholly accounting for the nature, function, and significance of religion. As the notion of "science" as "not religion" still pervades conventional thinking, constructing religion as a scientific object – i.e., "religion" as "science" – is to formulate religion as "not religion," in a manner of speaking, thus giving rise to the question of whether this "religion" is religious. This is a reflection of the relational nature of the discursive construction of "religion," here relative to "science," providing insight on the structure of religious change.

## Shaman, Healing, Paranormal

**Belinda Winder, Vivianne Crowley:** Interpreting the unusual: How Pagans and Pentecostal Christians interpret and integrate paranormal experiences

Belief in and experience of unusual, paranormal phenomena is a dimension of the personality construct of schizotypy, which ranges from normal dissociative, imaginative states to psychosis. Such experiences can also be interpreted as highly valued religious experiences. This paper examines whether religious beliefs that welcome and contextualize unusual experiences enhance individuals' coping strategies by creating frameworks for integrating and valuing them. Using a purposive, theory-guided approach to sampling, 379 participants from Pagan and Pentecostal Christian groups completed online measures relevant to schizotypy, including Mason, Linney and Claridge (2005). Seventy per cent of participants had had unusual experiences, 76 per cent produced creative work, and a third had experienced some form of mental illness. Structural equation modelling demonstrated a complex relationship between schizotypy, religious belief, creativity, and unusual experiences. The implications are discussed of whether

participation in religious groups that place a positive value on unusual experiences promotes psychological wellbeing.

**James R. Lewis:** New religions, the cultic milieu and paranormal beliefs  
Using data generated from questionnaires containing select items from the Baylor Religion Survey, the current study proposes to examine the paranormal interests and beliefs of participants in two specific alternative spiritual movements, contemporary Paganism and the Movement of Spiritual Inner Awareness (MSIA). The analysis will be framed by a discussion of the larger alternative spiritual milieu in which these movements are rooted, and how belief in the paranormal is correlated more with this milieu than with involvement in these NRMs.

**Nanne Elisabeth Jensen:** Possession and healing in contemporary alternative medicine in Germany

The aim of this project is to look into the increasing spread and variation of exorcist therapy concepts within complementary medicine in Germany. The field-based research focuses on the way the actors, as healers or non-medical practitioners, see themselves. Concepts of healing activities and the development of training contents for disciples are also explored. I look comparatively at these healers' exclusive or hybrid exorcist treatment concepts and the associated conceptualization. In view of my research aims, I conduct open guideline interviews with various therapists which will be developed further during the course of my research. This guideline questionnaire contains questions about extrasensory abilities and education of the actors, methods such as rituals, prayers and instruments. I ask about theories, underlying religious traditions and their possible individual transformation as well as delimitation from other exorcist healing concepts. If possible, I complement the results with participant observation.

## **Situating Hinduism in Switzerland: A Case Study of the Hindu Temple within the House of Religions in Berne**

**Simona Chaudhry-Ferraro**

The creation of the unique House of Religions in the heart of Switzerland (Berne) is not only a case of emphasizing peaceful co-existence between various religions but also a remarkable tool to showcase recent trends in the religious beliefs amid practices. This becomes truer when we study the environs of the recently consecrated Hindu temple therein. Majorly a relocated center of Hindu believers of Tamil origin from Sri Lanka, the Hindu Hall not only dots the skyline of the complex with its traditionally sculptured lofty tower but represents also the revolutionary undercurrent within the Tamil Diaspora, taking an innovative path away from the Hindu orthodoxy, particularly shedding old taboos related to

gender and caste/class barriers, while initiating a path-breaking attempt to de-Sanskritize the rituals. The different Hindu communities in the vicinity are witnessing such transformations that include the empowerment of women as reflected in the unique and most recent anointment of the first four female priests. The poster presentation of this project (focusing on these new trends of Hinduism and their impact, acceptance/non-acceptance among the different Hindu communities in Switzerland) highlights such changes while illustrating the main features and Hindu practices taking place within this particular socio-religious context and architectural complex.

## **Skillful Means: Developments in Indian and East Asian Buddhism**

### **Panel Chair: Yasutomo Nishi**

Since the time of Gautama Buddha who was born about 2500 years ago, the teachings of Buddhism have been passed on through generations and have been practiced in numerous different ways. The Buddha began to share his teachings in northeast India, and they were spread throughout India, then to Central Asia, China and Japan. Here, we focus on “skillful means” (善巧方便: shànqiǎo fāngbiàn), one of the most important Buddhist terms. Our four panelists will discuss the concept of skillful means in the following four different contexts: Early Buddhism (Theravāda Buddhism); the Lotus Sutra, one of the representative Early Mahāyāna Buddhist texts; Japanese Shingon Esoteric Buddhism; and the interpretation of the term by the modern Japanese Buddhist philosopher Inoue Enryō. Through our discussion from several points of view, we will examine the meaning of the concept of skillful means and its possible interpretations.

**Yutaka Kawasaki:** “Skillful means” and the related concepts in Pāli literature

“Skillful means” in Mahāyāna Buddhism has been studied extensively. It is one of the most important religious concepts and many Buddhist teachings relate to it. However, it can only be speculated how this idea emerged and whether it was rooted in the original teachings of the Buddha himself. In this presentation, I will, first, discuss the use of the term “skillful means” in the context of early Buddhism, mainly referring to the Theravada Buddhist canon. Next, I will examine how the concept of “skillful means” is dealt with in some “Hīnayāna” Buddhist treatises. Finally, I will use teachings and episodes from the early Buddhist canon to demonstrate that the Buddha made actual use of the idea of “skillful means” in his sermons.

**Yasutomo Nishi:** On the “skillful means” in Saddharmapuṇḍarika

The purpose of this paper is to figure out what “skillful means” is in the context of Saddharmapuṇḍarika (SP), one of the early Mahāyāna sūtras. Traditionally, the study of the Lotus Sutra has been done based on a Chinese translation. The translation which has simply been called “the Lotus Sutra” generally refers to the translation done by Kumārajīva in 406 CE, the title of which is Miaofa-lianhua-jing (妙法蓮華經). It has been known for its liberal translation that conveys the profound messages of Buddhist thoughts. Here, focusing on the process of the formation of SP, I will find out a fundamental concept of SP. Studies of the formation of SP should be done in a careful philological approach to its texts in Sanskrit. This paper will try to prove that the fundamental concept is the very teaching of skillful means in SP.

**Makio Takemura:** On the “skillful means” in Esoteric Buddhism

In the Mahāvairocana Sūtra, which is a central text of Esoteric Buddhism, there is a very famous sentence that says, “Bodhi-citta is the cause, Mahākaruṇā is the base, and Upāya (skillful means) is the ultimate.” The original meaning of “upāya” in this sentence has been understood as the means of ascetic practice. But because of the preceding term Mahākaruṇā (great compassion) many researchers also have interpreted “upāya” here as means for liberating living beings. I intend to analyze how the word “upāya” is used in the canon of Esoteric Buddhism. By clarifying its content and its interpretation as means, I will elucidate the specific meaning of “upāya” in Esoteric Buddhism

**Rainer Schulzer:** Soteriological pragmatism and Buddhist psychotherapy in Inoue Enryō

Besides the derogatory usage of upāya in the sense of “only a means, but not the full truth,” the Japanese Buddhist modernizer Inoue Enryō (1858–1919) applies the term also in affirmative ways. I will distinguish four interpretations: (1) Upāya as a pragmatic concept of religious truth: A teaching that reduces suffering is a true teaching; (2) Upāya as a Buddhist concept of tolerance: Religious “dispositions” (kikon) are various, therefore the teachings must be various too; (3) Upāya as a hermeneutic tool: Buddhist doctrines inconsistent with the scientific worldview can be interpreted as soteriological devices; (4) Upāya as a psychotherapeutic approach: Faith can work as a self-fulfilling prophecy in healing.

## Sonic Explorations in the Study of Religion

### Panel Chair: Rosalind I.J. Hackett

The modern-day study of religion has benefited from a number of “turns”, each destined to provide new analytical purchase on the dynamics of religion. One area that remains neglected despite the uptick in material and multi-sensory studies of religion is that of sound. This panel features four scholars whose research is centered on the category of sound in all its performed, perceived, and imagined complexity. Drawing on their work on jazz improvisation in the United States, popular music in Brazil, the sonic agency of electronic music, or technologically mediated listening practices, they explore concepts deriving from the burgeoning multidisciplinary field of sound studies, such as soundscape, acousmatic listening, embodiment, sonification, improvisation, and reverberation. Taken together, they make the case that thinking with and through sound can advance new understandings of the making, experiencing, and transmission of the religious and spiritual in local and global contexts.

**Jason Bivins:** *The Tao of Mad Phat: jazz, meditation, and improvising on the body*

This paper will explore improvisation as a practice of religious self-cultivation, embodiment and transformation. Focused on jazz traditions, I attend specifically to the generation of “peak experiences” in collective improvisation, avowed by performers as moments when the human body becomes a “vessel” or a “receptacle” for divine energy and will. I analyze these experiences in three separate fashions: (1) as the posited outcomes of meditative practices; (2) as states of egolessness; and (3) as means of transforming or even ascending beyond the limits of the body. Analysis of these expressions reveals not only complex forms of religious embodiment in musical practice, but an opening to new considerations of religious presence, affect, and ritual. Musicians considered include Dennis Gonzalez, Steve Lacy, Myra Melford, William Parker, and Ivo Perelman.

**Martijn Oosterbaan:** *Sounding the religious city*

As a number of writers confirm, sound and religion are often ignored in our conceptions of the modern urban fabric (Arkette 2004; Atkinson 2007; Lanz 2013). Though highlighting the idea of an “urban sonic ecology” – “a permeable, modulating, fleeting and occasionally persistent soundscape within and across different social and physical sectors of the city” – Atkinson, for instance, limits his analysis of sound in the city to work and leisure. This is remarkable because in many cities around the world conflicts about urban sounds are strongly related to religious experiences and boundaries. This paper on evangelical sonic interventions in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, attempts to bring back sound and religion into our conceptualizations of contemporary societies by means of a postsecular

critique. Ideally, such a critique lays bare some of the normative structures that tend to push sound and religion to the side and thus creates space for their presence.

**Marian Caulfield:** “Acousmatic listening”: philosophical investigations of sound and technology within the Study of Religions

In this paper, I introduce potentially useful theoretical concepts to describe how sounds, received and interacted with in isolation, i.e., iPods, video game playing, social media sharing, etc., whilst realizing a solitary, transcendental, ineffable way for the listener to “be,” can at the same time support a “virtual” social experience. I begin by investigating the term “acousmatic listening”. Introduced by French composer and pioneer of *musique concrète*, Pierre Schaeffer, it describes an experience of hearing sounds with no visible causes. This, married with an exploration of Marx’s idea of “phantasmagoria,” described as the production of something reified and “godlike” through forgotten or hidden technical processes, may offer interesting methodological pathways to explain the above dichotomy. With Bourdieu’s ideas of “epistemological rupture” applied to the study of sound in the study of religions, I propose possible methods of multidisciplinary investigation that may allow these ideas to be approached from several angles.

**Rosalind I.J. Hackett:** Making the invisible audible: the sonic mysticism of ambient and space music

All sound is mediated, but the development of digital acoustic and auditory technologies over the last few decades has expanded the opportunities for sounding and listening practices exponentially. In this paper I argue that the genre of electroacoustic/electronic music, particularly of the ambient and “space” varieties, is productive for understanding the agency of sound in shaping the experiences and practice of religion. The ethereal, immersive, and meditative soundscapes (cf. David Toop’s *Ocean of Sound* 1995), generated by groundbreaking radio programs such as *Hearts of Space* and supported by websites such as *Sounds True*, invite new understandings of spatiality and religious praxis (cf. Umberto Eco’s notion of the “open work” [1989]) and a non-dichotomous interpretation of the material and the spiritual (Cobussen 2008). The ambiguity and ineffability of this electronic music are generative of what composer Kristina Wolfe terms “sonic mysticism” (2014).

## Sources of Post-Modern Religion

**Anne Dyer-Withford:** New Age practice models post-Fordist production. This paper examines the parallels between New Age practices and values and post-Fordist work. New Age practices are excellent immaterial commodities: because seeking is multivariate and ongoing; because social good is implied beyond the consumption act; and because “spiritual” branding allows a company to sell a varied and changing product line without diluting brand strength. However, the relation of New Age spirituality and capitalist production is under-explored. Industrial research sees spirituality as an imposed or emergent ethos supporting work, uninterested in its independent, parallel and productive character. Nevertheless, organizational forms (complementary production/consumption as nodes in networks) and skills valued (creativity, cooperation, and affective intensity) are similar for spirituality practices and generic information and cultural services production. This paper outlines these parallels and accounts for them through providing, for New Age spirituality, a model in relation to post-Fordist industry that is similar to what David Harvey and Fredric Jameson offered for postmodern culture.

**Christiane Kliemannel:** Folkish religion: the religious adaption and transformation of racist ideology

Modern religious diversity includes certain New Religious Movements which provide propaganda for right-winged and racist ideology. These communities and their religious opinions are not new but have their origins in the pre-fascist movement and are referred to by cultural sciences as “Folkish Religion.” The presentation is focused on four German communities (youth alliances) and their prominent masterminds: Deutsche Schwesterschaft (Otto Reuter), Adler und Falken (Wilhelm Kotzde), Nordungen (Hildulf Flurschütz) and Deutschjugend (Mathilde Ludendorff). The first part reconstructs and compares the religious concepts and their origins in the view of their proposed identity and meaning. Then, selected adaptations by female members of these alliances are analyzed. The final part discusses references to contemporary Religious Movements and their differences. The lecture points out a detailed view on the thoughts of these youth alliances, particularly in regard to new contents of folkish religion, and clarifies adaptations and transformations of folkish and racist ideology.

**Marita Guenther-Saeed:** Age, gender and spiritual knowledge: Are we going native?

This paper reflects on the label “indigenous” and concepts of so-called traditional, spiritual or alternative knowledge within indigenous communities and also Western contexts of spiritual movements. Do these concepts reveal some crisis of identity politics – and the growing impact of post-secular spaces as self-em-

powering and also political strategies? With the term “Mother Earth”, a concept pointing to post-colonial globalized power relations sensitive towards bio-political and economic issues is now (09/2014) included in documents of the first UN World Conference on Indigenous Peoples. This concept also refers to indigenous claims of representation and owning history while at the same time being part of alternative Western concepts, e.g. when German female elders as part of the feminist spirituality movement present themselves as indigenous, having special spiritual power and knowledge. The paper concludes by discussing “going native”, as questioning the legitimizing of (hegemonic) knowledge and power – and the position of academic research and scholarly obligations within this framework.

**Sissel Undheim:** Spiritual Lego: toys, temples and New Age in the Lego brick universes of Ninjago and Chima

This paper will discuss the use and presence of eastern inspired New Age concepts in the creation of two recent and very popular additions to the toy company Lego’s brick collections: Lego Ninjago and Lego, the legends of Chima. Merging traditional fantasy-mythology with more specific references to Chinese and eastern religious traditions, both Lego Ninjago and Lego, the legends of Chima rely on general concepts relatively well known from the world of alternative spirituality. With a focus on the Confucian concept of qi/chi, as it is transferred and used as a key concept in the “Legends of Chima”, the paper will also discuss how the “new age frosting” found in these Lego products may be contributing to the toys’ popularity.

## Spirits in Past and Present

**Jessica Moberg:** Casting out spirits: the impact of occult reality on Sweden’s spiritualist landscape

Modern media have become a powerful force that contributes to changing the way we communicate, perceive the world, structure our relationships and practise religion – a process media scholar Knut Lundby refers to as “mediatization”. The paper uses mediatization as an analytical tool, addressing a global phenomenon that took root in the Swedish setting at the turn of the millennium: Occult Reality TV. Focus lies on the most popular show, *The Unknown* (*Det okända*), in which real spiritualist mediums are seen casting out disturbing spirits from people’s homes. The paper investigates how the show has contributed to transforming the spiritualist landscape in Sweden, suggesting that the casting out of spirits, which had been extremely rare, now is practiced at a large scale and that famed TV-mediums are central for introducing it into the spiritualist tradition.

**José Carlos Vieira Leitão:** Individual and collective narratives in an Amsterdam Espiritismo Cruzado community

Arising from late nineteenth century developments of French Kardecism in Cuba and Puerto Rico, Espiritismo Cruzado stands as a hybrid practice between European, Kongo and Yoruba cults and cosmological views. Given its cosmological complexity, Cruzado practitioners constantly negotiate a transgressive path between spirit and material and personal and collective notions of the spiritual, effectively building their own pantheon of spirit correspondences. Resorting to personal interviews, this paper explores the personal narratives of solitary Cruzado practice and meditation at the bóveda espiritual (the spiritual dome/vault, a private spiritual altar), and the perceptions of causality, sensation and consciousness in what is by definition an absolutely personal and private experience. These narratives are then also compared to communal and collective practices of Cruzado (Misas Espirituales), and how these same individual and personal narratives fit and arrange themselves in a collective and community environment of an active Amsterdam Cruzado center.

**Merili Metsvahi:** Female werewolves in Estonian vernacular beliefs

In the Estonian Folklore Archives one can find more legends about female than about male werewolves. During the Estonian werewolf trials of the sixteenth to seventeenth century more women than men were accused in transforming themselves into wolves. In the first part of my presentation I will give a very short overview of the history of Estonian werewolf beliefs. In the second part of my talk I am going to give an answer to the question of popularity of female werewolves in the Estonian vernacular beliefs. In my interdisciplinary approach I am going to point to the position of Estonian women in the Middle Ages and early modern period that differed from the position of women in most of the other European countries. For that purpose some facts from the history of the Estonian family have to be introduced. I will draw the connection between the changes in women's position in the family and the beliefs about female werewolves.

**Teruyoshi Yonei:** A relationship between humans and deities

In the ancient era of Japan, various spirits including gods were considered to dwell all around the country. They believed the society consisted of both humans and deities. Both were able to influence mutually. People could not keep peace without deities' protection, and deities in shrines were presented offerings in return for those graces. The causes of disasters were explained by this relationship. The lack of, or ill-formed, offerings causes gods' anger and they were thought to give people many types of calamities.

## Spirituality

**Assia Harwazinski:** Spirituality and critique of religion in the work of Joni Mitchell

The American “anti-intellectual” singer Joni Mitchell (born in 1943 in Alberta, Canada, as Roberta Joan Anderson), belonged to the anti-Vietnam war, Civil Rights and ecology movement – shortly: to the origins of the Woodstock festival and a whole generation of flower power artists of all branches in the USA. Her beginnings included a phase in Laurel Canyon, the artistic hippie colony in Los Angeles where she was embedded in the free-floating spirituality of this time, a place significant for a whole generation of artists with very individual developments. This spirituality was the precondition as well as expression of this artistic colony which only lasted a few years before being disrupted by scary incidents. Mitchell’s work reflects this spirituality, combined with a growing critique of traditional religion dominant in US society.

**Michael Amoroso:** Spiritual but still religious: religious affiliation and movement in São Paulo’s devotion to souls

Every Monday, countless Brazilians travel to Catholic churches to light candles, pray to, thank, and ask things of departed human souls. While most devotees identify as Catholic, some do not affiliate with the Church, and many consider themselves Catholic and something else too. The eclecticism among devotees is often reflected in individuals’ devotions, which may incorporate distinctly non-Catholic elements such as colored candles for Umbanda entities or Kardecist prayers. This paper addresses the devotion to souls as a vector for movement between religious institutions, theologies, and identities. Given the individual nature of the devotion – a solitary practice conducted in the presence of others – and the complex nature of devotees’ religious affiliations and participation, it questions models of religious affiliation that imply a strong connection between religion and the social group, as well as the applicability of North America’s anti-institutional “spirituality” to the Brazilian religious field.

**Tatiana Malevich:** The categories of “new spirituality” and “traditional religion”: an attempt at differentiating in Russian context

The proposed paper presents general findings of a series of empirical research projects on the possibilities of applying the categories of “new spirituality” and “traditional religion” to Russian realities. The research was conducted by means of the following instruments partly borrowed from European colleagues and adapted to Russian particularities: (1) the so-called “New spirituality/traditional religion” scale; (2) a closed-ended question concerning the respondents’ self-definitions in terms of “being spiritual” and/or “being religious”; (3) four Likert-type scales aimed at defining the respondents’ self-ratings of “actual”

and “desirable” spirituality/religiosity; and (4) the Personality Differential ratings concerning the categories of “spiritual person” and “religious person.” The findings show that the concepts “new spirituality” and “traditional religion” have relevance to the contemporary Russian religious situation and could be effectively used in its context, but with some limitations. The possible reasons for and nature of such limitations are discussed.

## Stasis and Innovation in Western Esotericism

### Panel Chair: John MacMurphy

One of the most intriguing phenomena in the field of Western Esotericism is the adaptation of long-discarded systems of belief into new modern currents. This panel examines the reasons esoteric traditions go back to their roots, the selection process and methodology by which these heritages conform to their new forms and the ways in which these systems of beliefs are classified in modern scholarship. Focus will be placed on Kabbalah, magic, and Satanism.

#### **John MacMurphy:** Sefer Ha-Zohar as an ecstatic text

Current academic research in the field of Prophetic Kabbalah (Idel, Wolfson and Hames) – which explores the kabbalistic practices for inducing altered states of consciousness, gnosis or divine union – revolves almost exclusively around the school of Abraham Abulafia (1239–1291), sometimes called the “Father of Ecstatic Kabbalah”. Up until now, Sefer ha-Zohar (The Book of Splendor), the largest and the most influential kabbalistic corpus, has been associated primarily with the theosophical lineage – with the ecstatic aspect receiving little to no scholarly attention. By examining the zoharic literature, the Abulafian corpus as well as works by other kabbalists such as the Lurianic texts, this paper argues that ecstatic elements not only exist in the Zohar, but were also recognized as such by other Kabbalists.

**Carl Karlson-Weimann:** Anti-cosmic Kabbalah: esoteric re-interpretations in contemporary Left Hand Path Satanism

This paper analyzes the uses and interpretations of Kabbalah in contemporary esoteric and anti-cosmic Satanism. In the introduction to the recently published “The Book of Sitra Achra: A Grimoire of the Dragons of the Other Side”, the author N.A.A.218 explicitly states that the book owes much to the writings of “some of the adepts” of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn as well as to the teachings of Rabbi Nathan of Gaza, the prophet of Sabbatai Zevi. These references indicate not only a desire to be associated with the Occultist Kabbalah of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century occultism, but also with Jewish Kabbalah of the seventeenth century. My paper will present the system of thought applied

in the innovative Kabbalah of N.A.A.218, relate it to the sources mentioned, tracing transformations and re-interpretations of kabbalistic and other esoteric elements, and also place it in the wider Left Hand Path milieu.

**Kateryna Zorya:** The magical restoration: pre-nineteenth century sources in twenty-first century magical practices

In an attempt to improve their magic, contemporary occultists often employ ideas and concepts borrowed from modern philosophy and science. In the spirit of post-Enlightenment innovation, antiquated schematics are replaced by less complex ones, stemming from a largely contemporary view. Some contemporary occultists, however, believe that post-nineteenth century occultism is a decline rather than a modernization and turn to earlier sources in their practices. This paper examines published editions of pre-nineteenth century sources made by occultists, such as the True Grimoire in the interpretation of Jake Stratton-Kent, and reports of using such sources in magical practice by such contemporary occultists as Christopher Warnock, whose focus is on Renaissance astrology and magic. The paper will examine reasons for disregarding later occultism, modern interpretations of classical works of magic, and adaptations of classical works to a new intellectual environment.

**Shinichi Yamamoto:** A comparative analysis of the Great Resurrection of Nizari Ismailism and the messianic eschatology of Sabbateanism

Two similar historical events and their esoteric backgrounds are examined in this paper: the Great Resurrection of Nizari Ismailism and the messianic eschatology of Sabbateanism. The Nizari leader Hasan II proclaimed the abrogation of the current sharia in 1164. After the death of Hasan II, however, his successor abandoned his revolutionary scheme. The self-proclaimed Jewish messiah, Sabbatai Tzevi, converted to Islam in Adrianople, the Ottoman Empire in 1666. Before his conversion, he intentionally violated traditional Jewish customs. All of these blasphemous deeds were based on the Kabbalistic idea that the true messiah could discharge the Jews from the commandments and give the new Torah. Interestingly, both of these events had almost identical backgrounds in the esoteric ideas of world cycle. Although difficult to claim a direct historical connection between them, it is possible to indicate that this type of eschatology could result in a similar frustration and apologetic doctrine.

## The Study of Religion as an Area of Conflict: Three Outsider Perspectives

### Panel Chair: Horst Junginger

With Edmund Hardy (1852–1904), Eduard Erkes (1891–1958) and Hans Alexander Winkler (1900–1945), the panel takes three outstanding German historians of religion into account who equally failed to overcome the academic outsider positions they were entrenched in. Despite their exceptional skills, the Catholic Hardy, the Social Democrat Erkes and the Communist Winkler did not fit into the mainstream of religious studies for political reasons, but also as a consequence of their lacking willingness to make compromises in scientific regard. Considering their life and work against the background of four different political systems in Germany shows interesting similarities with the relatedness of marginality and productivity typical of the academic study of religion as a whole.

**Fritz Heinrich:** The Study of Religion in the German Empire: Edmund Hardy's critique of Friedrich Max Müller in historical context

In 1898 Edmund Hardy published a programmatic article in the first issue of the *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft* with the title "Was ist Religionswissenschaft?". In it, the Catholic scholar of religion offered an approach to the relatively new discipline that came close to our modern understanding of cultural studies. Three years later the same journal published one of the first historiographical descriptions of the study of religion, written by him. Besides a profound overview of the research that had been done up to his times, Hardy here criticized Friedrich Max Müller's idea of a perception of the infinite ("Wahrnehmung des Unendlichen") as being unable to sufficiently explain the origins of religion, countering with the almost untranslatable sentence: "Der Mensch ist ein alter Praktikus" (man has always been focussed on practical issues). Despite his political and religious engagement, and also despite his scholarly abilities, Hardy remained a solitary person in his private life as well as in the study of religion. The disruptions in his biography and the physical breakdown at the end of his life offer insights in the academic field of the early study of religion in its political, religious, ideological, and scholarly contexts.

**Horst Junginger:** The knowledge of the powerless and the power of knowledge: the strange case of Hans Alexander Winkler

Before Hans Alexander Winkler obtained his *venia legendi* for a general history of religions in 1928, he went through difficult times. Constant want of money repeatedly forced him to disrupt his studies, even to live on the streets for some time. As a miner he joined the Communist Party in 1922, for which he was dismissed from an academic post in 1933. During another couple of hard years he survived with ethnographic fieldwork in Egypt. In that time he wrote a number

of brilliant books, one of them being translated in 2009 as “Ghost Riders of Upper Egypt: A Study of Spirit Possession”. Ironically WWII turned things around for Winkler. The former Communist became a member of the NSDAP and the Foreign Office, putting his Oriental expertise in the service of German warfare in Iran and Northern Africa. In 1945 he lost his life on the battlefield, perhaps not unwittingly as it seems. Winkler’s extraordinary talent parallels not only the great potential of the academic study of religion but also the misfit’s corruptibility and the peril of adaptation and overcompensation revolving around the old saying of Francis Bacon that *scientia est potentia*.

**Udo Mischek:** Eduard Erkes (1891–1958): a cultural-materialist critique of religion in the Weimar Republic

Eduard Erkes, a historian of Chinese culture at the University of Leipzig, is commonly known as a sinologist but was a scholar of religion in the true sense of the word as well. He belonged to the few academics who made use of a materialist approach. Being a member of the Social Democrats since 1919, Erkes participated actively in adult education. In 1925 he published a booklet on how God was created (*Wie Gott erschaffen wurde*) in the left-wing and freethinking journal *Urania-Monatshefte*. It came as no surprise that Erkes lost his position as adjunct professor and curator of the Leipzig Museum of Ethnography when the Nazis assumed power. After the war Erkes joined the Socialist Party of East Germany (SED) and represented what might be labelled a “new mainstream” in the GDR. In 1948 he was appointed full professor of Chinese studies at the University of Leipzig. A closer look at his writings makes clear how deeply engaged he was in the academic study of religion in Germany.

## **The Study of Religions (in Plural) in Catholic Countries: Particularities, Specificities and Challenges**

### **Panel Chair: Francisco Diez De Velasco**

Countries with a Catholic majority, and in which the Catholic Church has a strong weight in education and the formation of the intellectual elite, presented a peculiar development of the disciplines devoted to the study of religions. These disciplines are based on an approach that is necessarily built with a methodological openness towards diversity and plurality. Before the Second Vatican Council this plural position faced rejection in Catholic countries, rejection which remained sometimes even after, influencing the academic consolidation of the disciplines of the study of religions and the themes and ways of working in the field. This panel proposes a revision of different examples focusing on the par-

ticularities, specificities and challenges of the development of the study of religions (in plural) in those countries.

**Natale Spineto:** Catholic Church and history of religions in Italy

The aim of this paper is to study the relationship between the Catholic Church and the study of non-Christian religions in Italy, with particular reference to the period from the second half of the nineteenth century until WWII. Indeed, in these years, the history of religions has some special features that are related to the influence that the Catholic Church has had on Italian culture. For example, we can mention the role of the clergy in the abolition of theological faculties; the delay with which classic British anthropology (opposed by the church) spread in Italy and the success of the school of Wilhelm Schmidt; the attempts to encourage the diffusion of a Catholic history of religions (especially related to the Jesuits); and the renewal of the religious-historical knowledge by the modernists.

**Mar Griera:** Cults, sects and heresies: the study of religious minorities in Spain

This paper examines the evolution of the scientific study of religious minorities in Spain, paying special attention to the twentieth century. The development of this field of research has been intimately linked with the historical, social and political context of the country, and strongly marked by the role of the Catholic Church. The goal of the paper is twofold: first, to describe the changes in the scientific approach, conception and definition towards religious minorities during the twentieth century; and, second, to analyze the political uses of the knowledge generated and, in particular, its role in the construction of conceptual foundations of public policies towards minorities.

**Monica Cornejo:** Catholic and folk: representations of popular religion and the spring of Spanish anthropology

This paper explores the emergence of scientific studies on Spanish religiosity in the twentieth century, trying to show how native anthropologists highlighted heterodox and sometimes bizarre representations of folk Catholicism against the orthodox point of view of the Catholic Church. This kind of study had a remarkable impact on emerging local identities and also on policy trends, especially in the period between the final decade of the Franco dictatorship and the process of democratic transition. In that period, anthropological research gave accounts of some of the more widespread images of religious Spain: crowded processions in Sevillian Holy Week, weeping devotees of the Virgin Mary, strange outfits with cones on the heads, statues of saints and “fiesta” everywhere. This paper will analyze the political and scientific context in which this interpretation of popular Catholicism in Spain became relevant.

**Francisco Diez De Velasco:** History of Religions vs. Sciences of Religions: names and shapes of a disciplinary field in Spain

“History of Religions” was the name of the first Chair in the Spanish University on the subject with which we are dealing. Created in 1954, its only holder was Ángel Álvarez de Miranda, who trained with Raffaele Pettazzoni in Rome. He understood the history of religions as an autonomous discipline following the model of the Scuola di Roma. Upon his death in 1957, the political changes and the pressures of the Catholic authorities made the Chair and the discipline in Spain disappear. It emerged decades later not as an autonomous discipline but as a confluence of approaches from very different disciplines (philological, sociological, philosophical, historical, anthropological, legal, etc.) and except in Catalonia and some few universities in Spain, the name adopted (e.g. in the SECR – member of the IAHR) is Sciences of Religions (with both elements in the plural). The implications and models that underlie both denominations are analyzed in this contribution.

## **The Study of Religions and Motherhood Studies: A Fruitful Interdisciplinary Potential?**

### **Panel Chair: Florence Pasche Guignard**

This panel features scholarship on motherhood (as an institution), mothering (as women’s experience), and mothers in several religious traditions with the aim to uncover the interdisciplinary potential of motherhood studies with the study of religions and reflect on new paths of research. Studies on kinship and family, im/purity in childbirth, transition rituals, spiritual mothering, goddesses, etc. constitute traditional topics in our discipline, while other areas still deserve further consideration. This is the case with women’s religious experience as mothers and of discourses not just about family and parenting, but of women reflecting on or challenging the religiously defined norms of “the good mother”. The contributions to this panel examine maternal representations and ritual practice in various historical and religious contexts. Methodological issues raised by these cross-cultural perspectives will also be addressed in the response to the panel and in the discussion.

**Florence Pasche Guignard:** A “mother turn” for study of religion/s? A literature review on the study of mothers, motherhood and mothering in religious traditions

As both disciplines focus on an (often difficult to define) topic (“religion/s”, “motherhood”) rather than a geographical area, a historical period, or the use of specific research designs and methods, the study of religion/s and mother-

hood studies share some epistemological and methodological issues. This presentation will underline the most important ones and see which new paths of research could emerge from the intersection of the study of religion/s with contemporary motherhood studies, a burgeoning field. This introduction first consists of an overview of the state of scholarship in both disciplines. As this review of literature will show, even if it has successfully integrated theoretical inputs of gender studies, our discipline has not yet taken the “mother turn”. Motherhood, as a normative institution, and patriarchal representations of mothers are classical topics of research, but mothering, as women’s experience, remains an understudied issue (often because of a lack of access to sources).

**Giulia Pedrucci:** Divine motherhood: a missing chapter in the Greek and Roman pantheons

An analysis of a variety of ancient Greek and Roman sources (medical, philosophical, poetic, iconographic, juridical, epigraphical) reveals a female stereotype in which the woman and the mother overlap to a point where they practically coincide. We also gain the impression that we cannot speak of a motherhood tout court, but of several motherhoods, depending on the context taken into consideration: purely physiological, political, social, mythical, religious, philosophical, juridical or iconographic. Therefore, rather than real people, we have figures or characters.

**Augusto Cosentino:** Women and female figures in Lokroi: mothers, daughters, lovers

The status of (human or divine) women in Lokroi Epizephyrioi, in Magna Graecia, is characterized by peculiar aspects, as is the Locrian cult to Persephone and Demeter in this apparently matriarchal context. An analysis of archaeological data identified the so-called “U-Shaped Stoa” as the site of “sacred prostitution”. Moreover, one of the most important sanctuaries of Persephone in South Italy was located in Lokroi. A collection of pinakes, pottery tablets, that were found there represent the myth of Kore’s rape and her subsequent wedding (as Persephone), but goddess Demeter is never depicted in these pinakes. A particularly intriguing pinax features a female figure opening a cista (corb) with a child inside. Who are they? Is this a maternal figure? This paper examines the potential relationships between these various elements and underlines Persephone’s role in relation with her mother Demeter and with Aphrodite.

**Anna-Katharina Höpflinger:** Motherly nation: civil religious representations of the “motherland”

“Motherland” is a term used to construct spatial concepts of political belonging. This belonging is strengthened by a naturalization of the relation between the individuum and a geographical setting, often using terms of family ties. Processes of identification and normative expectations towards the individuum form an

important part of such idealized relations. It is striking that the construction of the “motherly nation” is (especially in the course of the strengthening of nationalism in the nineteenth century) based upon religious world views and representations. For example, female state personifications such as Germania, France’s Marianne or the United States’ Columbia, adopt in their visual stagings iconographical elements taken from religious traditions. These religious visualizations contribute towards the shaping of such female personifications into the idealized concept of the “motherly nation”. My contribution will explore the civil religious functions of the construction of nations as “mothers” with a focus on the specific sociopolitical contexts.

**Anna M. Hennessey:** Uncovering the topic of childbirth in art, religion, and philosophy

There is an academic, artistic, and cultural void when it comes to the topic of childbirth. In the case of Religious Studies, research overwhelmingly prioritizes the topic of death over that of birth. A review of library and journal resources or any academic press catalogs on religion reveals that the literature available on religion and death greatly outnumbers that on religion and birth. The American Academy of Religion devotes conference sessions exclusively to research on death and yet none are devoted to birth. As for teaching resources, the situation is no different. In Philosophy and the Arts, the same curious lack of focus on birth exists. What is it about birth that is so silencing? This paper explores the possible reasons for which childbirth remains a taboo topic within Academia. It then makes the case that this academic prioritization of death over birth has profound implications, both ideological and actual.

**Pamela Klassen:** Response

## Swedenborg’s Written Revelation: The Dynamics of Reception

### Panel Chair: Jane Williams-Hogan

Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772) was a Swedish scientist, philosopher and civil servant who claimed he was called in 1745 to write and publish a new Christian theology. His first work was published in 1749, his last in 1771. The focus of this revelation was to open the Bible’s internal or spiritual meaning. Like the scientific penetration of nature, this unveiling of the literal meaning of scripture was to provide a rational understanding of the mysteries of faith. He did not found a religion but widely distributed his works to be discovered by people of faith. It was clear that these books called to people because a church organization was founded in London, in 1787, by individuals who had never personally

known Swedenborg. This panel seeks to explore the dynamics of the process of reception of a written revelation, both positive and negative.

**Jane Williams-Hogan:** The call of charismatic books: Swedenborg, artists, writers, and spiritual seekers

Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772) wrote and published a new Christian revelation from 1749–1771. He never founded a church. One was established, however, in England in 1787 by individuals who felt called to regularize access to the “charisma” of these books. For a time, the artist and poet, William Blake (1757–1826), was a member of the first congregation. John Flaxman (1755–1826), the sculptor, was also attracted to the message of Swedenborg, as were many other artists, writers, and spiritual seekers in Europe, the Americas, and eventually from around the world in the nineteenth and succeeding centuries. This paper will examine the nature of Swedenborg’s spiritual works, their “charisma” and why they have attracted and continue to attract exceptionally creative and reflective individuals to explore them.

**Bernhard Lang:** Swedenborg and Dickens: traces of Swedenborg’s influence in *A Christmas Carol*

In Charles Dickens’s famous novel *A Christmas Carol in Prose, Being a Ghost Story for Christmas* (1843), Mr Scrooge meets and converses with four spirits of which one is identified as Scrooge’s business partner who has died not long ago. The meeting with spirits is a central theme in the writings of Swedenborg whose book on Heaven and Hell was widely read in Victorian Britain. Dickens himself owned a copy, sent to him by the Swedenborg Society of London in 1841. In his letter of acknowledgment (September 9, 1841), Dickens writes that this book “will not go unread.” The paper scrutinizes the novel for traces of Swedenborg’s influence.

**Devin Zuber:** Reading literature as religion, or religion as literature: Swedenborg and a post-secular age

Beyond the Swedenborgian church movement which emerged after Swedenborg’s death, a number of Romantic writers and artists came to use Swedenborg’s writings as aids for enchanting their various aesthetic projects: locating in his theology concepts that allowed them to “spiritualize” the work of the poet or painter. This talk explores how two such American figures, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry James Sr., read Swedenborg “literarily” (not literally), and colored their views of the aesthetic as a spiritual office – views that ultimately came to supplant the institutional authority of the church. If James and Emerson could be said to have appropriated Swedenborg as a “post-Christian” figure, how might their idiosyncratic readings of Swedenborg function as post-secular? Some of the recent discussions around post-secularity occasioned by Charles

Taylor and Hent de Vries can find, I argue, a corollary in James' and Emerson's transpositions of Swedenborgian theology into literary aesthetics.

**Tiina Mahlamäki:** Swedenborg's reception within Anthroposophy: the case of the Finnish artist Kersti Bergroth

My paper will discuss the influence of Emanuel Swedenborg on a Finnish female author, Kersti Bergroth (1886–1975) through Bergroth's novel *Eläviä ja kuolleita* (*The Living and the Dead*; 1945). Bergroth was a prolific author with an anthroposophical bent and an admirer of German Idealism. In this particular novel Bergroth refers explicitly to Swedenborg and the story discloses a number of Swedenborgian themes: the doctrine of correspondences; a world divided into material, spiritual, and divine realms; and communication with the spirits of the dead. As Bergroth was an active member of the Anthroposophical movement, I will also consider the route, spread, and place of Swedenborg's ideas within Anthroposophy and Theosophy in the twentieth century.

## Taxonomies of Religion in the Ancient and Modern Worlds

### Panel Chairs: Daniel Barbu, Francesco Massa

Starting from recent studies on the invention of “paganism” and “Judaism” in the fourth century, this panel will investigate historical processes that produce taxonomies of religion as part of a discourse on religious diversity. How do religious groups organize the diversity of religions? What are the narratives through which they give sense to religious diversity? What are the political forces driving the need to organize diversity? Taxonomies of religion are a central component of the discursive construction of religious identities. Drawing the boundaries between “us” vs “others” implies both comparison and systematization of religious knowledge, that is, to inscribe the rites and beliefs of others on the map. Such taxonomies can take many forms, from heresiological discourse to elaborate narratives on the cultural history of mankind. With this topic, we intend to explore the formation and uses of fundamental categories that often continue to frame the study of religion.

**Eduard Iricinschi:** Gnosis, haireisis, and Mani: fourth-century religious vocabulary and its modern adjustments

“Gnosticism,” “heresiology,” and “Manichaeism” are modern concepts in constant need of theoretical fine-tuning. Over the past decades, scholars adjusted the Nag Hammadi codices and the Manichaean texts to the more general contexts of “heresy,” “gnosis,” and “dualism.” This paper explores the ways in which scholars adapted gnosis, knowledge religiously codified in rituals and teachings, and often presented as revelations about invisible realities, into

“Gnosticism,” a seventeenth-century, Protestant linguistic invention, to describe the Catholic Church. It will also sketch the trajectories through which philosophical haeresis, used by second- and third-century Christian writers as a rhetorical tool to describe religious diversity and, simultaneously, to reduce it to a caricature of itself, later became “heresies,” as depicting full-blown religious, social, and political aberrations. Finally, it will suggest that modern scholars follow ancient Christian writers’ use of the same rhetoric of difference, to impose artificial boundaries between the followers of Mani and “real” Christians.

**Mélanie Lozat:** Religious geographies in Strabo’s Geography

In his Geography, Strabo establishes a map of the Roman Empire and the territories still to be conquered for the use of Roman power. In this context, he offers a detailed description of various countries, their dimensions and the peculiarities of their climate and nature as well as their inhabitant’s *nomoi*, including religious practices. Strabo constructs the identity of the Barbarians he describes according to Greek ethnographic standards, thus depicting the barbarians following the Greeks models of inversion, analogy and comparison. Starting from the way Strabo describes the religion established by Moses in Jerusalem, and comparing it with what he says of the religion of people living at the ends of the world, I will focus on his construction of religious taxonomies, and present the system resulting from his account of human diversity.

**Nicolas Meylan:** Is Snorri a colleague?

The prologue to Snorri Sturluson’s Edda, a textbook of Old Norse poetry and mythology, in which he narrates the history of religious change, strikes scholars as ahead of his time: the absence of polemic; the role of linguistic change and diffusion in history; his anticipation of the notion of “natural religion” have led scholars to label Snorri as an early historian of religions. I would like to interrogate this label by replacing it in Snorri’s general project. I will explore the paradigm with which he works and the ways he departs from it. In so doing, I wish to suggest that Snorri’s Prologue is not so much a historical as a taxonomical enterprise, seeking to establish a higher order taxon in order to deconstruct the incommensurability between paganism and Christianity in his bid to protect his forebears and their poetry from clerical censure.

**Emma Abate:** An atelier of Jewish Studies in the core of fifteenth-century papal Rome

My presentation will deal with a crucial passage in the relationship between Christians and Jews in the Roman Renaissance focusing on the milieu of the Christian Kabbalist Giles of Viterbo (1469–1532). He was Superior of the Augustinian order and Cardinal, reformer and humanist. The study of the Hebrew religious culture played a central role in his reformist and ecumenical vision of the mission of Christianity. He gathered around him a group of Jewish intellectuals

and converts whom he engaged in the acquiring, writing, teaching and copying of Hebrew works. Notably he was interested in biblical exegesis and mysticism. My contribution aims at delving into the intellectual mutual exchange of religious notions in the entourage of Giles of Viterbo and in the friendship between Giles and his master of Hebrew Eliahu Bahur ha-Levi (1469–1549), the celebrated philologist who was guested in Rome by Giles for more than ten years.

## **Technology and Religion in Historical and Contemporary South Asia: Spaces, Practices and Authorities**

### **Panel Chair: Knut Axel Jacobsen, Kristina Myrvold**

This panel explores intersections between technology and religion in South Asia in the past and present and how various forms of techno-religious intersections transform and open up new religious practices, discourses, communities, and institutions. Technological developments at different times in history may include new machines and technologies in a broader sense (e.g. printing technology) and new means of transportation (e.g. railways, cars) and communication (e.g. telephone, radio, TV, mobile phones, and the internet) that have facilitated new spaces for religion. The techno-religious intersections generate several questions about authority and power, the politics and poetics of identity, community and place, and how religious agency, information and experience are mediated, commodified, and adjusted to the demands of societies. With a specific focus on South Asian contexts and religions this panel invites papers that discuss various empirical and theoretical aspects of how technological innovations create, alter and negotiate religious spaces, practices and authorities.

**Knut Axel Jacobsen:** Technological innovations and Hindu pilgrimage in contemporary India: new means of communication and ritual change

This paper analyzes how technological developments are impacting Hindu religious traditions of pilgrimage in present-day India. Despite an increasing secularization in India, the number of pilgrims visiting places of pilgrimage continues to grow. One reason for this is that new means of communication are being used to propagate the pilgrimage places and to organize the visits. The paper investigates how new means of communication impact ritual practices and particularly examines the relationship between technological innovations and how information about the places is disseminated, how ritual clients are recruited, and how the rituals are organized and performed. By looking more particularly at the impact of the Internet and mobile phones, the paper argues that these new technologies create new ways of organizing ritual clients and rituals. The paper uses the example of the pilgrimage town of Siddhpur in Gujarat which

is the place in which the śrāddha rituals for dead mothers are performed and a place of cremation. The use of the internet and mobile phones has led to a radical transformation of the śrāddha rituals and changed them from a family ritual to a collective ritual performed in large groups. The paper analyzes this ritual change and the role of new means of communication in this change.

**Elizabeth Weigler:** Historical consciousness and access: Sikh identity and narration of the Great War in Britain

In Britain, several state-sponsored projects seek to incorporate the sources and voices of minority groups into the WWI Centenary commemorations that began in 2014. Ethnic religiously grounded Sikh non-governmental organizations are among those asked to create “new histories” for display to the British public. History is one way the community of Sikh faithful (Panth) make sense of religious teaching and practice; these historical projects constitute a civic extension to an existing process of historical narration among Sikh community members. The resulting WWI narratives are communicated as physical exhibits and non-traditional, publically accessible web-based exhibits and archives. Using a preliminary case-study, this paper explores how new, widely accessible technological platforms may impact authority and individual Sikh identity. It engages debates concerning the value and nature of non-academic authority, explores possibilities for including multiple perspectives within dominant Sikh religious discourse, and questions how these sources and narrative interpretations of Sikh values in driving WWI participation are used in religious debate.

**Andreas Johansson:** A cry for help: Sri Lankan Muslim organizations’ discourse on social media

The overall aim of this paper is to describe and analyze the creation of identity in social media for Muslim organizations in post-war Sri Lanka. What role does social media play among Muslim organizations in Sri Lanka? The use of social media among different Muslim organizations reflects what happens in society. In contemporary Sri Lanka Sinhala nationalistic organizations like Bodu Bala Sena have made a great impact on the debate on what role religion should have in the country. Bodu Bala Sena claims that Islam is a non-Sri Lankan element in the Buddhist majority society. This shows that the role of a political organization in a minority situation is complex with various kinds of discourse to relate to.

**Anna Bochkovskaya:** Counter-scriptures online: promoting Punjabi Deras’ ideologies

Social media has been good at countering Islamophobia in Sri Lanka. The use of social media is only one of many self-defense strategies the Muslim community uses. For example, these self-defense strategies can also be seen in political forums, like the parliament, and in ecumenical discussions among theologians.

The focus in this study is to see how Muslim organizations use social media in relation to ethnicity (Muslim), nation (Sri Lankans), and state (the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka) in their reaction towards organizations like Bodu Bala Sena. The materials that will be analyzed are pictures posted on the Facebook pages of three Muslim political organizations.

**Hindol Sengupta:** How technology and the free markets changed the Hindutva project

The paper studies the impact of the use of social media and mobile phone technology to bridge the caste divide between upper caste Hindus and so-termed lower castes in relatively new Hinduism movements in their attempts to create a cohesive Hindu society and fill traditional caste chasms. Economic empowerment has been key in bridging the caste divide as, for instance, has been shown by Devesh Kapur, Chandra Bhan Prasad, Lant Prichett and D. Shyam Babu in *Rethinking Inequality: Dalits in Uttar Pradesh in Market Era Reform* (Economic & Political Weekly, 2010). Now the use of technology is adding a new layer to this social transformation. The paper will specifically look at the work of the Hindutva Abhiyan which is led by a metallurgical engineer, trained at the Indian Institute of Technology and working as an IBM risk management consultant, and also leading a Hindu spiritual order, and his use of SMS, mobile voice messages and Facebook as neutral tools to bridge the caste divide in Dewas, Madhya Pradesh and in Mandla, Chattisgarh, both deep into the interior of the rural forest heartland of central India. The paper analyzes how technology is being used to deliver the same messages on the essence of the Ram Tatva (lessons from the Ramayana), Krishna Tatva (lessons from the life of Krishna in the Mahabharata) and the Bhagvad Gita Tatva (lessons from the Bhagvad Gita) among lower caste groupings. It analyzes how the medium integrally becomes part of the message as similar access to technology brings about a sense of social democratization and caste equanimity, albeit often temporarily to begin with, which is then used to give core messages of a caste-free Hinduism leading to signs of attitudinal change among recipients.

## **Testing Functional Hypotheses of Religion: Announcing a New Public Database with Worked Examples for Scholars of Religion**

**Panel Chair: Joseph Bulbulia**

From its inception, the academic discipline of Religious Studies has been home to debates about the origins and functions of religions. Until recently, however, scholars of religion have lacked the tools for resolving the enduring contro-

sies. This panel describes exciting new methods for leveraging publically accessible datasets for addressing fundamental questions. The panel opens with the world premier of Pulotu, the first publicly available database purpose-built for testing evolutionary hypotheses about religion. Pulotu contains rich information from a diverse sample of over one hundred Austronesian cultures, and comes free-of-charge. A second talk raises the question, “Why have the Abrahamic faiths been so successful?” and models the relative importance of key drivers of success, both internal and external. A third talk considers whether the pattern of religious change across Christianity’s history has been defined by key historical moments or occurs more slowly at denominational fragmentation. Evidence is used to evaluate functionalist controversies. A final talk illustrates how fine-grained environmental data can be combined with global ethnographic datasets to predict the worldwide distribution of beliefs in moralizing high gods with an accuracy of 91%. The supported model portrays religion’s role in history as neither one of pure cultural transmission nor of simple ecological determinism, but rather a complex mixture of social, cultural, and environmental influences.

**Joseph Watts:** Announcing Pulotu! A public database of Pacific supernatural belief and practice

Pulotu is the first publicly available database designed specifically to test evolutionary hypotheses of supernatural belief and practice. It contains a diverse sample of over one hundred Austronesian cultures, spread across half the world’s latitude, with belief systems that range in focus from localized ancestral spirits to powerful creator gods. Each culture has variables on a wide range of supernatural beliefs and practices, as well as their social and physical environments. Here I will present the key features of Pulotu and illustrate the power of phylogenetic methods to reconstruct the history of cultures and test theories about the coevolution of supernatural beliefs with social structures while controlling for the historical non-independence of cultural histories. I conclude by offering scholars of religion a hands-on-introduction to Pulotu’s user-friendly graphical interface, and tips about how scholars might get started in leveraging Pulotu’s power to address field-specific questions.

**Quentin Atkinson:** Modelling the spread of Abrahamic religions

In 1900, 45% of people on the planet were Christian or Muslim. Today the number is 55%. Understanding the factors that determine the success of Christianity and Islam across cultures has the potential to explain how and why these religions have become globally dominant today. Here I present a range of quantitative cross-cultural models that investigate the relative importance of religious features and features of the host culture – existing religious beliefs and practices, economic systems, and political structures – in determining the success of a set of Abrahamic religious traditions around the world. This model high-

lights the features of religious systems that are most resistant to change, and lays the foundation for nomothetic laws of cultural diffusibility with the potential to explain the global success of Abrahamic traditions.

**Joseph Bulbulia:** The punctuated evolution of religion

Evolutionary theories of religion hold that religions evolve to enhance group unity, but what is the evidence? “Recognition signaling” argues that religions function to delineate group boundaries and predicts that religious change will be most pronounced at religious schisms. Against the “schismogenesis” of religious diversity, several historians have argued for defining moments – a “punctuated evolution.” We test rival models by applying cultural phylogenetic methods to a large sample of Christian denominations ( $n=50$ ). Despite previously reported evidence for schismogenesis from small samples, and in line with punctuated evolution, we find that most change in Christianity occurred at the Protestant Reformation. Moreover, despite a superficial resemblance of change within Christianity to an evolutionary tree, results indicate that historical change was exceedingly un-treelike, suggesting substantial borrowing between denominations. Results illustrate the power of cultural phylogenetics to test long-debated theories of religion, and reveal the limitations of tree-like approaches in the evolutionary study of religions.

**Russell Gray:** The ecology of religious beliefs

The role of a broad range of biological taxa in shaping human behavior is currently disputed. Both comparative and experimental evidence indicate that beliefs in moralizing high gods promote cooperation among humans, a behavioral attribute known to correlate with environmental harshness in nonhuman animals. Here we combine fine-grained bioclimatic data with the latest statistical tools from ecology and the social sciences to evaluate the potential effects of environmental forces, language history, and culture on the global distribution of belief in moralizing high gods ( $n = 583$  societies). After simultaneously accounting for potential nonindependence among societies because of shared ancestry and cultural diffusion, we find that these beliefs are more prevalent among societies that inhabit poorer environments and are more prone to ecological duress. In addition, we find that these beliefs are more likely in politically complex societies that recognize rights to movable property. Overall, our multimodel inference approach predicts the global distribution of beliefs in moralizing high gods with an accuracy of 91%, and estimates the relative importance of different potential mechanisms by which this spatial pattern may have arisen. The emerging picture is neither one of pure cultural transmission nor of simple ecological determinism, but rather a complex mixture of social, cultural, and environmental influences. Our methods and findings provide a blueprint for how the increas-

ing wealth of ecological, linguistic, and historical data can be leveraged to understand the forces that have shaped the behavior of our own species.

## THATcamp

### **Organizer: Frederik Elwert**

The THATcamp at the IAHR Congress will allow participants to discuss and engage with current developments that are often framed as the “digital humanities.” Because of its open and participatory nature, it will allow a focus on topics and methods that the participants themselves regard as relevant, and not impose a rigid schedule. A website is to be set up beforehand in order to collect session proposals. For the same reason, THATcamp spans across multiple Open Sessions in order to allow discussion of a broader range of topics. The event is moderated by Frederik Elwert, but because of the purposely open nature a detailed program cannot at this point be provided, but will develop during the Congress.

## Theologies and Religious Studies in Postwar Germany

### **Panel Chair: Johann Evangelist Hafner**

Postwar Germany showed a balance of two mainstream Christian denominations that dominated the religious field. This situation has diversified during the decades since the reunification in 1989, especially through the establishment of Jewish and Islamic Studies at state universities. It took great legal efforts and did not prevent scandal to find the academic place for Jewish and Islamic Studies, beside Area and Religious Studies, and other sciences related to religion. The line between religious and secular approaches to religion is clear as long as it is determined by institutional conditions. But the line gets blurred when it comes to methods: theological research and non-theological research alike are applying historical, sociological, philosophical et al. approaches. The panel will explore the frictions between methodological practice and institutional frameworks and the opportunities of the German model as well.

**Guiseppe Veltri:** Daughters or stepchildren of the “Wissenschaft”? Jewish studies and Jewish Theology in the nineteenth century

The lecture focuses on two basic elements of the so-called *Wissenschaft des Judentums*: the philological study of Judaism, promoted and prospected by Leopold Zunz, and the theological study of teachers and rabbis as suggested by Abraham Geiger. It faces two different patterns of university teaching and learning which developed from the same spirit of academic concern: to give a ground-

ed education to whoever is seriously interested in Jewish religion, history, and literature. Zunz saw the integration of “Jewish studies” or “the science of Judaism” into the body of German university education as one precondition for emancipation. Geiger’s predominant interest was the theological education of teachers, referring to the new spirit of the study of Jewish religion in an institution which could guarantee also the official acknowledgement of the curriculum. Both of them were following a utopian project which ran aground because of the Prussian lack of political understanding of Judaism and minorities.

**Walter Homolka:** Utopia became reality: Jewish Studies and Jewish Theology well-established in Germany

When the Science of Judaism evolved at the beginning of the nineteenth century it intended both theological and secular studies to prove the general value of Jewish culture and civilization. Access to the public university system was denied until after the Shoa. Since then, Judaic Studies have been established at various German universities and in 2013 the School of Jewish Theology of the University of Potsdam was opened. Utopia became reality and both branches of the Science of Judaism, religious and secular, have become an undisputed part of the German academic scene: using similar tools for differing aims. Louis Jacobs says in “A Jewish Theology” (1973, p. 14–15): “The historian of the Jewish religion tells us what it is that Jews believed in former ages. The task of the theologian is to draw on the findings of the historian but to ask what it is that Jews can believe today.”

**Bekim Agai:** Islamwissenschaft, Islamic Studies and Islamic Science: convergences and delineations

Islamic-Theological Studies are a latecomer in Germany. When the German Council of Science and Humanities published its “Recommendations on the Advancement of Theologies and Sciences Concerned with Religions at German Universities” in 2010, including a recommendation to establish Islamic-Theological studies, a discussion took place within the established Orientalist discipline of “Islamwissenschaft” asking for the scientific possibility of another academic discipline studying Islam from a scientific perspective. The new representatives of Islamic-Theological Studies responded to the critique, trying to explain communalities and differences between the old and the new subject. One was the basic difference between an insider’s and an outsider’s point of view. In my paper, I will describe the context of the process of establishment, giving insight into the debates and will explain why the assumption of the difference of insider’s and outsider’s perspective is misleading.

**Johann Evangelist Hafner:** Separation and confusion of theology and religious studies

The ongoing decrease of membership and influence of the main Christian churches provokes the question if Christian theologies should maintain their predominance at state universities. This is expressed in conflicts about the refusals to hire university professors at Christian faculties because they lack the required confessional profile. Materially there is a widening gap between theologies which represent a specific denomination on the one side, and religious studies on the other side, which have to cover also non-Christian religions. Who is doing the job of non-confessional research on Christian cultures? Where are Catholic or Protestant Studies? The talk will investigate to what extent theological research already left its realm by importing not only sociological or historical methods but also theories. Since methods are not innocent, they often lead to reconstruction of Christian traditions under secular premises. This might lead not to an appeasement but to more conflicts in the future.

## Theorizing and Analyzing Religious Change

### Panel Chair: Liam Sutherland

The panel explores the analytical study of religion's shared ground with sociology and anthropology to address representation, interpretation and theorizing change through semantics, analysis of social forms, structuralism, Marxist and post-Marxist theory, conceptual history and critical discourse analysis. In 1992, the Comaroffs noted the objectivity vs. critical theory crisis and offered ethnography anchored in critical theory responsive historiography. Nineteen years later, Isaac Reed noted the false binary between activist scholarship that scorns data and causal explanation and naturalism/critical realism advocating stable objects available for value-immune descriptions. Reed states we can offer explanations regarding how and why things happen and change if we attend to the labor of historically and hermeneutically grounded critical theory informed social science. The Comaroffs, Reed and Zald resonate with the best analytical work in the study of religion over the last few decades: their work can operationalize the work of Lynch and Taves.

**Volkhard Krech:** Change we need: dynamics in the history of religions between semantics and social forms

Social change in general is usually conceptualized as an ongoing process (e.g. as "modernization"). However, there could be no innovation if there was no continuity (e.g. "tradition"). The same holds true for the history of religions. It will be argued that the history of religions can be conceptualized best by consid-

ering the dialectics between process and structure, condensation and diffusion as well as dynamics and stability. The history of religions proceeds between these (and other) poles. The oscillation is based on the interplay between semantics and social forms. Free floating semantics are canalized in special social forms (groups, currents, organizations), and social forms are legitimized by certain semantics.

**Paul-François Tremlett:** Theorizing change: forms, morphologies, transformations

This paper explores some ways in which scholars have conceptualized societal change. The paper begins with Lévi-Strauss' structuralist intervention in anthropology. This is framed as a rejection of linear, "evolutionist" theories which imagined societies as progressing from simple aggregates of elements to complex organisms. Lévi-Strauss developed the idea of "hot" and "cold" societies informed by ideas drawn from cybernetics, including entropy and feedback systems, while his writings on myth posited agentless transformation with myths taking the form of spirals. The paper moves to consider Marxist and post-Marxist theories of change, notably Laclau's opposition of contradiction to antagonism which indicates a shift from a linear progression of forms to social forms as the outcome of contingent processes of struggle. The paper concludes with an assessment of the value of these theories for understanding contemporary processes of postmodern/neo-liberal change and their impact on religious traditions.

**Ipsita Chatterjea:** Change and assertions of continuity: tracing religious, political and cultural valences of social regulation

This paper focuses on techniques for tracking change and internal heterogeneity within religious social aggregations over time. The paper addresses how Lynch's notion of "the sacred", and Taves' designation of "experiences" and "things deemed special" can be operationalized to study larger scale and complex constructions through historical sociology (Zald, John and Jean Comaroff and Reed) conceptual history (Koselleck, Pocock and Foucault) and critical discourse analysis (Wodak and Wuthnow). These techniques can be used to trace religious, political and cultural change and continuity; identify pivots for comparison and gauge representation and extensibility. The paper will illustrate the implementation of these techniques in a study that tracked metonyms of religious belief regarding human equality, social justice and "justified dominance" to narrate how African Methodist Episcopal women activists and their contemporaries created and responded to institutional shifts within the church and mobilized to fight asymmetrical social regulation within the US.

## Toshihiko Izutsu and Oriental Religious Thought

### Panel Chair: Yoshitsugu Sawai

This panel aims at reconsidering the characteristics of Toshihiko Izutsu's "Oriental Philosophy" from the historical perspectives of religions. Izutsu (1914–93) was famous world-wide as a Japanese scholar of Islamic philosophy as well as an Oriental philosopher. He was familiar not only with Semitic thought but also with a wide range of Oriental thought. Through his creative "reading" of classic texts of Oriental thought, he attempted to elucidate the structure of an "Oriental Philosophy," concerned with manifold layers of being and consciousness, in order to integrate Oriental traditions of thought into an organic unity. In this panel, we will clarify the characteristics of his philosophical reflections, especially his semantic understanding of Oriental philosophical texts, and use them to reexamine theoretical issues in the contemporary study of religions.

**Masaru Ikezawa:** Confucianism, Daoism, and Toshihiko Izutsu: comments on "Rectifying Names" and "Being Arises from Non-being"

The basic strategy of Izutsu's "Oriental Philosophy", according to the present presenter's understanding, was not to assume a coherent unity of "Oriental Philosophy" as a substantial entity, but to classify various Oriental thoughts systematically and to find some common features in them, in order to present alternative ways of thinking which were radically different from the Modern (the modern Western ways of thinking). It is really amazing for Izutsu to have foreseen contemporary globalization accurately, and to have begun to overcome the Modern by re-interpreting local cultures in the 1970s, because that is exactly the task of the present generation. In this presentation the contemporary potentialities of a couple of Chinese religious thoughts will be discussed, such as the Confucian idea of "Rectifying Names" and the Daoist idea of "Being Arises from Non-being," which Izutsu referred to.

**Juan José López Pazos:** Language and its meaning in Izutsu's Oriental philosophy

If we want to understand Izutsu's "Oriental Philosophy," we must pay special attention to his research into language and the way Izutsu uses the concept of "language" itself. As we can see from Izutsu's words "Existence is language," "God is language," language stands in the middle of Izutsu's thought. Izutsu said that the semantic articulation function in language is the one that creates all things. Even more, all things are nothing more than words (language). This concept of language Izutsu uses differs and transcends the concept of "language" or "word" usually found in general linguistics. Izutsu's works are already important not only in the philosophy of language field, but also in Oriental thought studies. That is why within this presentation I would like to explain

the meaning of language in Izutsu's philosophy and also clarify the special understanding of the concept of language in Izutsu's "Oriental thought".

**Masahiro Shimoda:** Some reflections on Izutsu's metaphysics of consciousness: focusing on his interpretation of the Buddhist philosophy of the treatise of the Awakening of the Faith of the Mahayana

It seems to be far from serendipitous that the last subject Izutsu Toshihiko was engaged with was the philosophy of the Awakening of the Faith of the Mahayana, one of the representative Buddhist treatises regarded to have appeared around the sixth century at the culminating stage of the intellectual history of Buddhism in India. The basic approach to this treatise taken by Izutsu is that of the premise of an inseparable relationship between existence and consciousness, which is mediated by language. This approach was distinctively effective in understanding the Buddhist philosophy both of India and East Asia, crossing the boundaries of the structure of language inherited from Sanskrit and Chinese. I will shed new light on the final work written by this profound thinker that discusses the possibility of opening up a new horizon of metaphysics of consciousness transcending the perimeter of the language of Western philosophy.

**Yoshitsugu Sawai:** Izutsu's Semantic Perspectives of Indian Philosophy

The purpose of this presentation is to explore how Toshihiko Izutsu interpreted Indian philosophy from his semantic perspectives. From his viewpoint of "Oriental Philosophy," he semantically attempted to interpret such Indian philosophical texts as the Upaniṣads, Śāṅkara's Commentaries on the Upaniṣadic texts, and the Buddhist sūtras of the Mādhyamika and Yogācāra traditions. What he emphasized as an important characteristic of Indian Philosophy is that Indian thinkers opened the dimension of depth-consciousness as their experiential facts on the basis of their metaphysical experiences, while observing the multi-layered structure of reality. In Indian philosophical traditions, Izutsu argues, there exists a one-to-one correspondence of the manifold layers of objective reality with those of subjective consciousness. Through his reinterpretation of Indian philosophy, he developed a structural theory of "Oriental philosophy," characterized by a multi-layered correlation of human consciousness with reality. This presentation will clarify the characteristics of his Oriental philosophical perspectives on Indian philosophy.

**Gregory D. Alles:** Response

## Tradition and Innovation in the Graeco-Roman World

### **Organizers: Charles Guittard, Claude Brunet**

Roman religion is generally characterized by conservatism and continuity but the Roman rituals and the Latin religious vocabulary offer examples of adaptation to new conditions. Rome's revival through the myth of its foundation (Camillus and Augustus are considered as "another Romulus"), the introduction of new gods and rituals (through the Bacchanalia or the ritual of "evocatio", for instance), the celebration of the Secular Games and the theme of the Golden Age (revived by Vergil and based on a cyclical conception of the time) are good examples of tradition and innovation. The roundtable will discuss various issues related to this topic and invites participants.

## Trajectories of Religious Innovations

**Christoph Elsas:** Dynamics of dualism in religious traditions: founders and mechanisms of innovation in antiquity

Anthropological bifurcations like in/out, life/death, good/bad, spirit/matter involve questions on how to handle them, and thus have also become themes for religious dualism. Considered from a historical point of view, there are impulses from Zoroaster's new doctrines and rituals which are inspired by an eschatological monotheistic tendency and were canonized in combination with the concepts of truth/lie and pure/impure in community and world: impulses to modify imperialistic dualism and to develop Pythagoras' dialectical polytheistic tendency of dualism – in religious individualization with the aid of purification rituals – until both traditions are combined in subsequent cosmic and anti-cosmic dualisms.

**Gösta Gabriel:** How to innovate mythology: the enūma eliš as an example for the deliberate construction of a new myth in ancient Mesopotamia

The position of the city god of Babylon, Marduk, changed drastically during the second millennium BCE. Formerly being just a minor god within the pantheon, he now became king of the gods. These religious dynamics required justification and, therefore, a new mythical text, the enūma eliš, was created. Its authors – probably Marduk's priests in Babylon – solved the conflict between the text's high rate of innovation and the traditionalism of the Babylonian culture by using material that was already known to the educated, literate elite, i. e., material of traditional mythology and religious practice. The paper will show that the references were not simply copied, but artfully adapted to the purpose of the text. Furthermore, it will be underlined how the enūma eliš enhanced on a prag-

matic level also the claim of Marduk's priesthood in Babylon to consult and guide the human king.

**Philipp Gollner:** How Mormons made (some) Swedes white: religion as movement and boundary among transatlantic immigrants in the late nineteenth century

This paper employs the case study of a woman who migrated from Sweden to Utah in 1885 in order to convert other Scandinavian women who had moved across the Atlantic to join the Latter Day Saints (Mormons), in order to probe models of the function of religion in modern globalization and test religion's ability to simultaneously cross space and construct boundaries. Seeking to transcend simplistic concepts of one-way acculturation of ethnic groups that dominate late nineteenth century transatlantic historiography, I intend to employ theories of religion and globalization in order to show that religion during this period in Western history presents a unique guide to study movements across space. I argue that while such migrant religion shared the ability to cross spatial boundaries with the globalizing marketplace and nascent entertainment culture, its immanent need for boundaries of identity sets it apart as a category of analysis.

## **Transcending Borders in the Wake of Catastrophe: Religion and Spiritual Care after the March 11, 2011 Earthquake in Japan**

**Panel Chair: Elisabetta Porcu**

This panel examines religious responses to the 3/11 disasters in Japan with a focus on survivors' interactions with the tsunami dead and the emerging trend of "spiritual care." The important role of psychiatrists and psychologists in providing "mental care" to disaster victims has been acknowledged since the Hanshin Awaji Earthquake of 1995. However, relatively little has been introduced about "spiritual care" as practiced by religious specialists and the religious needs of disaster victims. The 2000s saw the growing recognition of "spiritual care" by doctors and nurses in aid for the dying and the terminally ill. This type of care was distinguished from "religious care" and counseling in favor of a particular religious persuasion. In the wake of 3/11, religious specialists downplayed their own sectarian identity and explored new standards for "spiritual care" and grief-counseling in trans-religious networks, raising new questions about the "public" role of religion in a post-secular age.

**Tim Graf:** Religion in the public sphere: policy changes, regionalism, and the rise of “spiritual care” in post-3/11 Japan

This paper presents perspectives on religious responses to the March 11, 2011 earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear disaster through the lens of Japan’s constitutional separation of religion and state. I will begin by outlining the role of Buddhist temples as emergency shelters in the wake of 3/11, followed by a discussion of the ways in which religious activists promote the use of religious sites as designated refuge centers in dialogue with local governments. Part two of my presentation explores the shifting role of religion in the public sphere with a focus on trans-religious relief networks and collaborations between clergy, scholars of religion and medical doctors in post-3/11 “spiritual care” programs that have worked to shape a notably more positive image of religion in the media by reassessing the role of religion as a socially engaged practice, and by enabling religious specialists to practice “spiritual care” at hospitals and healthcare facilities.

**Hara Takahashi:** Tales about ghosts of the tsunami dead and their reception in Japan’s religious landscape

In this paper, the author provides an overview of how religious professionals, especially Buddhist monks, are dealing with so-called occult phenomena in the tsunami stricken areas after the Great East Japan Earthquake. Most of the ghost tales seem to result from a variety of unconscious anxieties, and monks are often consulted in such cases. Generally, they accept ghost tales for what they are, and conduct religious ceremonies that intend to bring peace to the restless souls, usually by reciting a sutra. While this seems to be inconsistent with Buddhist doctrine, clergy never fail to add some instructive advice that the souls of the deceased never do any harm, and that it is important to take care of the dead through daily rituals. Monks seem to view their clients’ distress to be settled in the course of time. In this way, monks contribute to providing spiritual care to the tsunami survivors.

**Norichika Horie:** Continuing bonds in the disaster area: locating the destinations of spirits

This paper is a report of qualitative and quantitative research on “continuing bonds” with the deceased in the areas affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake. The disaster survivors recount that it is normal for them to have conversations with the deceased victims, and that the continuing bonds with the deceased make them feel better. Communities of grief, within which stories about the dead are shared, have emerged among the bereaved. These groups share a stronger belief in religion and the afterlife than the general public according to opinion polls. Apart from heart-warming stories about the “familiar spirits” of loved ones, scary ghost stories about “unfamiliar spirits” are also

shared with different frequencies in different places. Being affiliated with a Buddhist temple may strengthen the continuing bonds with familiar spirits. Many victims, however, consider their connection to the deceased to be stronger than their connection to the priests.

## **Transformation and Revitalization: Mesoamerican Religious Traditions**

### **Sylvia Marcos**

Contemporary struggles for social justice in Mesoamerica are based on both reconceptualizations and permanence of cosmological spiritual references. An analysis of some of the most salient themes will be presented. References to basic cosmological philosophical groundings, like the complex inference to duality, opened the way to gender justice in otherwise male oriented struggles for justice. The focus on immanence today feeds a strength for resistance in spite of multiple and permanent attacks favored by powers of every kind. No waiting for an after-life of reward for suffering. The interconnection of all beings in nature – that includes humans – proposes a view of “nature” and our responsibilities towards the survival of the planet that is much beyond what is generally conceptualized in green ecologies.

## **Transformation in Practices and Discourses on Japanese Martyrs in Europe, Japan and Mexico**

### **Panel Chair: Haruko Nawata Ward**

This panel compares the practices and discourses of the early modern Japanese Christian martyrs in history in texts from Europe, Japan and Mexico, written with diverse motivations and agendas. According to Pinto’s analysis, seventeenth-century European sources apply the Catholic traditional understanding of martyrdom while also revealing the Japanese perception of these martyrs. The beatification and canonization processes of Japanese martyrs over four centuries show a gradual inclusivity in the profile of the martyrs and confirm the importance of the martyrs’ historical memory for the local Catholic community as our research demonstrates. Finally, the last paper examines the case of the Mexico-born Japanese martyr saint Felipe de Jesús and shows how his figure was first appropriated by the Mexican criollo community in the seventeenth century and by the conservative party in the nineteenth century, and how after declining in early twentieth century, his cult is now expanding to western Mexico.

**Carla Tronu:** Transformation in the discourse on the Japan martyrs from the seventeenth century to the present

The Japanese government banned Christianity in 1614 and persecuted foreign missionaries and Japanese Christians. Some of those who were executed have been recognized as martyrs through a long process, still on-going, that raises questions on identity and historical memory. Initially, in the seventeenth century, the cause for and the discourse on the first martyrs of Japan, the so-called Twenty-six Martyrs of Japan, developed in the frame of the rivalry to preach in Asia between the Mendicant Orders under Spanish patronage and the Jesuits under Portuguese patronage, generating controversial literature. No further claims were made until the late nineteenth century, when secret Christian communities were disclosed and some returned to the Catholic Church. This prompted several causes for Japanese martyrs and beatifications followed in 1867, 1981, 1989, 2008 and 2011, generating a discourse gradually more inclusive and representative of the local Catholic communities in terms of age, gender, class, and region.

**Reiko Kawata:** Transformation in the worship of Saint Felipe de Jesus in Mexico from the seventeenth century to the present

Saint Felipe de Jesus was one of the Twenty-six Martyrs of Japan who were crucified in Nagasaki on February 5, 1597 and beatified in 1627. He was a criollo, that is, an ethnic Spaniard born in Mexico, where he was already treated and worshipped as a saint shortly after his beatification, although he would not be canonized until 1862. This paper traces the changes in the political discourse on the worship of Saint Felipe from the seventeenth century, when the criollos in colonial New Spain appropriated him as one of their identity symbols, through the nineteenth century, when Mexico gained independence and the so-called conservatives in Mexico appropriated him as their symbol, up to the twentieth century, when his worship seems to have declined. My research reveals that today the cult of Saint Felipe is again spreading to new territories in western Mexico.

**Wei Jiang:** Levitation, invisibility and ninja: the transformation of the miracles of a Japanese martyr Fr. Thomas de San Augustin O.S.A. (1602–1638)

This paper is a case study on the hagiographical writings on the anti-Christian persecutions in both European and Japanese contexts during the seventeenth century. Fr. Thomas de San Augustin, O.S.A. (1602–1637) was an Augustinian priest of Japanese origin, who was executed in 1637 in Nagasaki and beatified by Pope Benedict XVI on 24 November 2008. A series of hagiographies in the Augustinian archives indicate that de San Augustin had practiced miracles of invisibility and levitation, a unique case among the Japanese martyrs. The contemporary Japanese sources in Omura show that de San Augustin, often named “the

monk with a sword of golden hand-guard”, was a master of ninja-like skills including camouflage and flying. This paper examines the entangled literature on de San Agustin, which contributed to the formation of a Roman Catholic saint and a hero at the time of the Christian rebellion in Shimabara in 1637–1638.

## Transformations of Religions in China: Past and Present

### Panel Chair: Daoru Wei

The religious history and status quo of religions are two main subjects for Chinese religious researchers. A large amount of academic results have been published on the religious history of China thanks to the efforts made by experts in this field. With continuous and rapid development of religions in China, more attention is paid to the status quo of different religions. In this panel, five theses concerning three religions of China – Buddhism, Taoism and Christianity – provide viewpoints and perspectives for you to learn something about the Chinese religions.

**Daoru Wei:** The changes of the study of Chan in the Yuan Dynasty of China. The political, minzu and religious policies of the Yuan Dynasty are obviously different from those of the Song Dynasty. This article analyzes five social factors that directly or indirectly cause the changes of the study of Chan in the Yuan Dynasty. By comparing Kan-hua Chan of Gaofeng Yuanmiao in the Yuan Dynasty with that of Dahui Zonggao in the Song Dynasty, the thesis elaborates three important changes and basic characteristics of Kan-hua Chan in the Yuan Dynasty.

**Xiaofeng Tang:** How to evaluate the rapid increase of Chinese Christianity after 1978

The rapid increase of Chinese Christianity after 1978 is an undeniable fact. When we try to evaluate this fact and its social influences, we have to answer these following questions first: Why do so many different versions about the number of Chinese Christians exist? How many “nominal Christians” are there in China? Is Christianity an adversary of Chinese native religions? Does there exist a so-called saturation status of Chinese Christianity in Chinese culture and society? Is Christianity the only religion rapidly increasing among all religions in Chinese society?

**Qiaowei Lin:** Daoism and the state cult of China in Ming Dynasty. In ancient China the state cult was the core of the Chinese imperial court, which included a series of public divine worship activities in different grades as the Grand, Secondary and Tertiary Sacrifices. The state cult, providing the imperial ritual offerings for the gods in national temples, did not only reflect the core of the political ideas and the social beliefs, but also implied some important reli-

gious meanings. As is well known, the Confucian teachings were the philosophical basis of the state cult in Chinese history. But how about the relation between Daoism (in this paper the English word “Daoism” refers to the Chinese terms Daojiao 道教/religion of the Dao) and the state cult in China? Leon E. Stover, in his book *Imperial China and the State Cult of Confucius*, “explores the political logic of old China’s archaic civilization, where court protocol was the very essence of a liturgical government whose philosophical basis rested on the scriptural authority of Confucian teachings.” When we focus on the influence of Confucianism, we might ignore the relation between Daoism and the Chinese state cult. This article will look into the literature of the court protocol in the Ming dynasty, and explore the establishment of the state cult in the Ming court, comprised of the worship of the Daoist gods and beliefs in addition to Confucianism. It will present a basic outline on the following three aspects: the enactment of the state cults with the participation of the Daoists (Daoshi 道士); the national temples providing the state rituals managed by the Daoists (Daoshi 道士); and the graded rites of the state sacrifices involving the Daoist gods – trying to show how the Daoist gods and beliefs earned credentials in the imperial court, and how they played an important role in the state cult in Ming China.

## Transgressive Transformations through Art

### Panel Chair: Lidia Guzy

This panel addresses the transformative and transitional power of artistic expressions in indigenous and marginalized cultures. The ethnographic studies presented here discuss art and artistic production as a potent medium of social and ritual transformation. The panel comprises members and collaborators of the newly created Marginalised and Endangered Worldviews Study Centre (MEWSC), UCC as an international forum to promote engaged and philanthropic scholarship for an inclusive and reflective global society. MEWSC is emerging as a genuinely critical think tank on contemporary global forms of marginalization. The centre fosters the study of non-hegemonial worldviews and forms of oral, performative and visual techniques of knowledge transmissions often devalued by cultures of literacy and texts. MEWSC focuses on three regions: Brazil, Eurasia (Eastern Europe and Russia, Siberia), and India.

**James Kapalo:** “And the archangel Michael looked just like me!”: visual media and the re-presentation of divinity in Moldovan radical religion

This paper explores the power of the visual to contest and subvert dominant religious beliefs and doctrines. Through an exploration of Inochentism and Archangelism, “home-grown” religious movements in twentieth-century Moldova, I

trace the power of visual media, when combined with folk narratives, prophecy and visionary literature, to contest state and church authority, embody the sacred and transform belief. The two movements discussed, driven underground by communist regimes in Romania and Moldova, deployed visual media in the form of vernacular icons, photographs and photomontages, as powerful tools for critique during periods of persecution by the state. Based on interviews with members of these movements between 2011 and 2014, on secret police archival sources and on Soviet propaganda publications, I examine how, under the pressure of atheist ideology, relations between divine and human, this world and the next, and the material and immaterial were re-imagined and embodied by Moldovan village people.

**Stefano Beggiora:** Aspects of Saora ritual: permanence and transition of the artistic performance

This paper discusses the ancient technique of art performance of the wall paintings called “anital” among the Lanjia Saora of southern Orissa (India). Through the wall-painting, the group strengthens the covenant between the living and the dead. The subject of this art form is highly symbolic and usually tells a dream or vision of the shaman that portrays the subtle world. Since the advent of Christianity, the “anitals” have become a target of persecution among the converted because they embody the tribal identity of the past. The recent revival of indigenous works and initiatives developed by NGOs tend to replicate the arcane motifs of anitals, identifying them as purely “tribal art” deprived of its ancient authentic religious value. Despite the current period of profound social change, I will demonstrate how the traditional technique is still alive and how it is possible to decrypt them through knowledge of Saora culture.

**Claire Scheid:** The Donyi-Polo creative collective: the role of artists in the formalization of Adi religion

The Adi of the Siang districts of Arunachal Pradesh, India, in the far Eastern Himalayan foothills, practice an indigenous religion known as Donyi-Polo (Sun-Moon). Since the mid-1980s, community leaders have been actively restructuring Donyi-Polo through “formalization” initiatives such as the institution of a religious governing body, the canonization and printing of religious texts, the unionization of shamans, and the construction of prayer halls. This religious reformation has also included the introduction of iconographical depictions of deities (previously represented only by straw and bamboo structures) and the composition of new tunes for prayer songs. This paper, based on interviews with the artists, will discuss the creative collective of painters and musicians who worked with the movement’s founder, Talom Rukbo, to produce these new media for Adi religious expression that are still widely incorporated into worship today in the Siang districts and greater Arunachal Pradesh.

**Lidia Guzy:** Transformative power of indigenous Adivasi art in Indian society

This paper explores the recent emergence of a new artistic genre, the indigenous Adivasi Art in India, which especially through the medium of museum exhibitions transforms the general image of socially marginalized and culturally discriminated indigenous Indian communities. The emergence of “Adivasi Art” changes the socio-ritual creator of local visual expression into a nationwide recognized artist (kolokar). An official recognition of a “forgotten” and “neglected art” in national cultural institutions such as museums is an expression of a socio-political emancipation and empowerment process of hitherto marginalized and devalued Adivasi communities. The paper discusses the socio-political process of art creation as a key transformative socio-political power.

## **Transnational Encounters and Religion: Following the Threads of Connected Histories (Nineteenth to Twentieth Centuries)**

### **Panel Chair: Philippe Bornet**

Inspired by the historiographical model of “connected histories” (Sanjay Subrahmanyam), the panel focuses on the detailed “trajectories” of individual actors and pays equal attention to the different contexts and perspectives entailed. Studies taking clues from this approach include biographical reassessments of travelers, “explorers”, missionaries, pilgrims, scholars, students, tourists, etc. In the context of the study of religions, this perspective can contribute to exploring not only the circulation of religious concepts and practices, but also issues such as the dynamism of “religious identities” and interactions between institutional and individual actors. The variety of contexts and actors display interactions that can be developed in many directions, providing a rich set of examples to reassess binary or unidirectional narratives of change. Bringing together selected cases involving European as well as non-European actors, the panel compares “transnational encounters” that involve religious issues (nineteenth to twentieth centuries).

**Philippe Bornet:** Connected histories of religion: examples from Swiss missions in South India

Introducing and explaining the notion of “connected history”, the paper will examine its interest and potentialities for the study of religions. In order to do so, two examples stemming from a twentieth century missionary context in South India are briefly introduced and contrasted: the case of a missionary scholar who developed a strong interest for Virashaiva literatures, Jakob Urner (in Karnataka from 1911 to 1928), and the case of a doctor who directed a hospital

in Betageri, Elisabeth Petitpierre (in Karnataka from 1927 to 1954). Taking clues from diaries, correspondence and reports, we analyze various types of encounters – with Indian scholars, texts or patients – and their effects on all partners of the interactions. We insist on the fundamental ambiguities of the missionary enterprise in those examples, with consequences that not only pertain to the expected process of Christianization but also the involvement with Indian national and regionalist politics and the development of representations of Indian religions that diverge from a mainstream “orientalist” imagination of “Hinduism” in significant ways.

**Carrie B. Dohe:** A tale of two primitives: the role and limitations of transnational encounters in the development of Carl Jung’s myth for “modern man” Carl Jung claimed he discovered his cure for “modern man’s” spiritual malaise through encountering tribal leaders in 1925 in the American Southwest and East Africa. In subsequent writings, he used these encounters with “primitive religion” as scientific “evidence” for his theory of the collective unconscious and archetypes. Yet Jung generally read these encounters in accordance with his already developed theory. He also obfuscated the modern settings in which he encountered these “primitives”: East Africa was dominated by British colonialism, while in the American Southwest, anthropologists and artists sought to bridge European and indigenous cultures. Furthermore, Jung’s contacts with East Africans were mediated by a Somali translator, but Jung spoke directly with his Taos interlocutor. These differences correlate with his double-sided view of primitivity as both dangerous and rejuvenating, and appear in Jung’s portrayal of East Africans as mute, unconscious ritualists and his Taos interlocutor as a spiritual guide.

**Fanny Guex:** The spiritual daughters of Herman Hesse: going East and changing the Swiss religious scene (1940–1970)  
During WWII, Lizelle Reymond (1899–1994), an orientalist, and Ella Maillart (1903–1997), an adventurer and journalist, spent a number of years in India searching for the meaning of life. Once back in Switzerland, they provided scholarly and literary materials raising new perspectives in the study of religion. Before the “Hesse trip” became a trend, both had close encounters with Indian gurus (Ramana Maharishi, Sri Atmananda, Sri Anirvan) and transformative religious experiences. On their return, Maillart and Reymond chose different public profiles about Indian spirituality in Switzerland. In this talk, I examine how they experienced Indian religions and what the effects were of these experiences on their life back in Switzerland. First, at a biographical level, I investigate how their transnational encounters modified their approach to religion. Secondly, at a larger level and using the approach of microstoria (Ginzburg), I consider how their trajectories enlighten more general mechanisms about the history of

religious encounters. Were they at the avant-garde of a tremendous religious change in Europe? What innovations and novel conceptions about religion did they bring back in their luggage?

**Dwayne Ryan Menezes:** The curious case of the Drs. D’Abreu: Catholicism, migration and a Kanara Catholic family in the heart of the Empire, 1890–1950  
 In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, several Catholics from South Kanara in British India, whether as British subjects or Indo-Portuguese Catholics, journeyed across the wider British, Portuguese and Catholic worlds. Wherever they travelled or settled, they often strategically deployed their Catholicism, distinctive Anglo-Luso-Brahmin culture and ambiguities about their racial heritage to overcome structural barriers to the mobility and assimilation of South Asians. Catholicism, with its numerous institutions, lay and clerical transnational networks, and doctrinal emphasis on universalism emerged as a particularly valuable tool that some could deploy for the purpose of assimilation. Catholicism would not only facilitate intermarriages with Catholics of other ethnicities, but also enable racial “passing” and other forms of strategic ethnic reidentification. By focusing on the D’Abreu family from Mangalore, members of which journeyed to the British Isles since 1890, this study shall uncover the forgotten history of an Indian Catholic family that embedded itself within the heart of British society. It shall explore how, by strategically emphasizing the Catholic and Portuguese markers of their multifaceted identities, the D’Abreu boys acquired a subsidized education at Stonyhurst; became celebrated surgeons; and married into the highest rungs of the European Catholic gentry and aristocracy. It shall explore both the transnational practices and networks of Catholicism and investigate the extent to which Catholicism could facilitate migration and aid assimilation.

**Brian Bocking:** Charles Pfoundes and the forgotten first Buddhist mission to the West, London 1889

Charles J. W. Pfoundes (b. Ireland 1840, d. Japan 1907) arrived in Japan in 1863 aged 23. He learned Japanese and developed a lifelong interest in, and admiration for, Japanese culture. In 1878 he returned to the UK and in 1889 launched, under the aegis of the newly-formed Kaigai Senkyokai (“Buddhist Propagation Society”) in Kyoto, a Buddhist mission in London. This forgotten but highly active Japanese Buddhist mission to London, then hub of the global British Empire, predates by ten years the so-called “first” Buddhist missions to the West which emerged in California in 1899 and, by almost two decades, the alleged “first” Buddhist mission to London of Ananda Metteyya in 1908. New research into the mission, including its confrontations with Theosophy and links to Spiritualism and progressive reform movements, offers new insights into the complex,

lively and contested character of global religious connections in the late nineteenth century.

**Fabienne Jagou:** The Chen Jianmin (1906–1987) legacy: an “always on the move” Buddhist practice

According to his website, Chen Jianmin followed thirty-seven masters before establishing his own school, called “Adi Buddha Mandala”. Chen Jianmin’s Buddhist life impressed a large range of people, from his co-disciples in the 1930s and 1940s to his today’s Taiwanese and American disciples. He first lived among Tibetans in Kham province before spending 25 years in Darjeeling meditating and producing hundreds of Buddhist booklets. He created new Buddhist symbols mixing Tibetan and Chinese traditions, and finally died in the United States. His remains are kept in Taiwan. The aim of this paper is to follow the life of Chen Jianmin and to analyze the way his created Buddhist legacy is practiced and understood among his followers, Taiwanese people mainly, who founded yet another Buddhist identity revealing a mechanism of religion that is “always on the move”.

**Adrian Hermann:** Writing the Philippines into the global history of “religion”: Isabelo des los Reyes y Florentino (1864–1938) and the Iglesia Filipina Independiente around 1900

As a case study on the connected histories of the emerging transcontinental networks of indigenous-Christian elites in the colonial public sphere around 1900, this paper focuses on the life, writings and intercontinental activities of the Filipino religious rebel, publicist, folklorist, historian and political activist Isabelo de los Reyes y Florentino (1864–1938) and the Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI) he founded in 1902 after his return from Spain. Through an analysis of Isabelo’s monographs *La Religion del Katipunan* (1899/1900) and *Biblia Filipina* (1908) as well as articles from early IFI periodicals, connections between religious, social, political and national struggles for emancipation are explored as an example of a history of religion in the age of a global discourse of “religion”. Thus, the paper reconstructs Isabelo’s contributions to the identity politics of a Filipino elite that – through their reception of and involvement in religious and scientific discourses on “religion” – was trying to find a place for itself and the Philippines in a global history of religion

**Maya Burger:** Response

## Truth-Conditions and Religious Language

### Panel Chair: Mark Gardiner

To what extent do we need to consider the truth of what religious people say in order to understand them? In this panel discussion we consider an influential approach to meaning – “truth conditional semantics” – that ties meaning directly to truth. According to this view, grasping the conditions under which an utterance is true is central to successful interpretation, whether in religion or elsewhere. However, interpreting religious language poses some interesting challenges to truth-conditional semantics. The discussion will be led by scholars who take very different positions with respect to the relevance of truth-conditional semantics to religious phenomena.

#### **Gabriel Levy:** Can fictional superhuman agents have mental states?

According to Tollefsen, from an analytic perspective, there is a reasonable way in which groups can be said to have mental states. She bases her argument on the every-day use of language, where people speak as if groups have mental states such as intentions, desires and wishes. Such propositional attitudes form the basis of any account of truth-conditional semantics, the rules by which people grasp the conditions under which an utterance is true. If groups (abstract units of people) have mental states, perhaps superhuman agents have them too. One argument that may contradict this premise is one that says that groups exist, whereas superhuman agents do not. However, if groups exist on the basis of normative narratives about them and the institutionalized actions they carry out in the world, the same can be said for superhuman agents. Superhuman agents are thus fictional and real in a similar sense as groups.

**Terry F. Godlove:** Interpretation without truth? A circumstances and consequences approach

In this paper I explore an alternative, or, perhaps, a complement to a truth-conditional approach to linguistic meaning, one along the lines of Robert Brandom’s “circumstances and consequences” model. I argue that it makes a natural fit with the study of religion. It takes its lead from a basic fact about linguistic communication, namely, that grasping the appropriate conditions for uttering a sentence and undertaking to react appropriately to its utterance are central to its success. If so, then clarifying the sense of appropriateness at stake here will be central to the philosophical project of giving an account of meaning. But, equally, our most influential theories of religion are also in the business of identifying circumstances and consequences of use – and therein lies the naturalness of fit.

**Lars Albinus:** The varieties of truth

In this paper I intend to focus on various conceptions of truth relevant for understanding religion. My question is: Should a philosophical notion of religion restrict itself to a concept of truth as a property of propositions irrespective of the specific contents of belief or should it take other concepts of truth into account as well? In suggesting possible outlines for dialectics between a semantic and a pragmatic conception of truth, I shall claim that there are other vitally important aspects of religion available to our understanding than the propositional content of belief. Thus, the study of religion might benefit from a pragmatic view on meaning while realizing, at the same time, that this view already draws on semantic presuppositions of its own. The question is if it is possible to draw from both sides in a conceptually clarifying way.

**G. Scott Davis:** Semantics and the study of religion

Many years ago David Lewis distinguished between “abstract semantic systems” and language “in use,” warning that “only confusion comes of mixing these two topics.” More recently, John Burgess has suggested that “it is best just to avoid “semantics” altogether.” In this paper I will argue students of religion need not worry about the details of semantic theory as long as they remain committed to the old Aristotelian tag that “to say of what is that it is, or of what is not that it is not, is true.”

## Voices of Muslim Women

**Organizer:** Maha Marouan

Often, in our discussion of women and religion, Muslim women’s voices remain absent from the conversation, or present in problematic ways due to a particular discourse that constructs Muslim women as oppressed and backward, and ultimately as women with no agency. This representation of the Muslim woman is not only articulated in conservative media, but liberal movements, including feminist movements, have located the Muslim woman outside the parameters of their agendas. This panel aims to challenge these constructs and show Muslim women’s experiences in a different light. The panel will start with a screening of the documentary “Voices of Muslim Women” which looks at the lives of Muslim girls in the U.S. and more specifically in the American South and the way these girls have negotiated their subjectivities in a place where there are many misconceptions about Islam and Muslims. The screening will be followed by a roundtable discussion with specialists in religion and gender and the film producer.

Participants: **Elias Bongmba, Rosalind I.J. Hackett**

## Way of Life and/as Religious Knowledge. Premodern Constellations

### Panel Chairs: Alessandro Stavru, Alexandra Stellmacher

With special focus on the agents of religious innovation the panel aims at exploring the dynamic relationship between way of life and religious knowledge up to pre-modern times. Religious knowledge is strongly linked to individual and collective practices and discourses. We are especially interested in the dynamic mechanisms of innovation processes which involve both agents (founding/charismatic figures) and their lifestyles as well as the making of canons and institutions. Therefore, our panel explores the developments of religious knowledge (e. g. ascetical, anthropological, eschatological, cosmological) against the background of the agents' way of life, and their biographical, social, historic, and intellectual environments (and vice versa). Our leading question is: on the basis of which practices and discourses is the way of life performed and how are such practices and discourses generated, and transformed, by taking up (innovative) lifestyles? To what extent are institutions involved? Do they repel or foster the innovation process?

**Marion Steinicke:** Companions in spirituality: the influence of the “spiritual exercises” on the life practice of early Jesuit missionaries

Founded in 1540 by the charismatic agent Ignatius of Loyola, the Jesuit Order played a decisive role in Counter Reformation as well as in global Catholic mission. The most striking innovation of the new order was the special meditative practice reflecting the founder's own religious experiences: The “spiritual exercises” have been central for Jesuits' daily life in completely different social environments. During the pre-modern period they served to tie together the members of the order also far from Europe. Fusing elements of traditional Christian epistemology, medieval mysticism, and rigorous self-investigation, the spiritual exercises form the basis of the Jesuits' intellectual disposition orientated towards mental formation processes and interests of cultural accommodation. My paper will investigate the discursive role of “exercising the spiritual exercises” within the (auto)biographical writings of the early Jesuit missionaries in China during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

**Philipp Winterhager:** Migration and hagiographic knowledge: two examples from early medieval Rome

Rome, in the Early Middle Ages, was a world city in transformation. It began to develop an identity as a religious centre in the post-classical Mediterranean world, attracting both pilgrims, who came to visit the tombs of the apostles and other saints, as well as an increasing number of Greek-speaking immigrants to Rome who settled there. Migration from the Byzantine East was therefore

highly influential on Roman culture from the sixth to the ninth centuries. Among others, monks from the Greek-speaking parts of the Mediterranean founded their own monasteries in Rome. My paper investigates the cases of two of these, asking for the specific relationship between migration background and knowledge about saints. Analyzing two hagiographic corpora from the monasteries of saints Lucia and Bonifatius, it will be shown by which narrative means migrants dealt with the task of how to accommodate themselves, through “their” patron saints, in a new environment.

**Alessandro Stavru:** Pythagorean way of life as religious knowledge: akousmatic tradition from Pythagoras to Apollonius of Tyana

The first mention of a “Pythagorean way of life” (Plat. R. 600a8-e2) credits Pythagoras with an astonishing knowledge, superior even to that of Homer. Evidence of this lifestyle has been preserved in the corpus of the so-called akousmata, a set of rules which prescribe individual and collective behaviors and practices. Tradition attributes these “things heard” to Pythagoras himself. In the Classical age akousmata became canonical to the point that a whole branch of Pythagoreanism (the akousmatikoi) derived its name from them. This paper will explore the religious background of the akousmatic tradition of Pythagoreanism and dwell on its ritual, social, historic, and intellectual environments. The focus will be on those aspects of this tradition which are likely to be derived from, or to have generated and transformed, the way of life reportedly performed by charismatic leaders (such as Pythagoras himself and Empedocles, up to Apollonius of Tyana in the Imperial age) within Pythagorean communities.

**Tudor Sala:** The many deaths of Mani: biographical mimesis and corporeal poetics of persecution among Manichaeans and Christians in late antiquity

Ever since the execution of Mani in a Sasanian prison in 274/7 CE, violence and death followed closely the Manichaean communities in their spread from third-century Mesopotamia to the Mediterranean and Asia. Dangerous enemies in the eyes of the political and religious establishment in both the Roman and the Sasanian Empire, the followers of Mani embodied a lifestyle of suffering which found its poetic expression in exceptional hymns and homilies, both woeful and triumphant. We know about these unique examples of late antique literature thanks to the major discoveries of Manichaean manuscripts in Central Asia and Egypt a century or so ago. While the arduous process of editing and translation is still going on, recent breakthroughs in the deciphering of difficult manuscripts (such as the Chester Beatty Kephalaia) allow for startling new insights into the early institutionalization of Manichaean ideologies of martyrdom. In my paper I intend to explore the types of religious knowledge and the categories of social memory that shaped how the dramatic events of death, suffering, and persecution that punctuated the early history of Manichaeism were remembered and rit-

ually reenacted by the later community, how they influenced the Manichaean way of life, and how they framed the institutionalization process of the Manichaean church in its interaction with pre- and post-Nicene Christianity.

## Women Apostles, Syzygoi, and Officeholders in Ancient Christianities

### Panel Chairs: Ilaria Ramelli, Joan Taylor

This panel will offer innovative insights into the role of women as apostles, “syzygoi” or companions and colleagues of apostles and, later, presbyters and bishops, widows, and officeholders in the variegated panorama of ancient Christian communities, from the first to the fourth/fifth century CE. Attention will be paid to the meaning of the early Christian metaphor of the widow as God’s altar and the role of widows in early Christian congregations, and to the role of women as true witnesses, prophets and apostles of Christ, even better than the twelve, according to Marcion and in Marcionite communities. The panel will also explore two types of women’s ministry in the churches of the later first and second centuries and the use and import of gendered spaces, and will investigate the meaning(s) of syzygos in early Christian debates, which bears heavily on the issue of women officeholders in ancient Christian communities. Literary (both Christian and non-Christian), iconographic, epigraphic and archaeological evidence will be examined in this connection.

**Joan Taylor:** Women’s place: ministries of teaching partners and widows within the earliest Churches and their situation in gendered spaces

Following on from a previous essay on the Twelve as twelve pairs of male and female teaching-healing partners who went out on missions “two by two”, a proposal that links with Paul’s assertion that a male apostle had a “sister-wife” as a companion, the present essay explores two types of women’s ministry in the churches of the later first and second centuries CE: women who worked alongside men as companions in teaching and healing, operating in missions and locally, and women independent of men who took care of people, acting as a collective in local congregations. The latter are identified as widows, translating the Greek word (“withouts”), because they are without men as guardians/husbands, though they are sometimes defined along with the sub-category of virgins. I will consider these two ministries within a gendered construct of space and movement, exploring what was considered to be appropriate as male and female space in households, dining rooms, cities and villages, or during travel. Concerns for propriety in regard to gendered space underly certain passages in the Pastoral Epistles, which advance standard categories of gender segregation for the sake of

offsetting social critique seen, e. g. in Lucian of Samosata's comments on second-century Christian communities. The recently-discovered third-century "Megiddo church" suggests a divided space for women and men. This raises questions about how leadership might be understood within early Christian congregations.

**Ilaria Ramelli:** Colleagues of apostles, presbyters, and bishops: the meaning of *syzygos* and the Patristic debate

This contribution will focus on the meaning(s) of "*syzygos*" in early Christian debates. This bears heavily on the issue of women officeholders in ancient Christian communities. It will take into consideration, among other evidence (including iconographic and archaeological evidence), the Acts of Philip and their portrait of the apostolic couple of Philip and Mariamme, in which the latter is described as a better apostle than her male counterpart, and debates concerning Paul's terminology and praxis in relation to women apostles and leaders in early Christian communities, especially with respect to the interpretations of 1 Cor 9:5. Such interpretations were conditioned by, and in turn influenced, the practices of women leadership in Christian congregations in the second to fourth century CE. Gregory Nazianzen testifies to the existence of a woman presbyter, colleague of a man presbyter and bishop, and highly respected in Cappadocia in the late fourth century. And it is on the basis of the presence of women officeholders in Christian communities in his time (late second to early third century CE), attested both epigraphically and literarily, that Origen referred passages of the "pastoral epistles" to women deacons and presbyters and insisted that Paul taught "with apostolic authority" that women must be constituted "in the ecclesiastical ministry".

**Markus Vinzent:** Women in Marcion's community

A comparison between the role of women as described by Marcion in his Gospel and Apostolikon to that of the canonical Gospels and the *textus receptus* of Paul's letters will be complemented by other information about the role of women in the Marcionite communities. It will emerge that in contrast to the ambiguous, if not dubious role of the twelve, and especially to that of Peter, women were regarded as true witnesses, prophets and apostles of Christ. The paper is also going to look into the role of women in the Roman church where, for example, in Hippolytus (*In Song of Songs* 25.6) they are still known as "Apostles to the Apostles".

**Margaret Butterfield:** How is a widow like an altar? Early Christian women at the center of the human-divine economy

A small number of Christian texts, dating from the second to the fifth centuries CE, briefly invoke the strange metaphor of the widow as an altar of God. In what ways might such a metaphor have been intelligible to early Christian audiences? In service of what rhetorical aims might the metaphor have been employed, and

what might have been effects of its usages? This paper considers the use of the metaphor in relation to evidence for widows' statuses as recipients of community funds and as offerers of prayer on behalf of the community. Characterizing widows as altars both presents them as objects under the control of others, and acknowledges their position at the center of a transformational economy of offering. Are widows as altars passive recipients of charity, or workers in the *ekklēsia* entitled to a share of the sacred portion?

## Women as Change Agents of Adaptation among Religious Communities in Southeast Asia

### Panel Chair: Sophana Srichampa

Religions play an important role in the life of Southeast Asia. The region has experienced ongoing religious influences from other parts of Asia, making it a critical hub for religious interaction. The role of women has been relatively absent from studies of these religious developments. Yet Buddhist women in Thailand and Christian women in the Philippines have been advocating for responses to these broader changes such as the inclusiveness of women in Sangha activities (Thailand) and the opening of schools for underprivileged children in rural areas (the Philippines). For example, Bikkhuni Dhammananda in Thailand has made public demands for several adjustments in Buddhist practice. On the other hand leading women reformers in the Philippines argue for a broader understanding of religion to avoid discrimination against the traditional practices and customs of indigenous peoples. This panel will describe and analyze how women draw on religious resources and arguments to advocate for and effect change in countries like Thailand, Malaysia and the Philippines, aided by a new environment of rights talk, particularly equal rights for women, and some progressive Court judgements.

### **Sophana Srichampa:** Can women be change agents in Thai Buddhism?

Although Buddha allowed women to be ordained as Bhikkhuni (nuns), the Thai Buddhist clergy or Sangha does not allow women to obtain this religious status. In recent times, Dr. Chatsuman Kabilsingh rebelled against this system of non-ordination and went to Sri Lanka to become a Bhikkhuni, only to come back home and start a movement demanding the creation of a Bhikkhuni order on a par with the monks (Bhikkhu). By establishing her own Buddhist Wat (temple), Chatsuman (now known as Bhikkhuni Dhammananda) has attracted several Thai women to her reform movement. The paper discusses how support for this protest has led to the growth of a strong network of over 100 bhikkhunis, 400 female novices and supporters in more than 20 provinces in the country.

It has also led to broader protests by women over prevailing gender inequities in Thai society. A qualitative method is used for data collection and the paper draws on Gramsci's concept of cultural hegemony for analysis.

**Bahiyah Abdul Hamid:** "Would you rather be a mistress or a second wife?" Muslim women and polygamy in Malaysia

Islam regulates and restricts polygamy, mandating conditions for its practice and providing legal restraints that could amount to discouragement and even prohibition of the practice. In Malaysia, this practice is legal for Muslims where a man can have four wives. While women and women's NGOs have criticized this practice – charging that Muslim men marry women for exploitative reasons, even when framed as noble – a group of women established the Ikhwan Polygamy Club (IPC) which advocates that husbands are to be shared and not fought over. This paper investigates the group's discourses to understand their arguments for a reformed approach to polygamy. Using media reports and personal interviews, a critical discourse analysis indicates that the IPC attempts to influence Muslim women to accept polygamy as a cure for social ills like adultery and prostitution. However, this discourse does not seem to gain support among women due to weak starting points in IPC rhetoric as well as emerging cultural factors

**Esmeralda F. Sanchez:** Babaylan: Filipina ritualist and healer

This study focuses on the changing roles of Babaylan healers in some communities in the Philippines. While the significance of these indigenous healers appears to be declining in urban areas, due to globalization and modernization, more careful research shows them to be still active at the community level in both rural and urban areas. They may be called on to perform healing rituals or deliver prayers at the beginning of community events. The paper also discusses why many modern, educated women recognize the continuing need for the Babaylan in their daily lives, and how and when they turn to them. Research methods for this paper include library research, participant-observation, and in-depth interviews.

## Women, Religion, and Violence

### Panel Chair: Morny Joy

In the recent past there have been many books published on violence and religion but there have been only a few volumes that have dealt with the question of women in relation to religiously motivated violence or condoned violence (through lack of active intervention). Yet the incidence of such violence against women continues unabated. In this panel the presenters will variously address

this issue, examining a number of examples from different religious and geographical contexts. The aim is to better understand the role religion has played in specific instances. Insights thus gleaned may help not only to understand the dynamics involved but also initiate more concerted effort in attempts to mitigate its occurrence.

**Nina Hoel:** Interrogating an Islamic body politics: South African Muslim women's narratives on sexual violence

Feminist activists and theorists' focus on body politics continues to be vital as we try to navigate critically through the enduring androcentrism and heterosexism that mark our contemporary realities. The entanglements of these discourses with the classic dichotomies of nature/culture and public/private, so prevalent in a variety of cultural and religious contexts, call for feminist inventiveness and thorough reconceptualization on the nature of being human. However, in feminist engagements with body politics, seemingly scant attention is paid to the influence of religious discourses on women's sexual and reproductive decision-making. Hence, in this paper, I foreground the functioning of an Islamic body politics that importantly inform Muslim women's understandings of sex, gender and reproductive bodies, and probe the extent to which religious norms and beliefs are intricately interwoven in a selection of South African Muslim women's narratives on sexual violence.

**Birgit Heller:** The female body between boundary mark and border transgression

This lecture focuses on the female body and is based on the fact that "woman" and "body" are identified in many cultures. Gender roles are the most basic building blocks of the social and religious order. Identifying woman, body, sex, weakness, irrationality and decay allows for specific roles, tasks and behaviors to be expected from women. The female body functions as locus where the borders of society and its normative orders are demonstrated and controlled. Particularly in times of social stress and instability, the insistence on traditional gender roles is reinforced. Fundamentalist movements, for example, try to preserve the world order by regulating the appearance of the female body with dress codes – using force if necessary. The recent phenomenon of rape in India may be interpreted in the frame of traditional gender ideology providing the basis for woman and body contesting destruction.

**Chikas Danfulani:** "Suffer not the witch to live": extended family violence against women, some selected cases from Jos, Nigeria

Studies on domestic violence against women have often focused on husbands as culprits. Another dimension which has been given less attention is the role of in-laws in initiating or aggravating violence against women. This paper relies on data from four biographic interviews with women in Jos, who have experienced

such violence due to their husband's continued love for them during some family misfortunes. This worsens upon their husband's death as they are accused of killing their husbands. The paper reveals the role that religion, in the form of witchcraft accusations, plays in issues of violence against women. It further shows how domestic violence against women is carried out not only by intimate partners but by extended family members who use a witchcraft accusation as a powerful weapon. The paper adds to the general debate on violence against women as viewed and interpreted in certain cultural contexts especially where religion has considerable influence.

**Carola Roloff:** Violence against women from a Buddhist perspective  
Non-violence is one of the two main pillars of Buddhism, but even in Buddhism in the West there is gender discrimination. Discrimination against women violates this basic Buddhist principle and is not compatible with values common in contemporary societies. The authoritative religious texts are ambivalent. Yet one can be excluded if one does not follow the norm. How can women reach their goals, if those who are in power in religions refuse to discuss such matters? In this paper, using examples from the ancient history of Buddhism as well as the intra-Buddhist and interreligious dialogue during the last thirty years, I want to discuss different possible strategies. My intention is to develop more intensive interdisciplinary cooperation in the field of gender and religion. In order to develop more effective strategies I encourage experts with religious and/or secular backgrounds to respond with their feedback, exchange or advice.

## **Women's Rights and Religions: Contemporary Perspectives**

### **Panel Chair: Rosalind I.J. Hackett**

The topic of religion and women's rights raises a myriad of questions and problems. For many of these issues there are no clear-cut or easy answers. Firstly, there is a question concerning which particular religion(s) out of the many contemporary entities is/are being designated. Secondly, women's rights themselves demarcate a contested area, with strong criticisms coming from diverse directions – e.g. from post-colonial scholars, from critical theorists, as well as from religious fundamentalists. As a result, before any attempt is made to investigate the topic of rights in relation to religions, I think it is necessary to examine the different ways in which religion and rights have been positioned in specific dispensations. The panel will consist of four papers. Two examine particular religious contexts; one analyzes the present situation in India; and one is a theoretical paper providing new insights on the problem of rights, religion and the secular/religious divide.

**Diah Ariani Arimbi:** Women and the politics of piety: women's rights, roles and equality in the Tarbiyah movement in Indonesia

The Tarbiyah (education) movement is the best known in Indonesia today. It has the largest number of members amongst groups in the Dakwah (proselytizing) movement that work on Indonesian campuses. Some groups in this movement call for Indonesia to become more Islamic – in the Middle Eastern way – with religious clothing, segregation and limitations on women's roles. In contrast to other Islamic revivalist organizations, however, the Tarbiyah movement is reformist, and relies heavily on modern interpretations of Islam concerned with democracy, civil society, human rights and equality of women, although these values are understood differently from Western notions. This paper aims to explore the varieties of women's activities in this movement, especially in relation to the ways women view their rights, roles and sexual identities within their notion of piety. Using participation observation and in-depth interviews as techniques of data collection, I will examine female activists of the Tarbiyah movement in Airlangga University, Surabaya.

**Brigitta Kalmar:** Gender dynamics of Tibetan Buddhism in exile

The generally ambiguous Buddhist attitudes towards women are evident in Tibetan Vajrayāna Buddhism in addition to other forms. On the one hand, at the doctrinal level, the Tibetan Buddhist attitude has been favorable, in that it includes positive feminine symbols and images, as well as a significant number of well-respected female practitioners, both monastic and lay people. On the other hand, the undebated folk belief in the “unfortunate female rebirth” has been especially prevalent, resulting in absolute male dominance in the holding of religious institutionalized positions, in an unwillingness to reinstitute the full ordination of nuns, as well as in a lack of financial and educational support of nunneries, leading to a general discouragement towards women taking up monastic life. This paper will investigate the current situation with particular reference to the notion of women's rights in contemporary Vajrayāna Buddhism.

**Morny Joy:** Women, rights and religion: a change in perspective

A major feature of debates on religion and rights is a tendency towards defining positions as mutually exclusive. I believe it is time to move beyond the resultant polarization, whether it appears as: (1) rights in opposition to religion – as is mostly the case in the secularized West; (2) the public versus private; or (3) accommodation versus assimilation. This essay surveys specific cases of the relations between women, religion and rights so as to illustrate such continuing dilemmas. An examination is then made of proposals from women scholars suggesting certain vital changes, e.g. reconfiguring rights as involving relationships. Such a change in perspective serves to ameliorate the all too prevalent binary dichotomy. The aim of this panel and my paper is to foster future collabo-

rative efforts on the part of women scholars from diverse backgrounds working in religion and rights so as to advance awareness of this contentious contemporary issue.

## Women's Voices

**Anja Pogacnik:** Exploring the marital and familial lives of Jain women in diaspora: a study of the Leicester Jain community

This paper aims to shed light on the experience of Jain women living in Leicester (England) and highlight some aspects of their changing marital and familial lives. Contrary to well-documented Indian norms on premarital behavior, marriage arrangements, and familial patrilocality, Jain women living in Leicester are (somewhat reluctantly) allowed to engage in premarital inter-gender interactions and dating, primarily search for their own spouses themselves (and rarely have their marriages arranged), and are predominantly neolocal after marriage. Relationships within families are also changing with women gaining more power within the spousal couple and affinal joint families due to their engagement in paid employment and consequential financial independence. I argue that these changes can be interpreted as a consequence of the diminished power and reach of informal social control the community is able to exhibit over its members due to its relative smallness.

**Elaine Nogueira-Godsey:** Ivone Gebara's "on-the-move" liberationist methodology

This paper introduces the on-the-move liberationist methodology developed by pioneering Latin American feminist liberation theologian, Ivone Gebara. "On-the-move" refers to the praxis-oriented, fluid theological engagement that has foregrounded Gebara's theological evolution, and gave rise to the development of a new Christian cosmology and anthropology, which opened the door for alternative theological discourses (e.g. queer, ecofeminist and feminist liberation theologies). This paper argues that Gebara's work represents the embodiment of a history of resistance underwritten by the experiences of poor women. Developed in recognition of the ever-changing nature of her own contexts, Gebara's methodology resonates with postcolonial theory and therein highlights an endemic anthropological way to construct knowledge. I argue that this constitutes a dialectical production of cultural and social processes symptomatic of, and responsive to, the postcolonial condition.

**Heather Vittum Fuller:** Sister artists: the artistic practices of Benedictine women

Historically marginalized by the patriarchy, the art of Benedictine women often demonstrates a spirituality designed especially for women. It portrays an intimate connection between the female and the divine, answering religious needs which were not met on the more traditional levels of worship. Moreover, in some cases, it serves to shift and transform the tradition, expressing a distinct theology and vision of God. This study examines the historic arts of Hildegard of Bingen and the artist of the St. Walburg Abbey followed by contemporary examples from the artists of St. Benedict's in St. Joseph, MN, who allowed me to interview them and study their work. Study of the arts often reveals truths about marginalized communities that text alone cannot. Using that methodology, we can increase our understanding of the experiences of women religious and their place as agents of innovation within the ecclesiastical structure.

**Piotr Sobkowiak:** Mongolian “religion of the shamans” as a construct of a non-European discursive tradition

Taking as an example the phenomenon of “religion of the shamans” (mong. *böge-ner-ün šasin*), this paper deals with the history of taxonomical and discursive processes which re-shaped the objects of the Mongolian religious reality. The act of singling out the agents of the traditional Mongolian beliefs, in the Buddhist-influenced socio-political environment, reached its peak during the Qing and Russian rule over the Mongolian tribes. The paper will give an overview of the thesis, which makes an assumption that “shamanism” should be understood neither as an emic phenomenon belonging to Mongolian culture, nor a post-colonial conglomerate developed in the Western academic environment, but rather as a construct of a discursive process taking place on the interface of the Tibetan, Mongolian, Chinese and Russian cultures. The importance of Asian epistemological traditions should become a meaningful aspect in the study of “global history of religions”.

## **Working Group “Evangelical, Pentecostal, and Charismatic Movements” of the German Association for the Study of Religions (DVRW)**

**Organizers:** Martin Radermacher, Sebastian Schüler

Der Arbeitskreis “Evangelikale, Pentekostale und Charismatische Bewegungen” (AK EPCB) versteht sich als Plattform im deutschsprachigen Raum, die als solche in der spezifisch religionswissenschaftlichen Ausrichtung unter dem Dach der DVRW bisher nicht existiert und das Thema als genuin religionswissenschaft-

liches etablieren will. Dabei sollen sowohl historische als auch gegenwartsbezogene und systematische Fragestellungen bearbeitet werden. Während des IAHR Kongresses wird der Arbeitskreis mit einer Posterpräsentation anwesend sein, die die Projekte seiner Mitglieder vorstellt.

**Participants:** Anja Bassimir, Esther Berg, Matthias Deininger, Frederik Elwert, Adrian Hermann, Petra Klug, Kathrin Kohle, Giovanni Maltese, Martin Radermacher, Katja Rakow, Susanne Rodemeier, Sebastian Schüler

## The Work of Data: Methods in the Study of Religions

**Panel Chair:** Steven Engler, Michael Stausberg

Contemporary debates in the study of religions often speak of “methodology”. Yet methods – i.e., ways of constructing/collecting and analyzing different types of data/materials in empirical research – are rarely addressed. The *Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in the Study of Religion* (2011) was the first major international attempt to take stock of and critically review the current methodological toolbox of our discipline. It discussed a range of well- and less well-known methods, and it began to move our discipline toward the level of methodological diversification and sophistication common in others. This process needs to continue. In this panel, scholars from Europe and North America look at methods and methodological strategies and tools not covered in the *Routledge Handbook*.

**Oliver Freiberger:** Exploring the methodical in “the comparative method” Comparison, in the narrower sense, has been a common and fundamental activity in the academic study of religion from the very beginning of the discipline. It has also been fundamentally criticized primarily for its potential to decontextualize and essentialize and for being used by scholars with theological, phenomenological, colonial, or other agendas. Yet comparative studies keep being produced—with varying degrees of reflexivity about the comparative process. If comparison is a subject of reflection at all, the discussed points are most often theoretical, sometimes methodological, but almost never methodical. Rarely have scholars suggested concrete and applicable frameworks and techniques for carrying out a comparative study. Summarizing a larger and more complex argument, this paper outlines such a concrete procedure of comparing. After briefly addressing various options for the research design (goals, scopes, scales, and modes of comparison), it lays out a research process that expands a model suggested by Jonathan Z. Smith and includes six steps: selection, description, comparison, redescription, rectification, and theory building. The paper briefly introduces each of these and discusses the potential benefits of the method. Fi-

nally it argues that a developed comparative method may once again become, if understood as a second-order method, a distinctive disciplinary feature of the study of religion. Considering the discipline's long experience with comparison – albeit often employed intuitively and also problematically – a comparative method that is both based on critical reflexivity and practically applicable may even be considered interesting by other disciplines, and thus exportable.

**Laura Feldt:** Metaphor analysis

Metaphors are prevalent not only in many forms of religious texts (e.g. hymns, prayers, poetry, narrative texts, mystical literature, magical texts, etc.) and symbolic expressions, but may also underlie rituals and institutions. Metaphors play a structuring role in everyday speech, philosophical language, social norms, and broader discourses of relevance to the study of religions. Figurative language is a language form used to describe, model and constitute deities and other transemirical/non-natural beings. For such reasons, metaphor analysis is a relevant contribution to the methodological range of the discipline. This contribution discusses definitions of metaphor, outlines the core research history of metaphor theory, assesses the strengths and limitations of metaphor analysis, and presents a strategy of analysis drawn from the hermeneutically grounded metaphor theory of Paul Ricoeur (*La métaphore vive*, 1977). This form of metaphor analysis proceeds in a series of steps: (1) identification and classification of the poetic language in the text; (2) sentence-level analysis of the selected metaphor(s) in terms of (a) the semantic domains involved, (b) the tensional aspects and emergent meaning, and (c) the (split) reference of the metaphor; (3) text-level analysis of the extent, status, and impact of the metaphor; (4) consideration of relevant intertextual context(s)/the selected corpus/network. The paper pays special attention to methodological challenges with regard to the analysis of metaphors from foreign or historically distant cultural contexts, and focuses on the representation of deities in ancient Near Eastern texts.

**Anja Kirsch, Dirk Johannsen, Petra Bleisch Bouzar:** Narratological analysis in the study of religion

Narratological analysis is a method to examine text-immanent forms and strategies of narrative representation (Sommer 2010). While developed in literary studies, it can be applied to any sort of narrative: from fictional literature to factual texts; from traditional tales to communicative interaction; from accounts of the world's creation to those of personal experience. Distinct from the analysis of context and content, narratological approaches focus on “how it is told”, the style of composition. With a variety of instruments, this form of analysis provides insight into the efficacy of narratives, the interpretative biases given by the texts, the schematization of events within narrative communities, and the textual dynamics of narrative cultures. Narratology has seen major transformations in re-

cent decades. From a formalist and structuralist endeavor it developed into a set of “post-classical narratologies”, inspired by diverse fields of cultural and anthropological studies. Two lines of research are of particular interest to the study of religion: first, aesthetic narratologies uncovering the formal foundations of narrative efficacy; second, cultural narratologies refining perspectives on the historical and social context of narrative cultures. The presentation will introduce these aspects of narratological analysis and their use in historical as well as in field research: comprising the identification of plots and scripts; setting, figuration and perspective; as well as blanks and “small stories”.

**Carsten Ramsel:** Mixed methods research in the Study of Religions

Since the 1930s but especially in the 1960s, there was an ideologically motivated fight between researchers who preferred either quantitative or qualitative methods (“Positivismustreit”). In the study of religions we still often find either quantitative or qualitative studies. I argue for the value of mixed methods studies that utilize both. I postulate, first, that quantitative and qualitative data are linked to the same “unobserved reality”. Second, both methods have their own “blind spots” of research. These “blind spots” are due to distinct research “logics”. Third, combining quantitative and qualitative methods (mixed methods design) increases the validity of both research data and results. My presentation will give a short introduction in the history of mixed methods designs. It will reflect kinds of “blind spots” in quantitative and qualitative research. Results of quantitative research and analysis methods can easily be generalized but say nothing about individual phenomena. On the other hand, results of qualitative research show a high outcome on an individual level but they cannot be generalized. Mixed methods studies permit both generalization and individual precision. Phenomena can be both explained and described in depth. Mixed methods studies consider the merits and demerits of both quantitative and qualitative methods. To illustrate the value of a mixed methods approach, I discuss the research project “Seculars in Switzerland” at the Universities of Berne and Lausanne, a mixed methods study illustrating how we have conceptualized such mixed methods research, what results we may expect, and how we increase the validity of both quantitative and qualitative data and results.

**Adrian Hermann:** Researching religious media audiences

Drawing on an understanding of religion as a practice of mediation (De Vries 2001; Meyer 2008), in this paper I am concerned with the “perceptual space” (Mohn 2012) constituted by a religious documentary film through its ritual screening. In addition to looking at the film *Father of Lights* (2012) as a media product, I specifically focus on this film’s performance and presentation – its aesthetic and ritual framing – in a series of religious film screenings and the audience reception to these events. This audience response is evaluated through an

ethnographic field study in combination with social-scientific methods of audience and reception research (cf. Schrøder et al. 2003; Staiger 2005), developing a method of researching religious media audiences. Drawing on recent work in film reception studies (Staiger 2000; Austin 2002; Austin 2007; Barker & Mathijs 2008; Plantinga 2009), I evaluate the commercial, discursive and social contexts of a religious documentary film, its circulation and viewing, as well as the audiences' expectations and responses. This analysis is based on a study of the 2012 *Father of Lights-Tour*, a religious film screening tour which took place from July to September 2012 in over 40 churches and theaters in the US, Australia, Canada and the UK. I focus here not only on an ethnographic study of these screenings as religious ritual, but also on studying the audience response and reception to the film *Father of Lights* through qualitative social-scientific instruments (based on fieldwork and a survey conducted with the assistance of Lydia M.Reynolds M.A. in August 2012). The charismatic-Christian documentary film *Father of Lights* aims at uniting Christians of different denominations in a shared conception of Godly love. Its appeal to emotional affect is performative in constituting the audience as an emotional community (cf. Braunmühl 2012) and in "moving" the viewers (cf. Plantinga 2009) into action (be it social activism for equal rights, or religious activities like healing and praying), as well as into emotion, into the adoption of new (e. g. Charismatic-Christian) emotional styles. In this way, drawing on Belinda Smaill's examination of emotion in nonfiction discourse, the project interrogates "how emotion is produced in particular documentaries and how the audience is addressed by this emotion" (2010, p. 3). In raising these questions and contributing to the development of a methodology of researching religious media audiences, the paper sheds light on the role of documentary films in contemporary religious fields

**Jens Kreinath:** *Filming Rituals and the Methods of Collecting Audio-Visual Data in the Study of Religious Practice*

Recent advances in visual anthropology and visual sociology suggest that new audio-visual technologies are of major importance for the study of ritual and other forms of religious practice (Knoblauch 2011; Ruby 2011; Kapferer 2013; Schnettler 2013). The aim of this paper is to address methodological issues related to the collection, production, and selection of audio-visual data and to focus on how visual data are constructed in research using these technologies. In particular, the emerging field of visual semiotics and research methods (Margolis & Pauwels 2011; MacEachren, Roth, & O'Brian 2012) serves as a theoretical frame for enhancing methods in ethnographic research on rituals and related forms of religious practice. Emphasis is placed upon the production and manipulation of visual data through electronically based audio-visual technologies. The ambition is to set out a methodology that allows for identifying the various processes

that are involved in the collection and re-construction of audio-visual data that allow for the production of reliable research data. In addition to questions regarding the collection of data of a technological nature, ethical questions also play a significant role in visual research methods, because human subjects become identifiable through advanced technologies of audio-visual representation. Since human subjects and their form of practice are the particular focus and primary source of information, it is necessary to address questions regarding how visual research methods are tied into research ethics in visual ethnographies of ritual and religion.

**Sebastian Schüler:** Dis/advantages of using QDA-software in the Study of Religions

Methods for analyzing qualitative data have become both numerous and highly professionalized in recent years. This professionalization of methods has resulted in the development and application of computer software particularly designed for the purpose of analyzing qualitative data. In the study of religions such QDA-Software gets adopted slowly. One reason for this could be that the focus of training in qualitative methods still lies on data collection rather than data analysis. QDA-Software allows for working efficiently with a greater number of interviews and texts and offers some analytical features. At the same time it seems that QDA-Software and its application for methods such as content analysis not only professionalizes the field of qualitative data analysis but also standardizes the methods. My presentation discusses some of these advantages and disadvantages in using QDA-Software in the study of religions.

## **Worldviews, Philosophy, Ethics, and Citizenship Education: Within RE or as Alternatives to RE? Cases, Concerns and Considerations**

**Panel Chair: Wanda Alberts**

Worldviews (religious and/or non-religious), non-religious philosophy and ethics, as well as citizenship education may be found as (more or less) integrated elements of a time-tabled religion education (RE) in public schools. However, non-religious worldviews, as well as philosophy and ethics, and citizenship education may also be offered as alternatives to various kinds of confessional RE. In both cases the respective states and educational authorities use RE, and the named elements in RE or alternatives to RE to further specific ideological/political agendas. This panel is dedicated to analyses of the situations in various countries as well as to study-of-religions based reflections on the pros and

cons for integrating worldviews, philosophy and ethics as well as citizenship education in a time-tabled RE based upon the academic study of religions.

**Tim Jensen:** Study of Religions-based RE and citizenship education: the perfect match or a mismatch?

Analyses of RE in Denmark, from the 1980s and onwards, demonstrate definite traces of an ideological and political agenda: RE is to transmit and consolidate (revive and inculcate) postulated (Christian) ideas and values and foster intercultural understanding and tolerance, an agenda that cannot be understood apart from a perceived threat to the “good life and society” posed by Islam and immigrant Muslims. The same agenda surfaces, in Denmark and elsewhere, in introductions of “citizenship education”, next to, as an alternative to, or integrated into RE. Some of the risks of putting together RE and citizenship education will be discussed – with reference to international debates and as well as to analyses of a compulsory subject (KLM) in Danish teacher education. With reference to a recent (2013) revision of the same subject, some – at least from a study-of-religions point of view – maybe more promising possibilities will close the discussion.

**Patrick Loobuyck:** Religion, ethics, philosophy and citizenship education: a Habermasian plea for an integrative ECR (Ethics, Citizenship and Religious Culture) course in the Belgian curriculum

Belgium has a (semi-)confessional RE system and the students do not have an independent moral, citizenship or philosophy course. As such, philosophy, ethics, religious literacy, intercultural competencies and citizenship education are all the quasi exclusive responsibility of the RE courses, which are organized and controlled by religious institutions (and humanistic freethinkers). This paper takes a critical look at the Belgian situation, starting from a liberal and Habermasian post-secular perspective. From this philosophical perspective the Belgian situation has its strengths and weaknesses. However, the deficits are substantial and provide sufficient reason to think about a better way to guarantee RE, citizenship education, ethics and philosophy for all the students. The paper concludes that there are not only practical, but also substantial philosophical reasons to introduce an independent, non-denominational and compulsory course of ECR (Ethics, Citizenship and Religious Culture & Philosophy) in the Belgian curriculum.

**Tiina Mahlamaki:** The concept of world view in teacher’s education program for Philosophy of Life (PoL) in Finland

The subject Philosophy of Life (Elämäntutkimus, Fi; Livsåskådningskunskap, Swe) is primarily aimed at those students that do not follow any religious denomination. The teacher education program for PoL consists of courses from the disciplines of Philosophy and Study of Religion/Anthropology. There are

also some special courses on PoL itself. The concept of world view is central in both studying and teaching PoL. The national core curriculum states that studying PoL “encourages the young in creating their own worldview, controlling their life rationally and setting their own goals”. The concept is regarded as important also in teacher education programs. In my paper, I discuss how the concept of world view is described in theoretical literature, in the national core curriculum and in the teacher education program. Data collected from an introductory course to PoL will also be presented where future teachers describe and reflect on their own world views.

**Christina Wöstemeyer:** Conceptualizations of secular worldviews in religion-related textbooks

Studying the dynamics, complexity, heterogeneity and structures within the field of religious and secular worldviews belongs to the remit of the study of religions. However, secular worldviews and different contexts of “nonreligiosity” are a quite young area of qualitative research of this discipline. This paper analyzes representation and conceptualization of the diversity of nonreligious worldviews in textbooks and curricula of Protestant, Catholic and Islamic confessional RE as well as in the non-confessional subject “Values and Norms” in public schools in Lower Saxony, Germany. The results of this empirical comparison of RE textbooks from a RS-perspective allow for conclusions concerning RS-based didactics in general. A particular focus will be the theoretical and methodological backgrounds of the analysis, including reflection on the concept of “nonreligion” (Johannes Quack) and the “didactics of the study of religions”, as well as on the model of subject materials and their framings used for analyzing different types of RE (Katharina Frank).

# Congress Committees

## The Congress Organizing Committee

Christoph Bochinger (Bayreuth) – *Congress Director*  
Jörg Rüpke (Erfurt) – *Congress Director, Chair*  
Tim Jensen (Odense) – *IAHR General Secretary, Chair*  
Mar Marcos (Santander) – *IAHR Deputy General Secretary*  
Wanda Alberts (Hannover)  
Martin Fuchs (Erfurt)  
Vasilios Makrides (Erfurt)  
Hubert Seiwert (Leipzig)  
Katja Triplett (Göttingen)  
Katharina Waldner (Erfurt)  
Elisabeth Begemann (Erfurt) – *Congress Coordinator*  
Bernd-Christian Otto (Erfurt)

## The Congress Advisory Committee

Peter Antes (Hannover) – *Chair*  
Rosalind Hackett (Knoxville) – *IAHR President, Chair*  
Giulia Sfameni Gasparro (Messina)  
Armin Geertz (Aarhus)  
Mihály Hoppál (Budapest)  
Hans Kippenberg (Bremen)  
Jan G. Platvoet (Bunnik)  
Michael Pye (Marburg)  
Kurt Rudolph (Düsseldorf)  
Jonathan Z. Smith (Chicago)  
Akio Tsukimoto (Tokyo)  
Zwi Werblowsky (Jerusalem)  
Donald Wiebe (Toronto)

## The Academic Program Committee

Christoph Bochinger (Bayreuth) – *Chair*

Mar Marcos (Santander) – *Chair*

Veikko Anttonen (Turku)

Eileen Barker (London)

Corinne Bonnet (Toulouse)

Carole Cusack (Sydney)

Vasudha Dalmia (Berkeley)

Oliver Freiburger (Austin)

Satoko Fujiwara (Tokyo)

Yolotl Gonzalez (Mexico City)

Rosalind Hackett (Knoxville)

Noriko Kawahashi (Nagoya)

Göran Larsson (Gothenburg)

Jacob Olupona (Harvard)

Marco Pasi (Amsterdam)

Michael Stausberg (Bergen)

Emilio Suárez de la Torre (Barcelona)

Ann Taves (Santa Barbara)

## The Congress Secretariat

Christoph Bochinger – *Chair*

Jörg Rüpke – *Chair*

Elisabeth Begemann – *Congress Coordinator*

Brigitte Benz

Diana Blanke

Vera Höke

Diana Püschel

Manuela Seifert

Maren Würfel

# Minutes of the International Committee Meeting

IAHR International Committee Meeting  
Erfurt, Germany  
Wednesday August 26, 2015

[To be adopted at the next International Committee Meeting in 2018]

[Preliminarily adopted by the IAHR Executive Committee January 30, 2016]

The President, Prof. Rosalind I. J. Hackett presiding.

Prof. Hackett welcomed the delegates of the International Committee and asked the General Secretary, Prof. Tim Jensen, to ascertain that the meeting had been announced and called in accordance with the IAHR Rules of Procedure. With reference to the General Secretary's report in the *IAHR BULLETIN 40, Erfurt Congress Edition, August 2015*, p. 52, Prof. Jensen confirmed that the meeting had been announced several times and in accordance with the IAHR Rules of Procedure Rule 3d, by way of the *IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement*, the IAHR website, and specific emails sent to IAHR officers. The first call was published in the *IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement, September 2014*, pp. 40 – 41.

## 1 Adoption of the Agenda

With reference to a need arising from the anticipated transfer of the IAHR bank accounts (from Ireland to Switzerland), the Treasurer and the General Secretary asked that an extra item ('Proposed Changes to the Constitution Caused by Transfer of Bank Account') be added as item 12 to the agenda, thus making "Any other business" item 13.

With this amendment, the agenda was unanimously adopted.

## 2 Membership

Prof. Jensen referred to the Constitution Article 4b, according to which the International Committee of the IAHR is composed of:

- (i) Two representatives each of the constituent national and regional societies;
- (ii) The Executive Committee [...];

- (iii) Up to four individual members co-opted by the International Committee on the recommendation of the Executive Committee.

Prof. Jensen added that the IAHR at the moment had no individual members but that Rule 6 allowed for the International Committee, on the recommendation of the Executive Committee, to adopt observers and/or consultants to participate in its sessions without voting rights.

With reference to Rule 5d Prof. Jensen noted that “[m]embers of the Executive Committee of the IAHR may not serve as representatives for their constituent societies at the International Committee meetings”. Prof. Jensen also stressed that no representative can represent more than one association.

## 2.1 Ascertainment of Membership

The following members of the Executive Committee of the IAHR were present: President Rosalind I.J. Hackett; Vice-president Ingvild S. Gilhus; Vice-president Abdulkader Tayob; General Secretary Tim Jensen; Deputy General Secretary Mar Marcos; Treasurer Brian Bocking; Deputy Treasurer Marianna Shakhnovich; Membership Secretary Abraham H. Khan; Publications Officer Morny Joy; Members without Portfolio Satoko Fujiwara and Amarjiva Lochan.

Apologies from: Internet Officer Silas Guerriero.

The following representatives of the IAHR national and regional member societies and associations were present:

Africa (AASR): Afe Adogame & Elias Bongmba  
 Australia (AASR): Carole Cusack  
 Austria (ÖGRW): Rüdiger Lohlker & Franz Winter  
 Belgium (BABEL): Jos Verheyden & Daniel Praet  
 Brazil (ABHR/BAHR): none  
 Canada (CSSR/ SCÉR) [one vote only]: none  
 \*\*Canada (Québec) (SQÉR) [one vote only]: none  
 China (CARS): Zheng Xiaoyun  
 Czech Republic (CASR): Tomáš Bubík & David Zbiral  
 Denmark (DASR): Jørn Borup & Laura Feldt  
 Eastern Africa (EAASR): none  
 Europe (EASR): Einar Thomassen & Marco Pasi  
 Estonia (EAUS/ESSR): Jaan Lahe & Ülo Valk  
 Finland (SUS): Peter Nynäs & Anna Haapalainen  
 France: Charles Guittard & Régine Guittard

Germany (DVRW): Christoph Boehinger & Christoph Kleine  
 Greece (GSSCR): Panayotis Pachis & Olympia Panagiotidou  
 Hungary (MVT): Abraham Kovács & Bulcsu Hoppál  
 India (IASR): none  
 Ireland (ISASR): James Kapalo & Alexandra Grieser  
 Italy (SISR): Giovanni Casadio & Alessandro Saggiore  
 Japan (JASR): Takeshi Kimura & Yoshitsugu Sawai  
 Latin America (ALER): none  
 Latvia (LRPB): none  
 Lithuania (LSSR): Milda Ališauskienė  
 Mercosur/South America (ACSRM): none  
 Mexico (SMER): Yolotl González Torres  
 Netherlands (NGG): Markus Altena Davidsen  
 New Zealand (NZASR) Geoff Troughton & Douglas Pratt  
 North America (NAASR): Luther M. Martin & Donald Wiebe  
 Norway (NRF): Knut A. Jacobsen  
 \*Poland (PTR): [see below]  
 Romania (RAHR): none  
 Russia: Ekaterina Teryukova & Elena Stepanova  
 Slovakia (SSŠN/SASR): none  
 South Korea (KAHR): Chae Young Kim  
 Southern Africa (ASRSA): none  
 South and Southeast Asia (SSEASR): Sophana Srichampa & Le Hang Nga  
 Spain (SECR): Francisco Diez de Velasco & Santiago Montero  
 Sweden (SSRF): Jenny Berglund & David Thurffjell  
 Switzerland (SGR/SSSR): Jens Schlieter & Anja Kirsch  
 Turkey (TAHR): none  
 Ukraine (UARR): Anatoliy Kolodnyy & Liudmyla Fylypovych  
 United Kingdom (BASR): Bettina Schmidt & Graham Harvey  
 United States (AAR): Amy Allocco & Robert Puckett

(\*) The association or society was (at the time of the meeting of the International Committee) not paid up to the latest completed financial year (2014), and thus not entitled to vote, neither at the International Committee Meeting nor at the General Assembly.

(\*\*) The Executive Committee has declared the membership lapsed but had not yet struck the name of the association from the list of member associations. The association in question thus had no voting rights. According to the IAHR Rules of Procedure 15a and 15b “The General Secretary, in consultation with members of the Executive Committee, shall alone determine whether a constituent society or association is fully paid up at the time of any vote to be taken ...”

Ascertaining the membership and the right to vote of those present, some colleagues present claiming to be members of the Nigerian Association for the Study of Religions were kindly asked to leave the room since the membership of the named association had been declared lapsed. Besides, no representatives or delegates from the named association had been announced. Two confirmed representatives of the Polish association were allowed to be present but with no voting rights, since the Polish association was not paid up to the latest completed financial year (2014).

(During the ascertainment of membership an error was discovered: the listing in the *IAHR BULLETIN 40, Erfurt Congress Edition, August 2015*, pp. 8–14 of the national member associations and societies, with an indication of whether they were paid up or not, incorrectly indicated that the CSSR/SCÉR (Canada) was not fully paid up to the latest completed financial year (2014).)

With reference to Article 6 and Rule 10, according to which “A meeting of the International Committee requires a minimum attendance of ten members from a minimum of seven national associations”, Prof. Hackett concluded that the International Committee had a quorum.

## 2.2. Ascertainment of Affiliation

With reference to the Rules of Procedure, Rule 5c according to which “each affiliated association may appoint no more than one (non-voting) representative to attend each International Committee meeting”, it was ascertained that the following affiliated associations and societies were present:

European Society for the Study of Western Esotericism (ESSWE): Henrik Bogdan  
International Association for the Cognitive Science of Religion (IACSR): Dimitris Xygalatas

International Study of Religion in Eastern and Central Europe Association (ISO-RECEA): Eileen Barker

International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture (ISSRNC): Sarah M. Pike

Society for Ancient Mediterranean Religions (SAMR): Jeffrey Brodd

## 2.3 Co-option as Recommended by the Executive Committee

With reference to the Rules of Procedure, Rule 5.f. provision that “[o]n the recommendation of the Executive Committee, up to four individuals may be co-opted as voting members by the International Committee at the beginning of the ses-

sion”, the General Secretary reported that presently there were no individual members.

With reference to Rule 6, allowing the International Committee, on the recommendation of the Executive Committee, to adopt observers and/or consultants to participate in its sessions without voting rights, the General Secretary reported that the IAHR Executive Committee recommended that a representative of the applicant Philippine association, Prof. Esmeralda Sanchez, be allowed to participate. The Executive Committee also recommended that Prof. Michael Pye be allowed to participate in order for him to function as ‘returning officer’ during the elections. The International Committee unanimously agreed to adopt the mentioned colleagues as observers without voting rights.

Moreover, it was recommended that nominees for the 2015–2020 Executive Committee who were in Erfurt but not already participating as delegates from member associations be allowed to be present not only in order for them to deliver an oral statement of candidacy but also to understand better the workings of the Committee in advance of the election. Consequently, Profs. Peter Beyer, Anne Kubai, Ann Taves, and Katja Triplett were by unanimous agreement allowed to be present without voting rights.

Last but not least, it was proposed by the Executive Committee that Prof. Armin W. Geertz, serving as chair of the IAHR 2010–2015 Honorary Life Membership Advisory Committee be admitted to the meeting in order for him to present the suggestions from that committee to the International Committee. The International Committee unanimously agreed to this proposal.

### **3 Minutes of the International Committee Meeting, Liverpool 2013**

The Minutes (*IAHR BULLETIN Number 40, Erfurt Congress Edition, August 2015*, pp. 17–36), preliminarily adopted by the Executive Committee July 29, 2014 and first published in the *IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement, September 2014*, pp. 14–39 and thus circulated to the members of the IAHR International Committee in accordance with the relevant rule(s), were unanimously adopted by the International Committee.

## 4 Report by the General Secretary

The General Secretary initially honored the memory of the following IAHR Honorary Life Members who had passed away since the World Congress in Toronto 2010:

Professor Jean Leclant († September 16, 2011)

Professor Julien Ries († February 23, 2013)

Professor Noriyoshi Tamaru († December 12, 2014)

Professor Jacques Waardenburg († April 8, 2015)

Professor R.J. Zwi Werblowsky († July 9, 2015)

He extended condolences to their families. Obituaries have been or will be published, he added.

With reference to his full and detailed written report, published in the *IAHR BULLETIN 40, Erfurt Congress Edition, August 2015*, pp. 49–77, Prof. Jensen expressed his wish to restrict the oral report to a minimum in order to provide more time for other items on the agenda.

Prof. Jensen consequently focused on the following:

### 4.1 Executive Committee and International Committee: Meetings and Meeting Locations

Prof. Jensen extended thanks to all the hosting member associations (the SSEASR, the SSRF, the BASR, the EASR, the AASR, and the DVRW) and their various local partners and university departments for facilitating the meetings of the Executive and International Committee since 2011. With reference to his written report as well as to his report to the International Committee in Liverpool 2013 on the same issue, he deemed it fair to say that the outgoing Executive Committee had been fairly successful with its efforts to implement the IAHR principle of rotation, i.e., to move the Executive as well as International Committee meetings around the world. The principle of rotation and its implementation has been and remains, Prof. Jensen said, highly important for our continued efforts to enhance and extend the IAHR as a global association and thus to promote the academic, non-religious study of religions globally, the key aim of the IAHR.

## 4.2 Communications

The *IAHR Bulletin* and the *IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement*, together with the IAHR website and occasional email letters with important pieces of information sent to the officers and members at large of the IAHR member associations and affiliates, constitute the main means of communication from and about the IAHR. Consequently, it is of the utmost importance to the well-being and functioning of the IAHR that the officers of the IAHR member associations and affiliated societies forward the digital version of the *IAHR Bulletin* and the digital *IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement* to their membership, and Prof. Jensen therefore urged the officers to do everything in their power to share these and other news items from the IAHR with their membership at large. The IAHR Executive Committee and its General Secretary have no other means to contact the IAHR members directly, neither by regular mail nor by email.

With its information about the more permanent ‘fundamentals’ of the IAHR (the IAHR Constitution and Rules of Procedure, the IAHR membership and leadership, past congresses and conferences, proceedings, publications and proceedings, *NVMEN*, and the Women Scholars Network) as well as about most of the news and information from the IAHR General Secretary’s desk, the IAHR website together with the IAHR Bulletin and IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement functions as the public face of the IAHR. Prof. Jensen mentioned that the website had been revamped in 2013, inter alia to better accommodate the needs and wishes of the Executive Committee. The General Secretary – in continuous contact over the past 7–8 years with the IAHR webmaster, Jeremy Hughes (Knoxville, USA), extended his heartfelt thanks to the webmaster for his almost daily work with the IAHR website, updating information, posting of news, etc.

Though the IAHR Facebook Group, in contrast to the IAHR website, is not meant to serve as an official vehicle or platform for news from the IAHR Executive, it nevertheless serves an important purpose which the website does not, namely communication among individual IAHR members and information about IAHR related events and matters. Prof. Jensen thanked the President, Prof. Hackett and the colleagues assisting her, Justin Lane and Sarah Gallant, for the work with the IAHR Facebook Group.

Likewise, he extended thanks to Prof. Hackett and Publications Officer Prof. M. Joy for their untiring efforts developing the IAHR Women Scholars Network, also by way of the 2015 revamped website, and the General Secretary also took the opportunity to extend thanks to all the scholars actively participating in and supporting the IAHR Women Scholars Network, thereby helping the IAHR pursue its efforts to practice a responsible strategy and implementation of globalization, as well as to work continually towards gender equality and empowerment of

women scholars, and, by extension, IAHR-related scholarship around the world.

### 4.3 IAHR Congresses and Conferences

With reference to his extensive written report listing the 2010 – 2015 IAHR Special and Regional Conferences (as well as the IAHR Co-Sponsored Conference in Macau 2015) and his extensive report on the bids for and decision regarding the hosting of the 2015 World Congress, Prof. Jensen extended thanks to all the colleagues whose engagement and hard work had made these IAHR conferences and the World Congresses in Toronto and Erfurt possible.

Special thanks were extended to the BASR (UK) and the CASR (Czech Republic) and their local partners; the two member associations that had joined the DVRW in preparing and sending detailed and impressive bids for hosting the 2015 World Congress.

Prof. Jensen briefly summarized his report on the many meetings that since 2011 had taken place between the IAHR leadership and the German Congress hosts. He himself, the Deputy General Secretary, the President, and the Treasurer, had been in continuous email and telephone contact with the German hosts on all relevant matters, e. g. the overall planning of meetings, sessions and social events, problems arising in spite of the meticulous work executed by the Academic Program Committee, and the distribution of travel grants made possible, inter alia, by an IAHR total grant of approx. 18.000 EUR. Indeed, all members of the Executive Committee had been involved in various aspects of the planning of the Congress as well as in discussions leading to distributions of grants.

With the grants provided by the German hosts and various German institutions the total amount used for subsidies amounts to 32.275 EUR, and some 52 scholars have been assisted. Some 1.600 panels and papers had been submitted, of which some 1.500 were included in the final program. The number of registered participants passed 1.000, thus putting extra pressure on the German hosts for everything to be in place in order to accommodate this relatively large number of participants.

Prof. Jensen on behalf of the IAHR Executive Committee extended heartfelt thanks to the Congress directors, Profs. Rüpke and Bochinger as well as to Congress Coordinator Dr. Begemann, to the members of the (local) Organizing Committee, and to each member of the Academic Program Committee, including, of course, the two co-chairs, Profs. Bochinger and Marcos, for their meticulous and hard work, including their constant efforts to help align the academic standard of the IAHR World Congress academic program with the general aims of the

IAHR and the IAHR's ongoing efforts constantly to improve, secure and tighten up its academic profile. Congress directors Bochsinger and Rüpke have contributed to the special *NVMEN* 60th Anniversary celebratory publication (see ahead) with an article unfolding their reflections in regard to the congress theme and the dynamics of the academic study of religions.

Prof. Jensen also extended thanks to the IAHR Honorary Life Members who kindly accepted to serve as members of the Congress Advisory Committee, and he extended special thanks to Dorothea Ditchfield who had generously sponsored the Gary Lease IAHR Memorial Lecture and whose support was highly important with regard to making the Gary Lease IAHR Memorial Lecture an established feature of IAHR World Congresses. Gary Lease, who passed away in 2008 while serving as the IAHR Treasurer, was a staunch supporter of the IAHR and its aim: to promote and strengthen the academic and non-religious study of religions worldwide. To have, the General Secretary added, Prof. Hubert Seiwert deliver the 2015 Gary Lease IAHR Memorial Lecture in the shape of the Opening Lecture bodes well for the future of the IAHR and the Gary Lease IAHR Memorial Lecture.

Before finishing his report on IAHR conferences and congresses, Prof. Jensen directed the attention of the members of the International Committee to the revised rules for hosting an IAHR conference, rules now stressing that the member associations hosting an IAHR sponsored conference had an obligation to ensure that the academic program and the individual papers contribute to the general aims of the IAHR as spelled out in the IAHR Constitution, "Article 1: [...] The IAHR [...] has as its objective the promotion of the academic study of religions through the international collaboration of all scholars whose research has a bearing on the subject. The IAHR is not a forum for confessional, apologetical, or other similar concerns." Furthermore it was now explicit that the IAHR General Secretary be kept informed about developments and provided with conference programs and the address list of the participants, that publication of the proceedings must be consistent with the IAHR congress publication policy, and that the host of an IAHR regional conference, within two months of the event, shall provide the IAHR General Secretary with a brief (max. 1.000 words) report on the conference suitable to be reproduced in an IAHR Bulletin or an IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement.

#### **4.4 Membership Development**

With reference to item 10 on the Agenda ("Recommendation of new members and affiliates"), Prof. Jensen limited his oral report to the following:

During 2010–2015, the IAHR has continued the process of globalization as regards the adoption of member associations from various parts of the globe, having furthermore strengthened its position as the pre-eminent global forum for the academic study of religions by way of affiliation to the IAHR of international associations dedicated to the study “of particular areas within the academic study of religions”.

However, he also noted that the Executive Committee in the same period, in accordance with the 2010 revised rules (IAHR Rules of Procedure, Rule 1.c.), had also declared lapsed the membership of some member associations which over several years had not complied with the IAHR requirements as regards the payment of annual fees and/or had not communicated with the IAHR leadership in order to maybe reach an agreement as regards the payment of fees.

Thus the membership of the Asociación Cubana de Estudios sobre la Religión, Israel Society for the History of Religion, the Nigerian Association for the Study of Religions, the Associação Portuguesa para o Estudo das Religiões, and the Indonesian Association for the Study of Research of Religion have all eventually been declared lapsed.

In view of this policy the Executive Committee had agreed on a re-admission policy, and Prof. Jensen with reference to his written report pp. 62–63 asked the members and the member associations to make themselves familiar therewith.

Last but not least, Prof. Jensen mentioned that there was a well-founded hope that an Israel society may spring to life, and that the Nigerian association may be re-admitted in accordance with the re-admission policy by the incoming Executive Committee.

He also mentioned that several colleagues, within and without the IAHR Executive Committee, had been trying to stimulate a process towards the establishment of a new and functioning Indonesian association, and that the IAHR leadership had been in continuous contact in order to offer assistance in case the Cuban colleagues find it suitable to try to establish a new Cuban association.

#### **4.5 Finances, CIPSH, and the IAHR African Trust Fund**

With reference to the full report by the Treasurer, Prof. Bocking, the General Secretary stated his satisfaction with the fact that the financial situation in 2015, as well as in 2013 and 2010 (cf. *IAHR Bulletin 39, Toronto Congress Edition, August 2010*, 42–45; 55–62), was significantly better than in Tokyo 2005 when he first took office. He added that though the major reason for the improvement was the agreement made with Brill in 2008 as regards *NVMEN*, a strict scheme in regard to the soliciting of annual dues and the rise in the rate of dues as of 2014,

had also contributed to the much healthier state of affairs. However, as spelled out in previous reports by the General Secretary and then acting Treasurer Prof. Jensen as well as by the now outgoing Treasurer Prof. Bocking the situation is not quite as healthy as it looks because it still depends to a significant degree on the capability of most officers and members of the Executive Committee to finance most (at times all) of their IAHR-related expenses themselves. As stated by Prof. Bocking in his report, “[p]roviding EC members with full funding for attendance at EC meetings would have required a significant additional commitment (perhaps 12,000 USD annually) from the IAHR budget.”

Prof. Jensen then took the opportunity to express his gratitude for the way in which the outgoing IAHR Treasurer had managed the IAHR finances 2010–2015 as well as for his highly important participation and close cooperation with the General Secretary in the 2006–2008 negotiations with Brill when he served (2005–2010) as Publications Officer.

Last but not least, Prof. Jensen extended special thanks to Honorary Life Member, Prof. Akio Tsukimoto for his generous donation to the IAHR. The IAHR rarely receives so generous a gift.

In regard to CIPSH, the *Conseil International de la Philosophie et des Sciences Humaines*, under UNESCO, the General Secretary initially referred to his earlier reports stating that the IAHR membership to the CIPSH, in terms of fees paid and grants received, had paid off. However, since 2010, this situation had changed dramatically, and in 2013 the IAHR Executive Committee decided to not pay any annual fees to CIPSH unless CIPSH was revived. In 2014 efforts to rescue or revive CIPSH resulted in a call for a General Assembly to be held in Paris, October 14–15, 2014, and it was decided to have the President, Prof. Hackett represent the IAHR in Paris.

It was also decided that the General Secretary should nominate Prof. Hackett for a position as Vice-President in the new CIPSH executive committee, and that the IAHR should pay the fee for 2014, but not for 2013 when CIPSH had appeared to be non-functioning. On an additional note it must be remarked that it was later agreed to pay the arrears for 2013, and that Prof. Hackett in Paris was elected one of two CIPSH vice-presidents.

A decision, Prof. Jensen added, about any payment of fee for 2015 and about the IAHR’s future relationship with CIPSH has been referred to the incoming 2015–2020 IAHR Executive Committee.

As regarded the IAHR African Trust Fund, Prof. Jensen referred to his written report pp. 65–66 for an overview of applications and grants awarded over the five years 2011–2015. Having summarized the discussion reported on in more length

in his written report pp. 66–67, the General Secretary reported on the concluding considerations and unanimous decision taken by the IAHR Executive Committee at its meeting in Cape Town, SA, in 2014 as regards a suggestion to extend the fund beyond 2015 and/or allocating a larger amount than 4,000 USD in 2015 (perhaps to subsidize the travel of scholars from Africa to the IAHR World Congress in Erfurt):

The Executive Committee had agreed on a limit of 4,000 USD each year, an amount of money, moreover, which in most years had turned out to be more than the IAHR African Trust Fund Board of Trustees required. Furthermore, the IAHR had already made a substantial contribution to the Congress travel subsidy fund to support scholars from weaker economies, and the allocation of travel support against published criteria was a matter for the Erfurt Congress Organizing Committee.

The Executive Committee, moreover, noted that the cycle of advertising, adjudicating and awarding the IAHR ATF grants typically ran between Sept-March. Thus, there would be ample time for the incoming Executive Committee meeting in Erfurt to make any arrangements it might deem suitable beyond 2015.

In light of this the Executive Committee at its meeting in Cape Town 2014 agreed:

- that the IAHR ATF in 2015 would continue to run as at present; that is, there would be a final tranche of 4,000 USD from the current fund made available to the IAHR ATF Board of Trustees in 2015, to support research by scholars in line with the IAHR ATF criteria;
- that efforts should be made, as also suggested by the IAHR ATF Board of Trustees Secretary, Prof. Adogame, to publicize the fund to promising candidates at the imminent AASR conference in Cape Town, so that the full allocation could hopefully be disbursed to projects of eligible scope and quality;
- that in briefing the new incoming Executive Committee in Erfurt, the outgoing General Secretary would briefly remind members of the history and purpose of the fund and its activation by the 2005–2010 Executive Committee and implementation by the 2010–2015 Executive Committee, as well as of the amount actually spent over the 5 years to 2015.

Prof. Jensen ended his report on the IAHR African Trust Fund by extending thanks to all the members of the Board of Trustees and special thanks to the Secretary to the Board of Trustees, Prof. Afe Adogame.

## 4.6 IASR Recommendations and IAHR Executive Response

Since the full text of the ‘Recommendations of the IASR Consultation on The Future of the International Association for the History of Religions’ as well as the responses from the Executive Committee had been published several times (first in the *IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement, March 2013*, pp. 12–20 & 21–35, then in the *IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement, Liverpool Edition, August 2013*, pp. 42–50 & 51–65), and since the matter, furthermore, was referred to in the General Secretary’s report 2010–2013 (*IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement, Liverpool Edition, August 2013*, p. 40) as well as in the preliminary Minutes from the International Committee Meeting, Liverpool, September 4, 2015 (*IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement, September 2014*, pp. 31–32), Prof. Jensen refrained from further reporting on this matter, referring the members to the named publications, all easily accessible on the IAHR website.

Prof. Jensen expressed his gratitude to the members of the IASR Consultation for their steadfast dedication to the IAHR and their continuous concern for its future well-being.

## 4.7 The IASR Proposal to Change the Name of the IAHR

Prof. Jensen, with reference to item 8 (“Proposal for a Change of Name of the IAHR”) and his written report pp. 68–69 refrained from further comments on this matter.

## 4.8 The AASR 2010 Proposal ‘Restructuring the IAHR Executive’, Follow-Up

With reference to his detailed written 2015 report (pp. 69–70), to the *IAHR Bulletin, 39, Toronto Congress Edition, August 2010*, and to the *IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement, Liverpool Edition, August 2013*, Prof. Jensen summarized the situation as follows: the IAHR International Committee at its meeting in Toronto 2010 concluded its discussion about the AASR proposal by rejecting the proposal. Nevertheless, it asked the 2010–2015 Executive Committee to consider the proposal and the delegations and duties of members of the Executive Committee and to report on its discussions at the International Committee Meeting in 2013. The Executive Committee discussed the matter at meetings in Cork 2013 and reported to the International Committee in Liverpool in 2013, and it also continued discussions at its meeting in Cape Town 2014. However, it did not come to a point

where it had any recommendations beyond what was implicit in its recommendations in Toronto 2010: based on the experiences with the new (as of 2005) delegation of duties, especially the offices of Membership Secretary and the Internet Officer, it was recommended to do away with the two named offices and thus, as of the nominations and elections 2015–2020, to have four members without a portfolio ('four further members'), a recommendation and a change to the IAHR Constitution later unanimously decided upon by the International Committee and General Assembly in Toronto 2010. This means, Prof. Jensen added, that the 2015–2020 incoming Executive Committee will have to do the same as the outgoing (cf. the remarks in the *IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement, Liverpool Edition, August 2013*, p.18): it has to figure out how best to deal with the duties formerly allocated to the Membership Secretary and Internet Officer, and it has to do what has been done already by the outgoing Executive Committee, namely engage the four further members actively in the ongoing work and discussions of the Executive Committee, work and discussions going on not just during the annual business meetings but throughout the year by way of electronic communication and meetings in the context of various IAHR conferences.

Prof. Jensen finally mentioned that the outgoing Executive Committee had agreed that it would not be appropriate nor very helpful to come up with a set of recommendations to be discussed and maybe voted on in Erfurt 2015. It must be up to the incoming 2015–2020 Executive Committee, constituted on the basis of the changes made to the Constitution in 2010, to take up the discussion and consider if it wants to work towards a restructuring of the IAHR Executive Committee and maybe come forward in due time with a proposal to be discussed and voted upon in 2018 and 2020.

#### 4.9 IAHR Related Publications

*NVMEN*, International Review for the History of Religions – as of 2011 published in six issues per annual volume, with Profs. Gregory D. Alles and Olav Hammer as current Managing Editors and Prof. Ingvild Sælid Gilhus as Reviews Editor – remains, Prof. Jensen said, the IAHR flagship journal, striking, in the opinion of the outgoing Executive Committee that “balance between a more classical historical-philological IAHR profile and a more innovative IAHR profile” which is “the hallmark of the IAHR and the way for the IAHR journal to have its own special identity”(cf. *IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement, Liverpool Edition, August 2013*, p. 57).

Consequently, the General Secretary was happy and proud to be able to show to the members of the International Committee a ‘dummy’ of the *NVMEN* 60th anniversary publication, edited by Profs. Armin W. Geertz & Tim

Jensen on behalf of the IAHR Executive Committee. Though it had been the intention of Brill to have it published and ready for the Erfurt World Congress, Brill now had scheduled the publication for November 2015, but Congress participants could pre-order the book for the extraordinary price of 25 EUR.

The publication, entitled *NVMEN, the Academic Study of Religion, and the IAHR – Past, Present and Prospects*, Prof. Jensen continued, was based on the past and present close connection between *NVMEN* and the IAHR, and thus on the history and development of the study of religions reflected in both of them. The contents were constituted by a mixture of, on the one hand, reprints of past key contributions to *NVMEN* as well as to the IAHR, and on the other hand, new contributions that – in line with the reprints selected – look forward at the same time as they look back. The book has reprints of contributions by C. J. Bleeker, R.J. Zwi Werblowsky, A. Schimmel, U. Bianchi, E. J. Sharpe, M. Pye, A.W. Geertz & R.T. McCutcheon, and T. Jensen, and new contributions by D. Accorinti, G. Alles, C. Bochinger & J. Rüpke, G. Casadio, S. Fujiwara, R.I.J. Hackett, O. Hammer, M. Joy, M. Pye, and D. Wiebe.

The General Secretary extended thanks to past and present Brill acquisition editors as well as to Brill editor Maarten Frijswick for suggesting the publication and for their support during the editorial process, a process bearing witness to the excellent working relationship between the IAHR and Brill, a relationship going back to the very beginnings of the IAHR and *NVMEN* (and described by Prof. Giovanni Casadio in his contribution to the celebratory publication). Prof. Jensen also extended thanks to the *NVMEN* Managing Editors, Profs. Alles and Hammer and to Reviews Editor, Prof. Gilhus for their gigantic work and service to *NVMEN* and the IAHR.

It was a pleasure, Prof. Jensen continued, to be able also to announce the publication of *Philosophy and the End of Sacrifice – Disengaging Ritual in Ancient India, Greece and Beyond* (ed. by Peter Jackson and Anna Pya-Sjödin), the first publication in the new Equinox/IAHR book series ‘The Study of Religions in a Global Context’.

The new IAHR book series strongly supports the continued development of historical and comparative studies, as well as encouraging work that is also in other ways innovative within the academic study of religions. Prof. Jensen thanked former and current IAHR Publication Officers, Profs. Brian Bocking and Morny Joy, Equinox editors Janet Joyce and Valerie Hall, the Managing Editor Prof. Triplett, and the editorial board for their efforts, cooperation and contributions to the new IAHR book series.

It is the hope of the IAHR Executive Committee that the new IAHR/Equinox book series will assist the IAHR in furthering its aims and scholars, including of course junior scholars, from around the world and the total range of the IAHR

constituency, are encouraged to use this new venue for the publication of their work.

Mentioning IAHR and IAHR-related proceedings, Prof. Jensen took the opportunity to thank Toronto 2010 IAHR World Congress Director Prof. Wiebe and his staff for preparing and publishing a digital version (uploaded at the IAHR website) already within a year after the event, and for finding the means for distributing 100 print copies to libraries around the world.

As for spin-off publications from the Toronto 2010 World Congress, Prof. Jensen said that neither he nor the Publications Officer had received information about spin-off publications, and he kindly asked the members to provide whatever relevant information they had in this regard and to consult the By-Laws for rules.

Having mentioned those proceedings and spin-off publications from IAHR conferences, published between 2010–2015, of which he and the Publications Officer were actually aware, and having thanked the colleagues responsible for these publications, Prof. Jensen ended his report on IAHR publications by directing the attention of members to the fact that Nos. 1–40 of the *IAHR Bulletin* can now be accessed by all IAHR members and the public at large at the IAHR website.

The (IAHR) *Bulletin*, for years part and parcel of *NVMEN*, served as the mouthpiece of the IAHR as an organization. A separate IAHR Bulletin, to supplement what was published in *NVMEN* from and about the IAHR, appeared in 1986 when Michael Pye, then Secretary-General, decided to produce and publish a supplement to what he called the more “formal notices” which were intended to appear in *NVMEN*, “the official published organ of the IAHR” (*IAHR Bulletin* February 1986, p. 1).

During his two terms as General Secretary (1985–1995) Prof. Pye managed to publish 33 issues of the IAHR Bulletin, and these 33 issues constitute and contribute to a highly important part and period of the IAHR’s history and identity, inter alia the concerted and strategic efforts of Prof. Pye and colleagues to build and expand a global and strong IAHR organization. Consequently, an offer from another former IAHR General Secretary, succeeding Prof. Pye in 1995 and serving also the two permitted terms until 2005, Prof. Armin W. Geertz, to have the 33 1986–1995 issues scanned so that they could enter the digital archive of the IAHR provided by the IAHR website had been accepted with great gratitude by the now outgoing General Secretary who extended thanks to Profs. Pye and Geertz, and encouraged all IAHR members to enjoy the 33 newly uploaded issues of the IAHR Bulletin at <http://www.iahr.dk/bulletins.php>.

## 4.10 Concluding Remarks

Stepping down as General Secretary, having served the IAHR for two terms, 2005–2015, Prof. Jensen looked back (and forward) as had many of his predecessors when exiting. Looking back Prof. Jensen found it safe to say that the IAHR leadership, i.e., the Executive and International Committee, as well as the General Assembly, during the two terms had continued to fulfil its mandate, namely (Constitution § 1), promoting “[...] the academic study of religions through the international collaboration of all scholars whose research has a bearing on the subject”, and thus also doing its best to make of the IAHR what it proudly claims to be (cf. the website policy statement), namely the “preeminent international forum for the critical, analytical, and cross-cultural study of religions, past and present”.

The IAHR leadership had done so by way of:

- assisting the establishment and adoption of new national and regional associations and societies for the academic study of religion(s);
- adopting (in accordance with the Constitution § 3b) affiliates, i.e., international associations for the study of particular areas within the academic study of religion, and thus linking them to and including them in the IAHR;
- framing the thorough amendments to the Constitution ratified during the 2010 Toronto Congress, with, inter alia, introduction of terms that signal that ‘history of religions’, also within the IAHR, is different from what it was in the 1950s;
- making other innovations to the Constitution and By-Laws meant to further geographic representation, gender balance and cultural diversity (e.g. revised Rules for the Nominating Committee);
- clarifying and tightening the academic profile of the IAHR.

As regards developments and improvements specifically pertaining to gender, Prof. Jensen noted that

- the Nominating Committee 2015–2020 was constituted of three females and two males;
- the IAHR Honorary Life Membership Committee 2010–2015 was constituted of two females and one male; and that
- while the IAHR Executive Committee 2005–2010 was constituted of seven males and five females (one serving as President), the 2010–2015 Executive had six females (one serving as President, another as Vice-President) and six males on board.

The 2015–2020 nominations, Prof. Jensen added, most certainly also reflect the global character of the IAHR membership and leadership as well as the (successful) efforts to help strike a gender balance.

Moreover, during this period, the IAHR Women Scholars Network was established and developed, and the new Equinox/IAHR book series ‘The Study of Religion in a Global Context’ had been introduced, with the aim of being a venue not least for younger scholars worldwide.

In terms of the ‘globalization’ of the IAHR, the outgoing Executive committee had thus continued the efforts towards globalization that can be seen as ongoing from the 1950s and speeded up and strategically developed by Profs. Michael Pye (1985–1995) and Armin W. Geertz (1995–2005).

Taking over in 2005, the outgoing General Secretary (functioning as Acting Treasurer 2008–2010), and the then-Treasurer, late Prof. Gary Lease, together with the Executive Committee initiated steps to help improve the financial situation. With the great help of the then-Publications Officer, now outgoing Treasurer, Prof. Boeking, the situation has been improved considerably.

Due to the positive change in the financial situation over the past 10 years, the IAHR had been better able to face some of the challenges pertaining to the continuous efforts to become more global. In Tokyo 2005 outgoing General Secretary Geertz (*IAHR Bulletin* 38, p. 38), in light of the then gloomy financial situation, stated that if the situation did not improve, the IAHR would become more virtual than real, most IAHR events would most likely happen only in economically strong countries, and “once again, we would be back to the routines and power structures of yesteryears”.

Prof. Jensen agreed: financial strength or weakness is crucial to IAHR’s capacity for global outreach, and the importance of the improvement of the financial situation cannot be overestimated. Thanks to the improved finances the IAHR Executive Committee, Prof. Jensen said, had been able to put ‘globalization’ to work, e. g. by way of giving considerable travel grants to help scholars from around the world participate in the IAHR business meetings, congresses, and conferences.

Last but not least Prof. Jensen wanted to stress that the outgoing Executive Committee, continuing the work of the 2005–2010 Executive, had worked assiduously to guard the academic respectability of the IAHR by clarifying the commitment to academic objectives. As he himself had stated in his statement for candidacy for the position of General Secretary in 2005: “‘global’ in the language of the IAHR, is not the same as ‘ecumenical’.”

Lasting traces of these efforts are found in the 2010 addition to the first article of the IAHR Constitution, but the tightening up of the academic profile can also be seen from the revised rules as to the obligation to see to it that the aca-

demic programs of IAHR Special and Regional Conferences are in line with the stated aims of the IAHR.

The outgoing Executive Committee had thus, in the opinion of Prof. Jensen, done its best to expand the IAHR while at the same time trying to secure that the ‘identity’ of the IAHR continued to reflect what was arguably first formulated more explicitly by General Secretary Zwi Werblowsky in his famous Marburg 1960 statement:

*If the IAHR has any raison d’être it is by reason of a division of labor which makes the Organization the responsible organ and international meeting ground for those scholars who wish to serve the cause of Religionswissenschaft in its strict sense. (NVMEN 7, p. 220)*

Prof. Jensen stressed that he wanted to quote these words because he, as is evident e. g. from the coming *NVMEN* 60th anniversary publication, with many others consider the Marburg 1960 Congress and the late Zwi Werblowsky’s statement a cornerstone in the building of an institutional consensus as to the perspective and ethos of the IAHR.

But, he added, he also quoted these words to signal that it had been a privilege and honor – standing on the shoulders of great(er) scholars and former general secretaries like, to mention but a few of the more recent ones, Zwi Werblowsky, Michael Pye and Armin W. Geertz – to serve the IAHR, trying to further develop the IAHR along the lines staked out by the Werblowsky statement.

Stepping down as General Secretary, Prof. Jensen wanted to thank all his colleagues in the outgoing Executive Committee for their hard work, commitment, and support. A special thank you was extended to the outgoing President, Prof. Hackett, as well as to the outgoing Treasurer, Prof. Bocking.

The President, Prof. Hackett thanked the General Secretary for his report and opened the floor for questions and comments, to the oral as well as written report. There were no questions nor comments. The President then expressed her gratitude to the General Secretary for his devotion and dedicated work for the IAHR and asked that the report be formally adopted. The report was adopted with applause.

## 5 Report by the Treasurer

With reference to his full and written report in the *IAHR BULLETIN Number 40, Erfurt Congress Edition, August 2015*, pp. 78–85, the Treasurer, Prof. Brian Bocking displayed the overview rendered below (cf. p. 84 in the detailed written report) of the IAHR accounts and briefly commented as follows:

*Income:* there are two reliable sources of income: 1) from Brill for *NVMEN* (currently 10,295 EUR p.a.), and 2) member and affiliate associations' annual dues (now c. 10,000 USD p.a.). CIPSH no longer offers any financial support.

The Treasurer added a few notes to the above. 1) *Payments from Brill* in respect of each issue of the IAHR journal *NVMEN* constitute the major guaranteed source of income for the IAHR, with 65,058 EUR provided since 2010. Payments are adjusted upwards annually according to the annual Netherlands Euro inflation rate. 2) *Annual dues* fulfil two main and important functions. One is symbolic, namely to renew the membership of each constituent member and affiliate association each year. (Failure to pay dues over several years, and despite reminders, means an association may eventually be declared lapsed.) The other function is to augment IAHR funds through a small levy on the worldwide membership. In general, member associations pay annual dues promptly, to the great happiness of your treasurer, although a few still need reminders. The annual levy was set at 1 USD per individual member several decades ago and had lost perhaps 80% in value over the years. Consequently in 2013 the Executive raised the annual dues for associations of between 34 and 499 members to 3 USD per member and the dues for associations with 500+ members (there are currently only two; Japan and USA) to 2,000 USD. Smaller associations of fewer than 34 members pay the unchanged minimum rate of 100 USD. The EC additionally agreed to review the rate at least every five years, i.e., by 2018.

The new dues rates have made a significant difference to dues income. 11,139 USD (including some arrears) were collected in 2014 compared with an average of 4,800 USD in each of the four previous years.

As for the CIPSH, the IAHR Endowment Fund and the IAHR African Trust Fund, he referred to what had already been reported by the General Secretary and to the details provided by his written report.

*Expenditure:* Average annual expenditure during the period 2010 – 2014, including expenditure on the 2010 Toronto Congress, has averaged 17,000 USD.

The Treasurer added a few words on major expenditures: *a) Conference support:* Since 2010, the IAHR has provided financial support to IAHR conferences including 30,000 USD to the Toronto World Congress as well as sums of 1,000 – 2,000 USD to AASR Conferences in Kenya (2012) and Cape Town (2014) and SSEASR conferences in Bhutan (2011) and Manila (2013). Conference support in the reporting period 2010 – 2014 has thus averaged 8,000 USD p.a., including the IAHR subvention to the Toronto Congress in 2010. In non-Congress years conference support has averaged 1,700 USD. Regarding the 2015 Erfurt Congress, the Executive Committee agreed in 2013 to make a subvention in Euro to the Erfurt Congress equivalent to 15,000 USD plus the IAHR Endowment amount of

8,695 USD, a total of 23,695 USD. *b) Executive Committee expenses:* Crucial to the IAHR's effectiveness is the annual Executive Committee meeting which generally lasts two days and is held in a different part of the world each year, in connection with an IAHR conference which, in most cases, EC members also attend. In practice, most of the costs of EC meetings in the period 2010–2014 have been met by members from their own resources or their university travel funds. For example, in 2013 eleven members met in Cork at a total cost of 3,535 USD (average per person subsidy 320 USD) while in 2014 the IAHR contributed less than 5,000 USD in total towards EC members' travel and accommodation for the meeting in Cape Town. Providing EC members with full funding for attendance at EC meetings would have required a significant additional commitment (perhaps 12,000 USD annually) from the IAHR budget. Since the real cost of EC members' travel and subsistence is thus much more than the IAHR subsidies, the low figure thus hides/reveals the continuing 'hidden subsidy' to IAHR from EC members' own resources. *c) Publications and web expenses:* Payments include the costs during 2010 of producing printed Congress proceedings from both Durban (2000) and Tokyo (2005). Other payments are largely for webmaster assistance with the iaahr.dk website.

*Bank Accounts and exchange rates:* The IAHR currently maintains two bank accounts: an EUR account (balance May 31, 2015: 55,418 EUR) and a USD account (balance May 31, 2015: 25,698 USD). The IAHR accounts are traditionally reported in US dollars, so the recent sharp rise of the dollar/fall of the Euro has 'cost' IAHR 4,633 USD in the period 2010–2014 and may 'cost' a further 5,000 USD in 2015 alone. However, this has no practical effect so long as the IAHR has both USD and Euro bank accounts on which to draw as appropriate. It should however be noted that of the IAHR's 24,000 USD annual income only 7,000 USD or so is actually received in dollars, so any expenditure above that amount in any year from the USD account will deplete the dollar reserves.

Prof. Bocking in ending his report extended thanks to all those treasurers and other officers of IAHR member associations who have over the last five years ensured payment of annual dues in the right amount, at the right time, and to the right IAHR account. Finally, Prof. Bocking thanked the President, General Secretary and all of his colleagues on the 2010–2015 Executive Committee for their support, encouragement and patience with regard to his efforts as Treasurer during the period.

The President, Prof. Hackett thanked the Treasurer for his clear report and opened the floor for questions and comments, to the oral as well as written report. There were no questions nor comments. The President then thanked the Treasurer for his excellent and dedicated work for the IAHR and asked that the report be formally adopted. The report was adopted with applause.

## IAHR accounts 01/01/2010 - 31/12/2014

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Totals	Average p.a.	5 months to 31/5/2015
	0.80	0.77	0.76	0.73	0.83			0.89
Exchange rate (€/\$) at 31 Dec	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$			\$
Opening balance at 1/1 brought fwd	63,529	47,334	67,635	68,217	87,942	63529	2010-14	94,261
Foreign Exchange gain/loss		1,282	728	2,324	-8,967	-4,633		-5,419
<b>INCOME</b>								
NUMEN	11,350	14,866	8,512	18,049	12,281	65,058	13,012	1,928
Dues	5,159	5,332	4,921	3,787	11,139	30,338	6,068	9,540
CIPSH	11,795	2,079	0	0	0	13,874	2,775	0
Donations	0	121	0	0	2,986	3,107	621	0
IAHR Endowment Fund	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8,695
IAHR African Trust Fund	0	4,000	3,535	0	2,119	9,654	1,931	0
Other	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
<b>Total income (€)</b>	<b>28,304</b>	<b>26,399</b>	<b>16,968</b>	<b>21,836</b>	<b>28,525</b>	<b>122,032</b>	<b>24,406</b>	<b>20,163</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>								
Conference support	33,395	1,299	3,000	366	2,000	40,060	8,012	18,112
Committee Expenses	5,651	1,229	9,205	3,433	7,570	27,088	5,418	5,107
IAHR African Trust Fund	958	4,000	3,535	0	2,119	10,612	2,122	0
IAHR Endowment Fund	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CIPSH	0	0	789	0	723	1,512	302	0
Publications & Web	3,020	776	0	311	283	4,390	878	0
Bank charges	0	41	260	325	544	1,170	234	166
Other	1,475	35	325	0	0	1,835	367	0
<b>Total expenses (€)</b>	<b>44,499</b>	<b>7,380</b>	<b>17,114</b>	<b>4,435</b>	<b>13,239</b>	<b>86,667</b>	<b>17,333</b>	<b>23,385</b>
Surplus/deficit	-16,195	19,019	-146	17,401	15,286	35,365		-3,222
<b>Closing balance at 31/12 carried fwd</b>	<b>47,334</b>	<b>67,635</b>	<b>68,217</b>	<b>87,942</b>	<b>94,261</b>	<b>94,261</b>		<b>85,620</b> (31 May)
IAHR African Trust Fund	12,000	8,000	4,465	4,465	2,346	2,346		2,345
IAHR Endowment Fund	8,695	8,695	8,695	8,695	8,695	8,695		0
<b>TOTAL ASSETS at 31 Dec</b>	<b>68,029</b>	<b>84,330</b>	<b>81,377</b>	<b>101,103</b>	<b>105,302</b>	<b>105,302</b>		<b>87,965</b>

## 6 Additional Matters of Report by the Executive Committee

The General Secretary, with reference to the meeting of Sunday, August 23, 2015 in Erfurt of the outgoing Executive Committee, reported that the Executive Committee, in line with an earlier decision taken, did not want to bind the hands of the incoming 2015–2020 Executive Committee in financial affairs and matters of principle. Consequently, it had decided to hand over several matters for discussion and decision to the incoming Executive, inter alia, a proposal to discuss whether the IAHR ought to adopt a policy on diversity, a request for readmission by the Nigerian association, and the future relationship to CIPSH.

He also reported that while in Erfurt he had received the good news that the (re-)establishment of an Israeli association for the study of religion was now planned to happen during a meeting to be held in October 2015. Prof. Jensen was very pleased with this, adding that the Israel society had been one of the oldest IAHR member societies, and that it would have been a loss to the IAHR if there were no Israel society. He thanked Shai Feraro and other Israel colleagues for taking this initiative, a most apt way to honor the now late Zwi Werblowsky.

Prof. Jensen, also while in Erfurt, had received a draft proposal for a constitution for a new Cuban association, and he expressed his hope that a Cuban association might be (re-)established in connection with a conference in Havana, Cuba, July 2016.

The President, Prof. Hackett opened the floor for questions and comments. There were no questions nor comments.

## 7 Election of the 2015 – 2020 Executive Committee

With reference to his email message of May 26, 2015 to members and officers of the IAHR International Committee and member associations and affiliates, as well as to the 2015 – 2020 nominees and nominating committee, in which the General Secretary announced that he had decided, in view of the fact the he was himself up for election, to hand over all further handling of the elections, including the soliciting of statements of candidacy (to be published on the IAHR website and in the *IAHR Bulletin*) from the named nominees, to the IAHR Treasurer, Prof. Bocking, Prof. Jensen handed responsibility of this matter over to the President and the Treasurer to conduct the election of the 2015 – 2020 Executive Committee.

Prof. Hackett, presiding, with reference to the General Secretary's 2010 – 2015 written report (*IAHR BULLETIN Number 40, Erfurt Congress Edition, August 2015*, pp. 52–53) and the series of email announcements sent to the International Committee and member associations and affiliates, as well as to the 2015 – 2020 nominees and to the 2015 – 2020 nominating committee chaired by Prof. Peter Antes, ascertained that all the IAHR rules and procedures for nominations (including alternative nominations) and elections of the Executive Committee, including the announcements of nominations and the deadline for alternative nominations, had been attended to. On May 26, 2015, the final and total nominations had been announced in an email to the same recipients and thus (hopefully) also to the IAHR membership at large.

Having thus ascertained that the relevant rules and procedures had been followed, she asked the Treasurer, Prof. Bocking to execute the elections. Prof. Bocking noted that in an election not all candidates could be successful and he congratulated, on behalf of the delegates present and the whole IAHR membership, all of the nominees; being nominated was already an acknowledgment within the IAHR of a candidate's capability, scholarly standing and commitment to the work of the IAHR.

With the help of a PowerPoint presentation Prof. Bocking explained the steps of the procedure and the details of the elections proper. Voting would start with the election of officers with designated duties, in the order listed in the Constitution, beginning with the Presidency. This would be followed by the election of the four further members. Voting would take place sequentially by secret ballot in the case of contested posts, while candidates for non-contested posts would be declared ‘elected unopposed’. Each voting representative would be provided with a set of ballot papers in different colors, the first for voting for (one) President, then for voting for (two) Vice-Presidents, then voting for (one) General Secretary, and finally voting for the four further members (all other posts being uncontested). Prof. Bocking also explained the procedures in case of tied votes, and the role of the President, who would not vote except in the case of a tie, where the President would exercise her casting vote as necessary. He also explained the function and assistance of Prof. Michael Pye as ‘returning officer’ and of the two outgoing Vice-Presidents (neither standing for election), Profs. Gilhus and Tayob, as tellers.

Before the act of voting, the nominees for contested posts present were given the opportunity to deliver a three-minute oral statement, while candidates for non-contested posts took a minute briefly to introduce themselves to the electorate. At the same time the candidate’s name and the position she or he had been nominated for was displayed by way of a PowerPoint presentation. Absent nominees for contested posts had been invited to send a video presentation although that offer was not taken up; in the case of an absent candidate, the PowerPoint also showed a photograph of the candidate. Thus each nominee present, with the exception of Prof. Peter Beyer who refrained from giving an oral statement, delivered a brief statement. Following this, the Treasurer announced a coffee break during which the members with a voting right could collect and sign for their voting papers.

After the break the voting procedure was set in motion as announced, and following each round of voting for each position, Prof. Michael Pye reported the result to the President and then formally announced the result on behalf of the IAHR. The outcome of the elections was as follows:

President (one position)

Peter Beyer, Canada (8 votes)

Tim Jensen, Denmark (58)

(spoiled/incomplete ballot papers: 1)

Vice-Presidents (two positions)

Veikko Anttonen, Finland (38)

Anne Kubai, Sweden (33)  
Mar Marcos, Spain (61)

General Secretary (one position)

Afe Adogame, United Kingdom (35)  
Jenny Berglund, Sweden (32)

Deputy General Secretary

Ann Taves, USA (elected unopposed)

Treasurer

Philippe Bornet, Switzerland (elected unopposed)

Deputy Treasurer

Marion Maddox, Australia (elected unopposed)

Publications Officer

Satoko Fujiwara, Japan (elected unopposed)

Further Members (four positions)

Milda Alisauskiene, Lithuania (43)  
Chae Young Kim, South Korea (39)  
Amarjiva Lochan, India (48)  
Marianna Shakhnovich, Russia (24)  
David Thurfjell, Sweden (42)  
Katja Triplett, Germany (53)  
Frank Usarski, Brazil (18)

*The following were thus duly elected to the IAHR Executive Committee 2015–2020:*

President: Tim Jensen

Vice-Presidents: Veikko Anttonen, Mar Marcos

General Secretary\*: Afe Adogame

Deputy General Secretary: Ann Taves

Treasurer: Philippe Bornet

Deputy Treasurer: Marion Maddox

Publications Officer: Satoko Fujiwara

Four Further Members: Milda Alisauskiene, Amarjiva Lochan, David Thurfjell,  
Katja Triplett

\*From 2015 onwards 'Secretary General'; see (9) below

The President, Prof. Hackett congratulated all the elected nominees, and thanked all the nominees not elected for their willingness to serve the IAHR.

Prof. Jensen, resuming his duty as General Secretary, thanked the two Vice-Presidents, Profs. Gilhus and Tayob, the elections officer, Prof. Pye, the Treasurer Prof. Bocking as well as the members of the Nominating Committee, Profs. Maya Burger, Gerrie ter Haar, Sylvia Marcos, Peter Antes (chair), and Luther H. Martin for their service to the IAHR.

## 8 Proposal for a Change of Name for the IAHR

With reference to

a) the proposal for a change of name discussed by the International Committee in Liverpool 2013 (cf. the relevant section of the Minutes from the International Committee Meeting in Liverpool 2013, *IAHR BULLETIN 40, Erfurt Congress Edition, August 2015*, pp. 30–33),

b) the IAHR Executive Committee's effort to encourage the IAHR members to discuss the revised proposal from Profs. Martin and Wiebe (see the *IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement, November 2013*, p. 3),

c) the decision to thus have a (in regard to this proposal) decisive discussion by the International Committee in Erfurt in order for it (in case of a recommendation for a change of name) to bring the matter before the General Assembly, and

d) the fact that the General Secretary had not received any other proposals for a change of name from any member association

the General Secretary invited Profs. Martin and Wiebe to ever so briefly state the case for the revised proposal to change the name for the Association to **the International Association for Historical and Scientific Studies of Religion (IAHSSR)**.

When Profs. Wiebe and Martin had done so, Prof. Jensen thanked them and opened the floor for questions and comments. He also reminded the committee members that a proposal for another name than the one proposed by Profs. Martin and Wiebe had not been filed to him and the Executive Committee, and that it was thus only the name proposed by Profs. Martin and Wiebe and not any other possible name that was up for discussion and voting.

Prof. Giovanni Casadio (Italy) read aloud a written statement which he afterwards has been kind enough to hand over to the General Secretary for him to include it in the minutes. The statement read:

CHANGE OF NAME? No, thanks.

1. The only viable alternative name to *History of Religions* is *Study of Religion(s)*, which is the denomination (official or in English translation) of the majority (29 vs. 8) of the IAHR member associations and societies. The term “study” is, however, too generic and amorphous, as was already noted in Paris by the IAHR International Committee in 1992, and is now recognised even by the supporters of the name change. The alternative name proposed at that time, “academic study” (which is used in the denomination of two national associations), was also discarded later on for being too inclusive, as it comprises the various philosophies and theologies of religion(s), which are studied and taught in an academic milieu yet are not historico-empirical and critical disciplines. See Doc. 1.

2. The denomination *Historical and Scientific Studies of Religions* that is now proposed by two senior scholars (who do not represent any national or regional associations, but only themselves, and this is a notable deterioration with respect to Rome 1990 and Mexico 1995, where the motion to change the name was presented by the British Association), is odd and awkward. Odd, because history itself is a science, and there is no apparent opposition between history and science; awkward, because it is redundant and equivocal, with regard to the adoption of two plural (“studies” and “religions”) which violate both the rules of English usage and the traditional epistemology of the study of religions (= religious studies).

3. *Science* is appropriate in German (*Wissenschaft*) and – with a notable amount of ambiguity – in French, Spanish, and Italian. In English it is not appropriate to define a branch of humanistic and cultural studies.

4. Martin and Wiebe mean “Scientific” as a study which uses cognitive science, evolution theory, biology, neuroscience as methods or approaches, but the name of a scholars’ association should describe the field of study, rather than supply an arbitrary choice of methods or approach.

5. History (historical), instead, is not the definiens of a method. History (of religions) is a field (*res gestae*) and a discipline (*historia rerum gestarum*) which is the traditional rendering in French, Italian, Spanish, Swedish, Norwegian, Romanian, Turkish, Portuguese, and Korean of the (German) original name of the discipline, *Religionswissenschaft*, as formulated by the founding father of the field as an academic area, F. Max Müller: See Doc. 2. The preservation of the denominator HISTORY in the name of not only several South and North European societies but also in few – but very representative – Asiatic (Turkey and South Korea) and South American (Brazil: an immense country) associations is by itself very telling.

6. Like Religion, or Hinduism, the Scientific (a quite controversial definer from the emic point of view: see Doc. 3 b) Study of Religion is already there. It does not need to be invented. It has already its own tradition and its own association, the *Society for the Scientific Study of Religion* (SSSR), which was founded just one year before our association. See Doc. 3 a. The members come prevalently from the so-called social sciences (sociology, psychology, political science, economics) and have their flagship review, the *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, which is, by the way, quite different from NUMEN in its contents and its aims. See Doc. 3 a.

7. Both the Social Science of Religion and the Cognitive Science of Religion (notice, in this case, the usage of the singular for both the discipline and the field) have their own highly structured associations and organs, with a significant mutually enriching interplay with the IAHR and its national and regional affiliated societies. See Doc. 4. An interplay and a cooperation which – in the view of the Italian association that I represent, a view

shared by the French, the Romanian and the Swiss francophone societies – should not imply a loss of our identity, according to the explicit and implicit intentions of the founders of the association, the Dutch G. van der Leeuw and C. J. Bleeker, the Italian R. Pettazzoni, and the Romanian M. Eliade.

8. History can be practiced – in compliance with the basic rules of philology – utilising approaches based on methods developed within the field of the social (homo sapiens is essentially a *zoon politikon* according to Aristotle) and natural (homo sapiens is primarily an animal) sciences. But history is by itself a full-fledged multifaceted “science” (in the sense of a non-confessional empiric study) with its own widely articulated methodology (which is not limited to the study of written documents) and does not require further qualifications.

Prof. Casadio ended up stressing that he was speaking on behalf of the Italian association.

Prof. Ingvild Sælid Gilhus also commented on the proposal, saying that she was in favor of the proposed change and that she liked the insertion of ‘Historical’ in the revised proposal, adding that she found the acronym a bit problematic, though.

Prof. Takeshi Kimura, one of two delegates of the JARS, conveyed the concern of JARS board members: in case the proposal to change the name of the IAHR was adopted by the International Committee and thereafter put to the General Assembly for the final decision by way of a vote in favor or against a new name, the location of the World Congress and thus of the General Assembly might be decisive. The majority of participants in the General Assembly held this year in Erfurt most likely would be from Europe, not least from Germany. This might be seen as a rather parochial way for an international association to take such an important decision. The IAHR and the International Committee ought to consider this before taking a decision.

The General Secretary thanked the speakers for the comments and asked if anybody else wanted to comment on the proposal. Since this was not the case, he proposed that a vote by a show of hands be taken, not least because it was agreed upon in Liverpool 2013 that the discussion of the International Committee on the proposal for a change of name was undertaken with regard to a possible recommendation to the General Assembly to vote on a (possible) recommendation from the International Committee that the IAHR change its name and thus the constitution.

Prof. Hackett then asked for a vote by a show of hands. The vote had the following result:

- *In favor* of the proposal to change the name for the Association to the *International Association for Historical and Scientific Studies of Religion (IAHSSR)*: **15**
- *Against*: **40**

– *Abstentions: 9*

The proposal to change the name for the Association to the *International Association for Historical and Scientific Studies of Religion (IAHSSR)* was thus rejected by a majority of the members of the International Committee and thus would not be brought before the General Assembly.

## 9 Proposal for Changing [IAHR] ‘General Secretary’ to ‘Secretary General’

The proposal submitted by the Executive Committee (and to be taken to the General Assembly for a final decision if accepted by the International Committee because it implied a change to the Constitution) was, the General Secretary explained, caused by worries expressed by some members that ‘General Secretary’ in some contexts did not signal the same importance, weight or authority as did ‘Secretary General’. Prof. Jensen added that if the proposal submitted won the favor of the International Committee, the recommendation to the General Assembly ought to mention that a change of name to Secretary General entailed a change of name from ‘Deputy General Secretary’ to ‘Deputy Secretary General’.

Prof. Hackett opened the floor for questions and comments. There were no comments or questions, and she therefore asked for a show of hands. An overwhelming majority was in favor of the proposal.

The proposal was thus to be brought before the General Assembly for it to take the decision that implied a change to the constitution.

## 10 Recommendation of new members and affiliates

The General Secretary, with the help of a PowerPoint presentation, and with reference to his report in the *IAHR BULLETIN 40, Erfurt Congress Edition, August 2015*, p. 60, reported that the International Committee Meeting at its meeting in Liverpool, September 4, 2013, unanimously agreed, upon the recommendation of the Executive Committee to recommend to the IAHR General Assembly (meeting in Erfurt August 29, 2015) that it adopt as *members* (cf. the Constitution § 3 A) the following national associations:

- *Association belge pour l'étude des religions/Belgische Associatie voor de Studie van Religies (BABEL)*, Belgium;
- *Irish Society for the Academic Study of Religions (ISASR)*, Ireland;
- *Lithuanian Society for the Study of Religions (LSSR)*, Lithuania;

as well as the following regional association:

- *Asociacion de Cientistas Sociales de la Religion del Mercosur (ACSRM)*, South America.

In addition to this, he reported that the Executive Committee had received (March 2, 2015) an application for membership from the *Philippine Association for the Study of Culture, History and Religion (PASCHR)*, and that the Executive Committee at its meeting in Erfurt, Sunday August 23, 2015, unanimously agreed to recommend to the International Committee that they recommend that the association become a new member of the IAHR at the General Assembly.

Prof. Hackett invited *PASCHR* President, Prof. Esmeralda Sanchez, to say a few words if she so wanted, and Prof. Sanchez rose and expressed the wish of the *PASCHR* to be adopted as a member of the IAHR.

Prof. Hackett then asked for a show of hands in favor of or against the recommendation of the adoption of each of the above mentioned applicants. In each case there was an overwhelming or unanimous majority in favor and the recommendation of the membership of each applicant was accompanied by applause.

The General Secretary, finally, reported that the IAHR Executive Committee had, upon the receipt (August 1, 2014) of an application with the relevant information attached, decided to recommend to the International Committee that it recommends to the General Assembly meeting in Erfurt to adopt as an *affiliate* (cf. the Constitution § 3B) the *Society for Ancient Mediterranean Religions (SAMR)*.

Prof. Hackett asked for a show of hands in favor or against the recommendation of the adoption of the applicant as an affiliate to the IAHR. An overwhelming majority was in favor and the recommendation was accompanied by applause.

## 11 Recommendation of Honorary Life Members

The General Secretary, having referred to the rules in regard to the procedure for Proposals for Honorary Life Membership, asked Prof. Armin W. Geertz, the chair of the 2010–2015 Honorary Life Membership Advisory Committee to present to the International Committee their proposals for Honorary Life Membership.

Prof. Geertz took the floor and read the letter of nominations that he – on behalf of the Honorary Life Membership Advisory Committee, consisting of the three honorary life members of the IAHR, namely, Prof. Giulia S. Gasparro (Messina), Dr. Yolótl Gonzales Torres (Mexico City) and Prof. Armin W. Geertz (Aarhus) – had submitted to the General Secretary in accordance with the relevant rules on July 20, 2015.

The Honorary Life Membership Advisory Committee proposed that IAHR Honorary Life Membership be conferred on the following three senior scholars:

- Prof. Giovanni Casadio, Salerno, Italy;
- Prof. Rosalind I. J. Hackett, Knoxville, USA; and
- Prof. Susumu Shimazono, Tokyo, Japan.

The proposals were unanimously supported by the International Committee, and IAHR Honorary Life Membership conferred upon each of the mentioned senior scholars by applause.

The letter sent and read by Prof. Geertz is rendered in full below:

***Nominations for Honorary Life Memberships of the IAHR (2015)***

*An Honorary Life Membership Advisory Committee consisting of three honorary life members of the IAHR, namely, Prof. Giulia S. Gasparro (Messina), Dr. Yolótl Gonzales Torres (Mexico City) and Prof. Armin W. Geertz (Aarhus) was constituted in accordance with the procedural provisions, and we have the privilege of reporting as follows.*

*In accordance with the rules, two IAHR constituent member societies and one affiliate responded to the General Secretary Prof. Tim Jensen's call for proposals, suggesting one name each, and the Executive Committee suggesting three names. These names were then forwarded to the Advisory Committee, which was asked to choose up to three names. According to the rules, "honorary life memberships can be conferred on senior scholars who have distinguished themselves through life-long service to the history of religions through their scholarship, regular participation in IAHR conferences, service as national or international officers and/or other outstanding contributions." We were conscious of various criteria such as academic achievement and reputation, global balance and gender balance, contribution to the work of the IAHR, but found that it was not possible to take all relevant criteria into account simultaneously and equally. It was necessary to establish a shorter list from within the slightly larger pool of eminently suitable persons and after considerable thought, the committee reached unanimous agreement that the following three persons (alphabetical order) should be put forward to the International Committee for decision:*

*Prof. Giovanni Casadio, Salerno, Italy*

*Prof. Rosalind I. J. Hackett, Knoxville, USA*

*Prof. Susumu Shimazono, Tokyo, Japan*

***Giovanni Casadio** is Professor of History of Religions at the University of Salerno, Italy. He has authored some 150 publications in Italian, English, French, German, Spanish, and Romanian related to Greek religion (Dionysus, Orphism, Plato, Plutarch), Near Eastern religions (Iran, Ugarit, Mesopotamia), ancient Christianity and syncretism (Gnosticism, Manichaeism), woman and gender studies, and to the history of the history of religions. Prof. Casadio is*

*founder and editor of the series *Biblioteca di Studi Religiosi* and *Biblioteca di Storia delle Religioni and Humanitas*, and he is a member of the advisory board of several international journals. He has served for several years on the board of the *Società italiana di storia delle religioni (SISR)*, one of the most active member associations within the IAHR, past and present. Prof. Casadio likewise has served as a member and Publications Officer (2000–2007) on the Executive Committee of the EASR. He is currently serving the SISR as Secretary and the EASR as Vice-President. He has been and still is one of the most steadfast and active supporters of the IAHR and well versed in the history of the association.*

**Rosalind I. J. Hackett** is Professor of Religious Studies at the Department of Religious Studies, University of Tennessee in Knoxville since 1986, and is an adjunct Professor in Anthropology and faculty associate at the Howard H. Baker, Jr. Center for Public Policy. She was a Distinguished Professor in the Humanities from 2003–2008. She taught in Nigerian universities from 1975–1983, while conducting fieldwork. As a specialist on the religions of Africa, she has published widely on new religious movements in Africa, religious pluralism, art, gender, the media, and religion in relation to human rights. She recently published on proselytization, religion and conflict, global Pentecostalism and Evangelicalism, and is currently working on sound in and as religion. Prof. Hackett has been very active organizationally. Within the IAHR, she has served as Deputy Secretary-General (1995–2000), Vice President (2000–2005) and two terms as President (2005–2015). She was Program Chair of the XVIIIth IAHR World Congress in Durban (2000) and active in coordinating panels at many IAHR conferences (1995–2015). She was Treasurer and founding member of the African Association for the Study of Religions (1993–1998) and Ex-officio member (1998–2005). Prof. Hackett currently serves as Vice President of the International Council for Philosophy and Humanistic Studies under UNESCO (2014–2017). She has served as President of the North American Association for the Study of Religion (1993–1994), on the Executive Council of the American Society for the Study of Religion (1999–2002) and on a number of steering committees in the American Academy of Religion (1986–2009).

**Susumu Shimazono** is Emeritus Professor of the University of Tokyo Graduate School of Humanities and Sociology, Department of Religious Studies. His many research fields include religions in modern Japan, comparative study of contemporary religions, new religions, death and life studies, public philosophy and religion, and comparative study of civilizations. He has produced a large number of publications, some of which are available in English as well. He has served as President of the Japanese Association for Religious Studies (2002–2005 and 2008–2011). He served as Congress Director of the 2005 Tokyo Congress of the IAHR, the largest world congress in its history, the success of which owes to his initiative.

Armin W. Geertz (on behalf of the Advisory Committee)  
July 20, 2015

## 12 Proposed Changes to the Constitution Caused by Transfer of Bank Account

The Treasurer, Prof. Bocking, took the floor and used a PowerPoint presentation to put forward the proposal and to provide the background for the proposal. The background, he explained, is the following:

Banks are subject to increasing restrictions on who may open a bank account, and where.

The IAHR bank accounts have to be transferred to the new Treasurer's location, Switzerland.

A basic requirement for opening a corporate (IAHR-type) bank account in Switzerland is that Switzerland must be the 'primary location' of the IAHR.

This condition is met if:

- (a) The IAHR Constitution does not state that the IAHR is located outside Switzerland;
- (b) the Constitution states that 'the primary location of the IAHR is the official address of the Treasurer'; and
- (c) the Treasurer is resident in Switzerland.

In order to comply with these requirements and thus facilitate a (hopefully) smooth transfer of the accounts, the Executive Committee proposed the following changes to the Constitution:

- A new sentence to be added at the end of Article 3 A of the IAHR Constitution to read as follows: "The primary location of the IAHR is the official address of the IAHR Treasurer"
- The clause in Article 1 of the IAHR Constitution which reads "and is legally registered in the Hague, the Netherlands" to be moved from the IAHR Constitution into a new section VI within the IAHR's Rules of Procedure and the current (final) section VI to be renumbered section VII.

Consequently, the Treasurer, on behalf of the Executive Committee, recommended that the Constitution §§ 1 and 3 be amended so that it reads as follows:

§ 1:

"The International Association for the History of Religions (abbreviated from its English title to IAHR), was founded in September 1950 on the occasion of the VIIth International History of Religions Congress. The IAHR is a nonprofit worldwide organization which has as its objective the promotion of the academic study of religions through the international collaboration of all scholars whose research has a bearing on the subject. The IAHR is not a forum for confessional, apologetical, or other similar concerns."

...

§ 3:

“The IAHR is constituted by national and regional member societies and associations for the historical, social and comparative study of religions. These are such bodies as are now members and such as have been, upon application, recommended for membership by the Executive Committee, pending recommendation by the International Committee (see below), and admission by the General Assembly at a future quinquennial Congress. The primary location of the IAHR is the official address of the IAHR Treasurer.”

Furthermore, it was recommended that the Rules of Procedure were amended to read as follows following Rule 20d (under VII. the change is only of numbering; formerly 21, now 22):

**VI. Legal Registration of the IAHR**

**Rule 21. Legal Registration**

The IAHR is legally registered in the Hague, the Netherlands.

**VII. Adoption, Amendment and Suspension of the Rules of Procedure**

**Rule 22. Adoption**

The International Committee shall adopt the Rules of Procedure by a two-thirds majority of members present and voting.

Each and all of the proposals were unanimously agreed upon by a show of hands and thus to be brought before the General Assembly for it to take the final decision.

## 13 Any other business

There was no other business.

Prof. Hackett closed the meeting, extending thanks to all the members of the International Committee for their active participation.

Minutes prepared by the then General Secretary, Prof. Tim Jensen, assisted by notes taken by the then Deputy General Secretary, Prof. Mar Marcos, and by comments from former Treasurer, Prof. Brian Bocking

# Minutes of the General Assembly

General Assembly of the IAHR  
Erfurt, Germany  
Saturday August 29, 2015

[To be adopted at the next General Assembly in 2020]

[Preliminarily adopted by the Executive Committee, January 30, 2016]

## *Welcome by the President of the IAHR*

Prof. Hackett welcomed the participants to the General Assembly and the closing of the IAHR XXI Quinquennial World Congress in Erfurt 2015. She explained that though everybody was more than welcome to attend, voting rights were restricted to paid-up individual members of paid-up IAHR member associations.

## *Welcome by the General Secretary of the IAHR*

Prof. Jensen likewise welcomed the participants to the last of many business meetings taking place in conjunction with the World Congress. Saying a few more words about the rules as regarded the General Assembly, he stressed that the basis of the IAHR is constituted by the individual scholars and members of the IAHR member associations, and that it is these members and this basis that constitute the General Assembly meeting once every five years in conjunction with a quinquennial World Congress. The General Assembly is thus composed of all members of the IAHR member associations present at the congress in question. The General Assembly may, however, take action only on matters referred to it from the International Committee (that met Wednesday, August 26 in Erfurt), but it may also refer any matter to the International or Executive Committee for consideration and report. It is, Prof. Jensen added, the privilege of the General Assembly to make amendments to the Constitution and to adopt new members and affiliates but it does so only on the recommendation of the International Committee. Prof. Jensen, with reference to the detailed listing (*IAHR BULLETIN 40, Erfurt Congress Edition, August 2015*, p. 52) of information about the IAHR sent to the officers and members of the IAHR member associations and societies and to the *IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement, September 2014* with the first call for the General Assembly 2015, ascertained that the meeting had been called in accordance with the relevant Rules of Procedure.

Prof. Hackett then moved on to the first item on the provisional agenda, printed in the *IAHR BULLETIN 40, Erfurt Congress Edition, August 2015*, p. 16, displayed also on a PowerPoint presentation in the meeting room.

## 1 Adoption of the Agenda

The agenda was adopted by general consent.

## 2 Minutes of General Assembly Toronto 2010

The minutes, printed in the *IAHR BULLETIN 40, Erfurt Congress Edition, August 2015*, pp. 37-48, were adopted by general consent.

## 3 Brief Report by the Outgoing General Secretary

The General Secretary initially asked the General Assembly to honor the memory of IAHR Honorary Life Members, Profs. Jean Leclant, Julien Ries, Noriyoshi Tamaru, Jacques Waardenburg and R.J. Zwi Werblowsky who had all passed away during the past five-year term with a minute's silence.

With reference to his detailed written report (*IAHR BULLETIN 40, Erfurt Congress Edition, August 2015*, pp. 49–77), as well as to the oral report to the International Committee at its meeting on August 26 in Erfurt, the General Secretary reported as follows:

### 3.1 Meetings and Meeting Locations

The outgoing Executive Committee had, in his opinion, been fairly successful with implementing the principle of rotation, moving the IAHR business meetings around the world, thus enhancing and extending the continuous efforts to make of the IAHR a truly global association and to promote the academic, non-religious study of religions globally, the key aim of the IAHR. He thanked all the hosting member associations and their local partners for facilitating the meetings.

### 3.2 Communications

With reference to his detailed listing of his communications on behalf of the Executive Committee to the IAHR members and affiliates, Prof. Jensen stated that the *IAHR Bulletin*, the *IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement*, the IAHR website and occasional email letters sent to the officers and members at large from the desk of the General Secretary constitute the main channels of communication from and about the IAHR. Since the IAHR Executive Committee and its General Secretary have no means to contact the IAHR membership directly, Prof. Jensen once again stressed how important to the well-being and proper functioning of the IAHR it is that the officers of the IAHR member associations and affiliate societies find ways to share the information from and about the IAHR with their, and thus the IAHR's, membership at large. How, he asked, should the members around the world keep up an interest in the IAHR and 'identify' themselves as IAHR members if they did not get to read the information from and about the IAHR?

With its information about news from the desk of the General Secretary as well as its information about the 'fundamentals' of the IAHR (Constitution, Rules of Procedure, lists of IAHR membership, past congresses and conferences, proceedings, publications and proceedings, as well as its link to e.g. the IAHR Women Scholars Network), the IAHR website functions as the public face of the IAHR, and Prof. Jensen expressed his hope that the members visit the website from time to time. The General Secretary – in continuous contact over the past 7–8 years with the IAHR webmaster, Jeremy Hughes (Knoxville, USA) – extended his thanks to the webmaster for his almost daily work with the IAHR website, updating information, posting news, etc.

Though the IAHR Facebook Group is not serving as the official vehicle for news from the IAHR Executive, it seems to serve another purpose, namely communication among individual IAHR members and information about IAHR related events and matters. Prof. Jensen thanked the President, Prof. Hackett and the colleagues assisting her, Justin Lane and Sarah Gallant, for the work with the IAHR Facebook Group.

Likewise, he extended thanks to Prof. Hackett and Publications Officer Prof. M. Joy for developing the IAHR Women Scholars Network, and, with reference to the successful meeting of the Women Scholars Network that had taken place some days before in Erfurt, he extended thanks to all the scholars actively participating in and supporting the network, thereby assisting the IAHR in its efforts to practice a responsible strategy and implementation of globalization, as well as to work continually towards gender equality and empowerment of

women scholars, and, by extension, IAHR-related scholarship around the world.

### 3.3 IAHR Congresses and Conferences

With reference to the listing of the 2010 – 2015 IAHR Special and Regional Conferences (as well as the IAHR Co-Sponsored Conference in Macau 2015) and his equally extensive report on the bids for and decision regarding the hosting of the 2015 World Congress, Prof. Jensen extended thanks to all the colleagues who had made these IAHR conferences and the World Congresses in Toronto and Erfurt possible. Warm thanks were extended to the BASR (UK) and the CASR (Czech Republic) and their local partners; the two member associations that had joined the DVRW in preparing and sending detailed and impressive bids for hosting the 2015 World Congress.

Special thanks were extended to the German and local Erfurt hosts of the IAHR XXI World Congress, to Congress directors, Profs. Rüpke and Bochsinger, to Congress Coordinator Dr. Begemann, to the members of the (local) Organizing Committee, and to each member of the Academic Program Committee, including, of course, the two co-chairs, Profs. Bochsinger and Marcos, for their meticulous and hard work, including their constant efforts to help align the academic standard of the IAHR World Congress academic program with the general aims of the IAHR and the IAHR's ongoing efforts constantly to improve, secure and tighten up its academic profile. Prof. Jensen likewise thanked the German hosts for their continuous and at times daily contact and cooperation with the IAHR leadership on matters pertaining to the Congress, and for their cooperation in regard to raising and distributing funds for partial travel grants to participants.

Prof. Jensen also extended thanks to the IAHR Honorary Life Members who accepted to serve as members of the Congress Advisory Committee, and special thanks were extended to Dorothea Ditchfield for generously sponsoring the Gary Lease IAHR Memorial Lecture.

Before finishing his report on IAHR conferences and congresses, Prof. Jensen mentioned that the rules for hosting an IAHR conference had been revised. They now make it an obligation for a host to ensure that the academic program and individual papers contribute to the general aims of the IAHR as spelled out in the IAHR Constitution, "Article 1: [...] The IAHR [...] has as its objective the promotion of the academic study of religions through the international collaboration of all scholars whose research has a bearing on the subject. The IAHR is not a forum for confessional, apologetical, or other similar concerns." Furthermore, it had been made explicit that the IAHR General Secretary be kept informed about de-

velopments and provided with conference programs, that publication of the proceedings must be consistent with the IAHR congress publication policy, and that the host of an IAHR regional conference, within two months of the event, shall provide the IAHR General Secretary with a brief report on the conference, a report later to be published either in the *IAHR Bulletin*, the *IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement* and/or the IAHR website.

Prof. Jensen thanked those colleagues who had already provided such a written report and this led him to remind the members of the rules regarding congress and conference publications and spin-off publications, inter alia the obligation to mention the relation to the IAHR congress or conference in question. With reference to his written report pp. 73–74, he expressed his sincere wish that colleagues who knew about IAHR related publications that had not been registered with the IAHR and on the IAHR website contact the IAHR General Secretary and/or Publications Officer. In line with what was said earlier on the importance attached to the dissemination to members of e.g. the *IAHR Bulletin* and the *IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement*, Prof. Jensen stressed the importance that publications related to the IAHR appeared as such, also publications related to the Erfurt 2015 World Congress. If the IAHR is never mentioned, the IAHR might well be forgotten.

### 3.4 Membership Development

With reference to item 5 on the Agenda (“Adoption of new members and affiliates”), Prof. Jensen limited his oral report to the following: During 2010–2015, the IAHR has continued the process of globalization as regards the adoption of member associations from various parts of the globe, having furthermore strengthened its position as the pre-eminent global forum for the academic study of religions by way of the *affiliation* to the IAHR of international associations dedicated to the study “of particular areas within the academic study of religions”. However, the Executive Committee, in accordance with the 2010 revised rules (IAHR Rules of Procedure, Rule 1.c.), had also declared lapsed the membership of some member associations which over several years had not complied with the IAHR requirements as regards payment of fees. The outgoing Executive Committee has been eager to develop the membership and have more members. But it has also agreed that it wanted the member associations to be alive and to pay the dues.

Thus, the membership of a Cuban, Israeli, Nigerian, Portuguese, and Indonesian association had all eventually been declared lapsed. In view of this policy, the Executive Committee, however had also agreed on a re-admission policy,

and the Nigerian association had applied for re-admission; the incoming Executive Committee was about to apply the principles of the new policy to this application. The General Secretary also mentioned that several colleagues, within and without the IAHR Executive Committee, inter alia Prof. Morny Joy, had tried to stimulate a process towards the establishment of a new and functioning Indonesian association, that the IAHR leadership was in continuous contact with Cuban colleagues who had drafted a new constitution for a new Cuban association that might hopefully (depending also on new Cuban regulations for associations in general) spring to life during or after a conference to be held in Habana, Cuba, July 2016. Last but not least he reported that he had very good reasons to believe that a new Israel society for the study of religions would be a reality in the near future (October), not least thanks to Shai Feraro, a young Israel scholar with whom Prof. Jensen had been in contact for a year or so. The General Secretary added that he could not think of a better way for scholars in Israel to honor the memory of late Zwi Werblowsky.

Before closing his report on IAHR membership developments, Prof. Jensen, with reference to his written report (p. 61) added a few words on the cooperation between the IAHR and the, as of 2010 national US IAHR member association, American Academy of Religion, the AAR:

The IAHR leadership, in close cooperation with the AAR leadership, had tried to make sure that the membership within IAHR of the AAR might develop into a well-functioning mode of cooperation, not least as regards an outreach of the AAR to international scholars located outside the USA and often members of IAHR member associations and affiliates. The AAR has appointed a liaison to the IAHR, and the IAHR has done likewise, asking the General Secretary to stay in close cooperation with the AAR, not least as regards the AAR international research grants scheme meant to further cooperation between US based AAR/IAHR scholars and non US-based IAHR members. Though the cooperation with the AAR leadership had been very good, promising, and rewarding, Prof. Jensen encouraged the incoming IAHR leadership to continue the close cooperation with the AAR, in order to make sure that the AAR did not forget that it is the IAHR that is the *international* (and preeminent) association for the academic scientific study of religion, and in order to make sure that the collaborative research grant requirement, according to which one partner in the grant scheme must be a member of the IAHR, is not neglected when the funding is decided upon.

### 3.5 Finances, CIPSH, and the IAHR African Trust Fund

With reference to the written and oral report by the Treasurer, Prof. Bocking, the General Secretary stated his satisfaction with the fact that the financial situation in 2015, as well as in 2013 and 2010 (cf. *IAHR Bulletin 39, Toronto Congress Edition, August 2010*, 42–45; 55–62), was significantly better than in Tokyo 2005 when he first took office. Though the major reason for the improvement was the agreement made with Brill in 2008 as regards *NVMEN*, a strict scheme concerning the soliciting of annual dues and the rise in the rate of dues as of 2014, had also contributed to the much healthier state of affairs. The fees are no longer just symbolic support, and Prof. Jensen thanked all the member associations for their support also in terms of the payment of fees.

This Erfurt World Congress, Prof. Jensen continued, is a very good example of how important it is for the IAHR in terms of democracy and scholarship to be able to use some of its general funds to assist scholars from all over the world to participate. Prof. Jensen once again stressed that he agreed with former General Secretary Prof. Armin W. Geertz when he said: if we do not have any money, if we cannot assist scholars from weak-currency countries then we will be back in the old euro-centric times.

This Erfurt World Congress, Prof. Jensen continued, the first one since Rome 1990 to be held in Europe, hosts, as far as he had been informed, almost 50/50 of participants from inside and outside Europe, or to be more precise: 54% from Europe and 46% from outside Europe (a first estimate). Due, he added to the fact that the German hosts have managed to raise a substantial amount of money, but also due to the fact the IAHR had been able to add an equally substantial amount of money to help fund scholars from around the world participate in the Congress.

Prof. Jensen expressed his gratitude for the way in which the outgoing IAHR Treasurer had managed the IAHR finances 2010–2015 as well as for his highly important participation and close cooperation with the General Secretary in the 2006–2008 negotiations with Brill when he served (2005–2010) as Publications Officer. Prof. Jensen also extended special thanks to Honorary Life Member, Prof. Akio Tsukimoto for his generous donation to the IAHR. The IAHR rarely receives so generous a gift.

In regard to CIPSH, the *Conseil International de la Philosophie et des Sciences Humaines*, under UNESCO, the General Secretary initially referred to his earlier reports stating that the IAHR membership to the CIPSH, in terms of fees paid and grants received, had paid off. The IAHR did receive grants that de facto assisted scholars from around the world. The IAHR, for example, received some 5.000 USD for the Toronto 2010 World Congress. But the IAHR has also support-

ed the CIPSH by way of an annual fee paid, and that fee has been paid also to support the general work of the CIPSH, inter alia promoting the humanities around the world. Prof. Jensen added that the outgoing President, Prof. Hackett, since 2014 one of two CIPSH Vice-Presidents, would be invited to take the floor under item “Any other business” to inform about an upcoming UNESCO/CIPSH Humanities World Congress planned for 2017.

However, Prof. Jensen continued, since 2010, this situation had changed dramatically, and in 2013 the IAHR Executive Committee decided to not pay any annual fees to CIPSH unless CIPSH was revived. In 2014 efforts to rescue or revive CIPSH resulted in a call for a General Assembly to be held in Paris October 14–15, 2014. It was therefore decided that the IAHR should pay the fee for 2014, but not for 2013 when CIPSH had appeared to be non-functioning. A decision, Prof. Jensen added, about any payment of fee for 2015 and about the IAHR’s future relationship with CIPSH has been referred to the incoming 2015–2020 IAHR Executive Committee.

As regarded the *IAHR African Trust Fund* (originally based on money accumulated in connection with the Durban 2000 World Congress and the work of the organizers, not least Profs. Pratap Kumar and Rosalind I.J. Hackett), Prof. Jensen referred to his written report pp. 65–67 for an overview of applications and grants awarded over the five years 2011–2015, as well as for a full report on discussions and decisions. The *IAHR African Trust Fund* has, Prof. Jensen reported, come to an end. It was the 2011 decision of the outgoing Executive Committee that it be a ‘sinking fund’ ending 2015. All the money set aside for the *IAHR African Trust Fund* had not been spent. On top of the 12.000 USD originally there, it was agreed to add 8.000 USD. But no more than 13.000 USD in total had been spent over the years. It will be up to the incoming Executive Committee to decide if it wants to continue the fund or start a similar one. The outgoing Executive Committee unanimously agreed not to take any decisions that might bind the hands of the incoming Executive Committee for instance by way of prolonging the *IAHR African Trust Fund* beyond 2015.

Prof. Jensen ended his report on the *IAHR African Trust Fund* by extending thanks to all the members of the Board of Trustees and special thanks to the Secretary to the Board of Trustees, Prof. Afe Adogame.

### 3.6 The IASR Proposal to Change the Name of the IAHR

Prof. Jensen, with reference to his written report pp. 68–69, reported: It follows from several *IAHR e-Bulletin Supplements*, and from, *inter alia*, the Minutes from the International Committee Meeting in Liverpool 2013, that there have been ex-

tensive discussions about the proposal to change the name of the IAHR, originally submitted by the IAHR Honorary Life Members, Profs. Luther H. Martin and Donald Wiebe, on behalf of the IASR consultation. Following the meeting and discussion in Liverpool, Profs. Martin and Wiebe submitted a revised proposal for changing the name of the IAHR, this time from the IAHR to *International Association for Historical and Scientific Studies of Religions* (IAHSSR), cf. the *IAHR BULLETIN*, 40, Erfurt Congress Edition, August 2015, pp. 103–106.

This proposal had been discussed (under item 8) at the International Committee Meeting Wednesday August 26, 2015, in Erfurt and following the discussion a vote was cast. The proposal was rejected by a majority of votes, namely 40 members voting against the proposal, 15 in favor of the proposal, and 9 abstentions. This, Prof. Jensen added, was the reason why the General Assembly did not have the proposal on its agenda.

Prof. Jensen then thanked Profs. Wiebe and Martin and the other participants in the IASR Consultation for taking the time and making the effort to reflect on and discuss possible ways of improving the IAHR and its work. That kind of dedication to the IAHR could hardly be overestimated.

### 3.7 NVMEN

The editorial board of *NVMEN*, International Review for the History of Religions, the IAHR flagship journal, is constituted by the IAHR Executive Committee, and it is the IAHR Executive Committee that recommends the managing as well as reviews editors of *NVMEN* to Brill Publishers. Current managing editors are Profs. Gregory D. Alles and Olav Hammer and current Reviews Editor is Prof. Ingvild Sælid Gilhus. The General Secretary thanked the editors for their service to *NVMEN* and thus to the IAHR, and he extended special thanks to Prof. Gilhus who is stepping down at the end of 2015.

Next, the General Secretary announced a forthcoming *NVMEN* 60th anniversary publication, edited by Profs. Armin W. Geertz & Tim Jensen on behalf of the IAHR Executive Committee. Though it had been the intention of Brill to have it published and ready for the Erfurt World Congress, Brill had re-scheduled the publication for November 2015.

The publication, entitled *NVMEN, the Academic Study of Religion, and the IAHR – Past, Present and Prospects*, is based on the past and present close connection between *NVMEN* and the IAHR, and thus on the history and development of the study of religions reflected in both of them. The content includes, on the one hand, reprints of past key contributions to *NVMEN* as well as to the IAHR, and, on the other hand, new contributions that – in line with the re-

prints selected – look forward at the same time as they look back. The book has reprints of contributions by C. J. Bleeker, R.J. Zwi Werblowsky, A. Schimmel, U. Bianchi, E. J. Sharpe, M. Pye, A.W. Geertz & R.T. McCutcheon, and T. Jensen, and new contributions by D. Accorinti, G. Alles, C. Bochinger & J. Rüpke, G. Casadio, S. Fujiwara, R.I.J. Hackett, O. Hammer, M. Joy, M. Pye, and D. Wiebe.

The General Secretary extended thanks to past and present Brill acquisition editors as well as to Brill editor Maarten Frijswick for suggesting the publication and for their support during the editorial process, a process bearing witness to the excellent working relationship between the IAHR and Brill, a relationship going back to the very beginnings of the IAHR and *NVMEN*.

It was a pleasure, Prof. Jensen continued, to be able to announce also the forthcoming *Philosophy and the End of Sacrifice – Disengaging Ritual in Ancient India, Greece and Beyond* (ed. by Peter Jackson and Anna Pya-Sjödin), the first publication in the new Equinox/IAHR book series ‘The Study of Religions in a Global Context’.

The new IAHR book series supports the continued development of historical and comparative studies, as well as encouraging work that is also in other ways innovative within the academic study of religions.

Prof. Jensen thanked former and current IAHR Publication Officers, Profs. Brian Bocking and Morny Joy, Equinox editors Janet Joyce and Valerie Hall, the Managing Editor Prof. Triplett, and the editorial board for their efforts, cooperation and contributions to the new IAHR book series.

Prof. Jensen ended his brief oral report on IAHR publications by directing the attention of members to the fact that Nos. 1–40 of the *IAHR Bulletin* can now be accessed by all IAHR members and the public at large on the IAHR website. Thanks not least, of course, to IAHR Honorary Life Member and former President and Secretary General, Prof. Michael Pye who managed to publish 33 issues of the *IAHR Bulletin* during his two terms as Secretary General.

But thanks must also go, Prof. Jensen added, to another IAHR Honorary Life Member and former General Secretary, Prof. Armin W. Geertz, who had been so kind as to offer to have the 33 1986–1995 issues scanned so that they could enter the digital archive of the IAHR provided by the IAHR website.

The General Secretary, consequently, extended his heartfelt thanks to Profs. Pye and Geertz.

### 3.8 Concluding Remarks

Stepping down as General Secretary, Prof. Jensen asked that he be allowed to look back over the past two terms during which he had served the IAHR as General Secretary.

Looking back Prof. Jensen found it fair to say that the IAHR leadership, i. e., the Executive and International Committee, as well as the General Assembly, during the two terms managed to continue to fulfill its mandate, namely (Constitution § 1), to promote “ [...] the academic study of religions through the international collaboration of all scholars whose research has a bearing on the subject”, and thus also doing its best to make the IAHR what it proudly claims to be (cf. the website policy statement), namely the “preeminent international forum for the critical, analytical, and cross-cultural study of religions, past and present”.

The IAHR leadership had done so by way of:

- assisting the establishment and adoption of new national and regional associations and societies for the academic study of religion(s);
- adopting (in accordance with the Constitution § 3b) affiliates, i. e., international associations for the study of particular areas within the academic study of religion, and thus linking them to and including them in the IAHR;
- framing the thorough amendments to the Constitution ratified during the 2010 Toronto Congress, with, inter alia, introduction of terms that signal that ‘history of religions’, also within the IAHR, is different from what it was in the 1950s;
- making other innovations to the Constitution and By-Laws meant to further geographic representation, gender balance and cultural diversity (e. g. revised Rules for the Nominating Committee);
- clarifying and tightening the academic profile of the IAHR.

As regards developments and improvements specifically pertaining to gender, Prof. Jensen found it worth noticing that

- the Nominating Committee 2015 – 2020 was constituted of three females and two males;
- the IAHR Honorary Life Membership Committee 2010 – 2015 was constituted of two females and one male; and that
- while the IAHR Executive Committee 2005 – 2010 was constituted of seven males and five females (one serving as President), the 2010 – 2015 now outgoing Executive had six females (one serving as President, another as Vice-President) and six males on board.

Moreover, during this period, the IAHR Women Scholars Network was established and developed, and the new Equinox/IAHR book series ‘The Study of Religion in a Global Context’ was introduced, with the aim of being a venue not least for younger scholars worldwide.

In terms of the ‘globalization’ of the IAHR, the outgoing Executive Committee had thus worked hard to continue the efforts towards globalization that can be seen as ongoing from the 1950s and speeded up and strategically developed by Profs. Michael Pye (1985–1995) and Armin W. Geertz (1995–2005).

Furthermore, Prof. Jensen said, ‘putting globalization to work’ takes a strong economy. Thanks to the noticeable improvement of the IAHR finances over the past ten years, the IAHR Executive Committee had actually been able to put ‘globalization’ to work, e. g. by way of giving considerable travel grants to help scholars from around the world participate in the IAHR business meetings, congresses, and conferences.

Last but not least Prof. Jensen wanted to stress that the outgoing Executive Committee, continuing the work of the 2005–2010 Executive, had worked assiduously to guard the academic respectability of the IAHR by clarifying the commitment to academic objectives. As he himself had stated in his statement for candidacy for the position of General Secretary in 2005: “‘global’ in the language of the IAHR, is not the same as ‘ecumenical’.”

Lasting traces of these efforts are found in the 2010 addition to the first article of the IAHR Constitution, but the tightening up of the academic profile can also be seen from the revised rules as to the obligation to see to it that the academic programs of IAHR Special and Regional Conferences are in line with the stated aims of the IAHR.

The outgoing Executive Committee had thus, in the opinion of Prof. Jensen, done its best to expand the IAHR while at the same time trying to secure that the ‘identity’ of the IAHR continued to reflect what was arguably first formulated more explicitly by General Secretary, Zwi Werblowsky in his famous Marburg 1960 statement:

If the IAHR has any *raison d’être* it is by reason of a division of labor which makes the Organization the responsible organ and international meeting ground for those scholars who wish to serve the cause of Religionswissenschaft in its strict sense. (*NVMEN* 7, p. 220)

Prof. Jensen stressed that he wanted to quote these words because he, as is evident e. g. from the coming *NVMEN* 60th anniversary publication, with many others, consider the Marburg 1960 Congress and the late Zwi Werblowsky’s statement a cornerstone in the building of an institutional consensus as to the

perspective and ethos of the IAHR, despite all disagreements and cultural differences.

But, he added, he also quoted these words to signal that it had been a privilege and honor – standing on the shoulders of great(er) scholars and former general secretaries like, to mention but a few of the more recent ones, Zwi Werblowsky, Michael Pye and Armin W. Geertz – to serve the IAHR, trying to further develop the IAHR along the lines staked out by the Werblowsky statement.

Stepping down as General Secretary, Prof. Jensen wanted to thank all his colleagues in the outgoing Executive Committee for their hard work, commitment, and support. A special thank you was extended to the outgoing President, Prof. Hackett with whom Prof. Jensen had had a wonderful working relationship for ten years as well as to the outgoing Treasurer, Prof. Bocking with whom he had had an equally splendid cooperation.

The President, Prof. Hackett opened the floor for questions and comments, to the oral as well as written report. There were no questions nor comments. The President then moved to ask the General Assembly to formally adopt the report. The report was adopted with applause. Prof. Hackett asked the General Assembly to join her in thanking the General Secretary for his meticulous work as manifested in his report, constituting an important record not just of the work of the Executive Committee but also of the work of the IAHR membership at large.

## 4 Brief Report by the Outgoing Treasurer

With reference to his full and written report in the *IAHR BULLETIN Number 40, Erfurt Congress Edition, August 2015*, pp. 78–85, the Treasurer, Prof. Brian Bocking displayed the overview rendered below (cf. p. 84 in the detailed written report) of the IAHR accounts.

The *payments from Brill* for each issue of *NVMEN* constitutes the major source of income for the IAHR, with 65,058 USD provided since 2010. The *annual membership dues*, hitherto mainly fulfilling a symbolic function, now, with the raise of the annual dues, however also actually augment the IAHR funds. The major expenditures are *a) Conference support*, *b) Executive Committee expenses*, and *c) Publications and web expenses*.

The IAHR currently maintains two bank accounts: a EUR account and a USD account. The IAHR accounts are traditionally reported in US dollars, so the recent sharp rise of the dollar/fall of the Euro has ‘cost’ IAHR 4,633 USD in the period 2010–2014 and may ‘cost’ a further 5,000 USD in 2015 alone. However, this has no practical effect as long as the IAHR has both USD and EUR bank accounts on which to draw as appropriate.

## IAHR accounts 01/01/2010 - 31/12/2014

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Totals	Average p.a.	5 months to 31/5/2015
	0.80	0.77	0.76	0.73	0.83		2010-14	0.89
Exchange rate (€-\$) at 31 Dec	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$			\$
Opening balance at 1/1 brought fwd	63,529	47,334	67,635	68,217	87,942	63529		94,261
Foreign Exchange gain/loss		1,282	728	2,324	-8,967	-4,633		-5,419
<b>INCOME</b>								
NUMEN	11,350	14,866	8,512	18,049	12,281	65,058	13,012	1,928
Dues	5,159	5,332	4,921	3,787	11,139	30,338	6,068	9,540
CIPSH	11,795	2,079	0	0	0	13,874	2,775	0
Donations	0	121	0	0	2,986	3,107	621	0
IAHR Endowment Fund	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8,695
IAHR African Trust Fund	0	4,000	3,535	0	2,119	9,654	1,931	0
Other	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
<b>Total income (€)</b>	<b>28,304</b>	<b>26,399</b>	<b>16,968</b>	<b>21,836</b>	<b>28,525</b>	<b>122,032</b>	<b>24,406</b>	<b>20,163</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>								
Conference support	33,395	1,299	3,000	366	2,000	40,060	8,012	18,112
Committee Expenses	5,651	1,229	9,205	3,433	7,570	27,088	5,418	5,107
IAHR African Trust Fund	958	4,000	3,535	0	2,119	10,612	2,122	0
IAHR Endowment Fund	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CIPSH	0	0	789	0	723	1,512	302	0
Publications & Web	3,020	776	0	311	283	4,390	878	0
Bank charges	0	41	260	325	544	1,170	234	166
Other	1,475	35	325	0	0	1,835	367	0
<b>Total expenses (€)</b>	<b>44,499</b>	<b>7,380</b>	<b>17,114</b>	<b>4,435</b>	<b>13,239</b>	<b>86,667</b>	<b>17,333</b>	<b>23,385</b>
Surplus/deficit	-16,195	19,019	-146	17,401	15,286	35,365		-3,222
<b>Closing balance at 31/12 carried fwd</b>	<b>47,334</b>	<b>67,635</b>	<b>68,217</b>	<b>87,942</b>	<b>94,261</b>	<b>94,261</b>		<b>85,620</b> (31 May)
IAHR African Trust Fund	12,000	8,000	4,465	4,465	2,346	2,346		2,345
IAHR Endowment Fund	8,695	8,695	8,695	8,695	8,695	8,695		0
<b>TOTAL ASSETS at 31 Dec</b>	<b>68,029</b>	<b>84,330</b>	<b>81,377</b>	<b>101,103</b>	<b>105,302</b>	<b>105,302</b>		<b>87,965</b>

Prof. Bocking extended thanks to all those treasurers and other officers of IAHR member associations who have over the last five years ensured payment of annual dues in the right amount, at the right time, and to the right IAHR account. Finally, Prof. Bocking thanked the President, General Secretary and all of his colleagues on the 2010 – 2015 Executive Committee for their support, encouragement and patience with regard to his efforts as Treasurer during the period.

The President, Prof. Hackett thanked the Treasurer for his clear report and opened the floor for questions and comments, to the oral as well as written report. There were no questions nor comments. The President then thanked the Treasurer for his excellent and dedicated work for the IAHR and asked that the report be formally adopted. The report was adopted with applause.

## 5 Adoption of New Members and Affiliates

Having referred to the most relevant articles and rules in the IAHR Constitution and Rules of Procedure, Prof. Jensen reported that the IAHR International Committee, at its meetings in Liverpool, September 4, 2013, and in Erfurt, August 26, 2015, upon the recommendation of the Executive Committee, had unanimously agreed to recommend to the IAHR General Assembly to adopt as members the following *national* associations:

- *Association belge pour l'étude des religions/Belgische Associatie voor de Studie van Religies (BABEL)*, Belgium;
- *Irish Society for the Academic Study of Religions (ISASR)*, Ireland;
- *Lithuanian Society for the Study of Religions (LSSR)*, Lithuania;
- *Philippine Association for the Study of Culture, History and Religion (PASCHR)*, Philippines.

Each of the named applicant associations was adopted as a member association by an overwhelming majority show of hands and applause, and the General Assembly greeted the representatives of the named association present.

The General Secretary proceeded to the application for regional membership, reporting that the IAHR International Committee, at its meetings in Liverpool, September 4, 2013, and in Erfurt, August 26, 2015, upon the recommendation of the Executive Committee, had unanimously agreed to recommend to the IAHR General Assembly to adopt as a member the *regional* association *Asociacion de Cientistas Sociales de la Religion del Mercosur (ACSRM)*, South America.

The named applicant association was adopted as a regional member association by an overwhelming majority show of hands and applause.

The General Secretary then proceeded to an application for affiliation, reporting that the IAHR International Committee, at its meeting in Erfurt, August 26, 2015, upon the recommendation of the Executive Committee, unanimously agreed to recommend to the IAHR General Assembly to adopt as an *affiliate* the *Society for Ancient Mediterranean Religions (SAMR)*.

The named applicant association was adopted as an affiliate by an overwhelming majority show of hands and applause, and the representative present was greeted by the General Assembly.

## 6 Recommendation of Changes to the IAHR Constitution and Rules of Procedure

Having referred to and displayed on a slide the relevant articles of the Constitution (§8) and the Rules of Procedure (Rule 22) regarding changes and amendments to the Constitution and the rules of Procedure as well as rules for voting (Rule 15acdeg), the General Secretary, Prof. Jensen and later, the Treasurer, Prof. Bocking, displayed on a slide the proposed changes to the IAHR Constitution as recommended by the IAHR International Committee on the recommendation also of the IAHR Executive Committee. Prof. Jensen also mentioned that in

so far as the changed articles were reproduced in the Rules of Procedure, the Rules of Procedure were also changed.

There were two proposals:

1. a) inserting a sentence in the Constitution about the primary location of the IAHR, and b) move a sentence about the legal registration of the IAHR in The Hague, The Netherlands, from the Constitution to the Rules;
2. Changing “General Secretary” to “Secretary General”, and “Deputy General Secretary” to “Deputy Secretary General”.

Ad 1. The Treasurer first reported on the background for the first proposal:

Banks are subject to increasing restrictions on who may open a bank account, and where.

The IAHR bank accounts have to be transferred to the new Treasurer’s location, Switzerland. A basic requirement for opening a corporate (IAHR-type) bank account in Switzerland is that Switzerland must be the ‘primary location’ of the IAHR.

This condition is met if:

- (a) The IAHR Constitution does not state that the IAHR is located outside Switzerland;
- (b) the Constitution states that ‘the primary location of the IAHR is the official address of the Treasurer’; and
- (c) the Treasurer is resident in Switzerland.

Consequently, the proposal was as follows:

- A new sentence to be added at the end of Article 3 A of the IAHR *Constitution* to read as follows: “The primary location of the IAHR is the official address of the IAHR Treasurer.”
- The clause in Article 1 of the IAHR Constitution which reads “and is legally registered in the Hague, the Netherlands” to be moved from the IAHR Constitution into a new section VI within the IAHR’s Rules of Procedure and the current (final) section VI to be renumbered section VII.

If the proposal be adopted, the relevant paragraphs and articles of the Constitution and Rules of Procedure are to be changed as follows, with the deleted and added sentences marked in cursive script.

### **Constitution**

#### Article 1

The International Association for the History of Religions (abbreviated from its English title to IAHR), was founded in September 1950 on the occasion of the VIth International History

of Religions Congress ~~and is legally registered in the Hague, the Netherlands~~. The IAHR is a nonprofit worldwide organization which has as its objective the promotion of the academic study of religions through the international collaboration of all scholars whose research has a bearing on the subject. The IAHR is not a forum for confessional, apologetical, or other similar concerns.

...

#### Article 3

The IAHR is constituted by national and regional member societies and associations for the historical, social and comparative study of religions. These are such bodies as are now members and such as have been, upon application, recommended for membership by the Executive Committee, pending recommendation by the International Committee (see below), and admission by the General Assembly at a future quinquennial Congress. *The primary location of the IAHR is the official address of the IAHR Treasurer.*

#### Rules of Procedure

20.d. The minutes of the Editorial Board of *NUMEN* shall be circulated only to the members of the Editorial Board, to the Managing and Reviews Editors, and to the Publisher.

#### VI. Legal Registration of the IAHR

##### Rule 21. Legal Registration

*The IAHR is legally registered in the Hague, the Netherlands.*

#### VII. Adoption, Amendment and Suspension of the Rules of Procedure

##### Rule 22~~7~~. Adoption

The International Committee shall adopt the Rules of Procedure by a two-thirds majority of members present and voting.

Following this presentation of the issue by the Treasurer, the President asked if there were any questions and comments. This was not the case. The General Assembly then adopted the recommended changes by such an overwhelming majority show of hands that the President without a doubt could state that the required two thirds of the General Assembly voted for the adoption of the proposal.

The General Secretary then moved to add a few words in explanation for the second proposal, changing “General Secretary” to “Secretary General”, and, “Deputy General Secretary” to “Deputy Secretary General”, in the Constitution as well as in the Rules of Procedure, saying that it was a wish based upon a seemingly wide spread notion that ‘Secretary General’ signaled more ‘authority’ and status than General Secretary, and that ‘Secretary General’ furthermore had been in use for decennia within the IAHR.

The President asked if there were any questions and comments. This was not the case. The General Assembly then adopted the recommended changes by such an overwhelming majority show of hands that the President without a doubt could state that the required two thirds of the General Assembly voted for the adoption of the proposal.

## 7 Other Recommendations of the International Committee Requiring a Vote by the General Assembly

There were no other recommendations.

## 8 Report on the Conferment of Honorary Life Membership

The General Secretary, with reference to the relevant rules, explained that IAHR honorary life memberships “can be conferred on senior scholars who have distinguished themselves through life-long service to the history of religions through their scholarship, regular participation in IAHR conferences, service as national or international officers and/or other outstanding contributions.”

Having furthermore reported that the IAHR Honorary Life Membership Advisory Committee 2010–2015, consisting of three honorary life members of the IAHR, namely, Prof. Giulia S. Gasparro (Messina), Prof. Yolótl Gonzales Torres (Mexico City) and Prof. Armin W. Geertz (Aarhus), had been constituted in accordance with the procedural provisions, and that the chair of the committee, Prof. Geertz had submitted suggestions for new IAHR Honorary Life Members, first in time for the International Committee in Liverpool in 2013 and now again for the International Committee meeting in Erfurt in 2015, the General Secretary reported that the International Committee, meeting in Liverpool (cf. *IAHR BULLETIN 40, Erfurt Congress Edition, August 2015*, p. 29) had conferred honorary life memberships on Profs.

- Jan G. Platvoet, The Netherlands
- Jonathan Z. Smith, USA
- Akio Tsukimoto, Japan

On its meeting August 26, 2015 in Erfurt, upon the recommendation of the IAHR Honorary Life Membership Advisory Committee, the International Committee had conferred honorary life memberships on Profs.

- Giovanni Casadio, Salerno, Italy
- Rosalind I. J. Hackett, Knoxville, USA
- Susumu Shimazono, Tokyo, Japan

The General Assembly applauded the conferment of Honorary Life Membership to each of the named, and Prof. Geertz was invited to take the floor to share with the General Assembly the brief introductions by the Honorary Life Membership Advisory Committee to the merits of each of the named new IAHR Honorary Life Members.

Prof. Jensen then thanked Prof. Geertz and the two other members of the committee, Profs. Giulia S. Gasparro and Yolótl Gonzales Torres for serving the IAHR once again as members to the Honorary Life Membership Advisory Committee.

## 9 Report on the Election of the Incoming Executive Committee

With reference to the Constitution § 4: “[...] The International Committee, at its meeting just preceding the General Assembly, shall elect the Executive Committee and shall report this to the General Assembly”, to the current rules regarding the ‘Nomination Procedure for the Executive’, as well as to the relevant sections (pp. 86–89 & 90–102) in the *IAHR BULLETIN 40, Erfurt Congress Edition, August 2015*, the General Secretary reported, with the assistance of a slide, on the result of the elections in the International Committee Meeting, August 26, 2015, Erfurt, of the 2015–2020 IAHR Executive Committee.

### President (one position)

Peter Beyer, Canada (8 votes)

Tim Jensen, Denmark (58)

(spoiled/incomplete ballot papers: 1)

### Vice-Presidents (two positions)

Veikko Anttonen, Finland (38)

Anne Kubai, Sweden (33)

Mar Marcos, Spain (61)

### General Secretary (one position)

Afe Adogame, United Kingdom (35)

Jenny Berglund, Sweden (32)

### Deputy General Secretary

Ann Taves, USA (elected unopposed)

Treasurer

Philippe Bornet, Switzerland (elected unopposed)

Deputy Treasurer

Marion Maddox, Australia (elected unopposed)

Publications Officer

Satoko Fujiwara, Japan (elected unopposed)

Further Members (four positions)

Milda Alisauskiene, Lithuania (43)

Chae Young Kim, South Korea (39)

Amarjiva Lochan, India (48)

Marianna Shakhnovich, Russia (24)

David Thurfjell, Sweden (42)

Katja Triplett, Germany (53)

Frank Usarski, Brazil (18)

The following were thus duly elected to the IAHR Executive Committee 2015–2020:

President: Tim Jensen

Vice-Presidents: Veikko Anttonen, Mar Marcos

General Secretary\*: Afe Adogame

Deputy General Secretary: Ann Taves

Treasurer: Philippe Bornet

Deputy Treasurer: Marion Maddox

Publications Officer: Satoko Fujiwara

Four Further Members: Milda Alisauskiene, Amarjiva Lochan, David Thurfjell, Katja Triplett

\*From 2015 onwards 'Secretary General'.

The President, Prof. Hackett congratulated the elected nominees, and thanked all the nominees not elected for their willingness to serve the IAHR.

Prof. Jensen thanked the two Vice-Presidents, Profs. Gilhus and Tayob, serving as tellers during the elections, Prof. Pye, serving as returning officer, and the Treasurer Prof. Bocking who had prepared and overseen the whole process leading towards the elections in the International Committee. Prof. Jensen finally extended thanks to the members of the Nominating Committee, Profs. Maya Burger,

Gerrie ter Haar, Sylvia Marcos, Peter Antes (chair), and Luther H. Martin for their service to the IAHR.

## 10 Public Transfer of Office to the Incoming Executive Committee

Profs. Hackett, Jensen and Bocking, the three officers from the outgoing Executive Committee who were on the stage, left the stage and thus stepped down from their offices (together with the other members of the outgoing Executive Committee).

(Before the outgoing President was allowed to step down, however, members of the Outgoing as well as Incoming Executive Committee showed their appreciation of her 20 years of service to the IAHR by handing over flowers and praises).

Shortly after, the members of the incoming Executive Committee entered the stage, thus signifying the transfer of office. The General Assembly welcomed and congratulated the incoming Executive Committee members with applause.

## 11 Brief Statement by the Incoming President

Prof. Jensen said it had been a privilege, pleasure and honor to serve the IAHR as General Secretary for the past ten years (and following the passing of Gary Lease also as Acting Treasurer for some years), and that he considered it no less an honor to serve as President for the coming five years. He extended his thanks to the member associations for the honor shown by way of electing him IAHR President.

Admitting that it was (kind of) a relief to hand over the many and time consuming duties of the IAHR General Secretary to the incoming Secretary General, Prof. Jensen expressed his great pleasure to be given the opportunity to contribute in other ways to the continuous work needed to make the IAHR what it boasts to be, namely the “preeminent international forum for the critical, analytical, and cross-cultural study of religions, past and present.”

A work the success of which – though primarily depending on the work and dedication to the academic study of religion and to the IAHR by all members and affiliates – was also depending on the efforts of the Executive Committee to stimulate membership development, cultural diversity, and gender equality, clarifying and tightening, at the same time, the academic profile of the IAHR.

While the task of the Secretary General is to function as the primus motor of the IAHR leadership, the office of the President is different, Prof. Jensen stated. Though to a certain degree an honorary position and the tasks of the presidency not infrequently representative, the President has other important functions: s/he must be well versed in the history and workings of the IAHR, s/he must function as a source of advice and support to the Secretary General, s/he must provide a sense of continuity in the Executive Committee, and s/he must help the IAHR bridge past, present and future.

Prof. Jensen expressed his thanks to the outgoing President for the excellent way in which she had performed accordingly and contributed to what had been a wonderful working relationship between the two. Prof. Jensen likewise thanked all the other members of the outgoing Executive Committee for their cooperation and support. Finally, he congratulated the members of the incoming Executive Committee, expressing his wish for a close, fruitful, and pleasant collaboration to the benefit of the IAHR over the next five years.

## **12 Brief Statement by the Incoming Secretary General**

Prof. Afe Adogame thanked the outgoing General Secretary for his work and asked the IAHR members not to use the work and style of Prof. Jensen as a yardstick for him and his work, and he announced briefer reports and fewer emails from the desk of the Secretary General. Prof. Adogame extended his thanks to the organizing committee of the Erfurt Congress, and to the outgoing Executive Committee members.

Continuity, he went on, was, however, guaranteed with the incoming Executive Committee. As he saw it, though, the Executive Committee is but the servant of the IAHR, not its owner. He encouraged members to actively contribute, and he said that he wanted to commit himself to maintain an open door policy, disseminating all information and asking for feedback from IAHR members, by sending information from and about the Executive Committee.

The IAHR, he said, must open itself to new challenges, not least to young scholars, trying to make them part of the IAHR.

Prof. Adogame finally stated that he looked forward to the next World Congress. A call for bids would be circulated, he said, within the next months.

## 13 Suggestions from the General Assembly to the Incoming Executive Committee

There were no suggestions.

## 14 Any Other Business

Prof. Hackett, in her capacity of newly elected Vice-President to the *CIPSH*, took the floor to announce and promote the World Conference of the Humanities in Liège 2017, aimed at promoting and defending Humanities. She offered herself to be a link to the conference, and encouraged colleagues to keep an eye on future announcements and calls for papers and panels.

Congress directors, Profs. Jörg Rüpke and Christoph Bochinger, then took the floor to extend greetings to the IAHR thanking the IAHR for the trust shown when asking the DVRW and the local Erfurt institutions and colleagues to host the IAHR 2015 World Congress in Erfurt.

They extended thanks to the various German co-sponsoring organizations for their support and for the grants given, and they extended thanks to everybody, student assistants included, for their invaluable contribution to the planning and running of the congress.

The President, Prof. Jensen, then took the floor and likewise expressed his thanks on behalf of the IAHR to everybody involved in the planning and running of the IAHR XXI World Congress, and he extended a special thanks to the student assistants who had done a wonderful job.

Last but not least he handed over presents to Congress directors, Profs. Rüpke and Bochinger, while Prof. Hackett handed over a special gift to Congress Coordinator, Dr. Elisabeth Begemann.

\* \* \*

Prof. Jensen then closed the formal meeting, thanking everybody present, and thereupon declared the 2015 XXI Quinquennial World Congress of the IAHR, the *International Association for the History of Religions*, in Erfurt, Germany, officially closed.

Minutes prepared by then General Secretary, Prof. Tim Jensen, occasionally assisted by notes taken by then Deputy General Secretary, Prof. Mar Marcos.



# Minutes of the Women Scholars Network Meeting

IAHR Women Scholars Network Meeting August 27, 2015 (Erfurt)

Convenors: Rosalind I. J. Hackett (RH); Morny Joy (MJ)

Attendance (per signatures collected): 71

## 1 Introduction; WSN Aims, Structure

RH introduced WSN and welcomed attendees. MJ provided an overview of history recounting the network's establishment in Tokyo 10 years ago and subsequent organization of panels in Rome 1990 (Ursula King).

MJ noted that overarching aim is to support women with their scholarship, that the committee previously and continues to offer mentoring. Noted the list-serv and Facebook groups.

RH outlined WSN structure and goals – noting the website as a source of this information.

## 2 Introduction to Members of the Steering Committee

MJ noted apologies received from Terhi Utriainen (Finland), Marion Maddox (Australia) and Rachelle Scott (USA).

Those members of the Steering Committee in attendance introduced themselves: Rose Mary Amenga-Etego (Ghana); Sylvia Marcos (Mexico); Ursula King (England); Edith Franke (Germany).

It was noted that there was not representation on the Committee from China, India or South Africa.

**Action: Coordinators/Committee to seek/appoint representatives from those regions**

## 3 Achievements

RH outlined WSN achievements, noting:

- steady growth in membership;
- increased participation at IAHR meetings and business meetings;

- there were almost as many women as men as representatives of their national association at the previous day's IAHR meeting;
- many regional meetings have included impromptu WSN meetings;
- MJ's organization of three panels at this IAHR conference;
- Facebook at 300 members: Jenny Berglund and Sarah Gallant are administrators.

RH discussed the re-designed website. Requested photographed for use: any IAHR related meeting/conference/event, especially from Europe and Africa.

Thanks expressed to Jeremy Hughes, Darlene Juschka, Sarah Gallant and Jenny Berglund for all their work on the WSN website, list-serv and Facebook.

## 4 Improvements

RH reporting:

- confirmed Jenny Berglund (Sweden) will take on the role of coordinator. RH and MJ to step down at close of week. JB will appoint second coordinator in due course;
- requested submissions to further develop the Resources and Related Programs pages on the WSN IAHR website;
- aim to further expand regional representation on Committee.

## 5 Future Tasks

RH reporting:

Outreach: RH noted need to strengthen work and outreach in South and South East Asia, Eastern Europe, Africa and South America.

History pages: RH noted aim to construct WSN History page for website, which could also contain region specific histories. Sylvia Marcos suggested the use of the term 'genealogy' rather than 'history'. This was debated with a suggestion to use both terms. Elaine Nogueira Godsey suggested interviews be conducted with the founders. Ursula King noted the need to be diplomatic and discrete as the history includes sensitive and difficult events and issues.

Also noted that long narratives may not be read and a summary best suited the website. Ipsita Chatterjee noted the material can be 'staged' (providing a range of detail levels utilizing different media forms). Amy Allocco noted it could also be used as a teaching resource.

MJ noted that she is currently writing a history of the WSN for the forthcoming Special Issue of *Numen*. Once published this article should be linked to website.

Academia Group: JB noted that a WSN Academia.edu site should be created: this platform is used by the vast majority of attendees at the meeting.

**Action: Academia.edu group to be set up**

## 6 Amy Allocco: AAR Funding Program

AA as Chair of the AAR International Connections Committee announced the Collaborative International Research Grants. Noted they fund \$500–\$5000 and teams can apply for up to two years. AA is available to provide formative feedback on applications prior to submission. Application deadline October 1. See AAR website for more details.

## 7 Travel Fund Development

RH reported on aim to broaden notification of already existing funds to support conference attendance. IAHR does have a funding program.

Discussion regarding the need for supplementary support. For the WSN to offer a program it would have to undertake fundraising. Asha Mukherjee noted that it was problems with funds that resulted in a lower attendance of Indian scholars at the Erfurt meeting.

**Action: call to members to suggest possible donors/sponsors to specifically cover cost of conference registration.**

## 8 New IAHR Book Series (Equinox)

MJ reported on the recent launch of the series ‘The Study of Religion in a Global Context’ (Equinox), edited by Morny Joy and Tim Jensen, with Katja Triplett as Managing Editor. First volume published and another in press. See Equinox website for more details.

## 9 Publicizing Members Work

RH reported on the need for greater circulation of information about members' publications. This can be part of content on the Academia.edu page. Call for members to share – via posts – what they have been doing. Inform others about recent publications and awards.

RH raised the issue of translation. How many articles/key texts by women scholars had been translated into other languages? Is there a way the WSN can support this activity? It was also noted that there were fewer *festschriften* for women scholars.

**Action: Committee to consider ways of supporting translation/festschrift production**

## 10 Website Photographs

RH called for photograph submissions for the website.

## 11 Matters Arising

Rose Mary Amenga-Etego (Ghana) announced the African Association's next conference, "Religion, Sexuality and Identity in Africa and the African Diaspora" July 26–29, 2016, Ghana.

Conference: "Religion Against Violence" to be held in Havana, Cuba, July 2016.

Mentoring scheme: success of SOCRAL (UK) mentoring scheme discussed. Further discussion about whether the WSN should develop a more formal mentoring program. Discussion concluded that no change should be made to the current arrangements.

Enormous thanks expressed to Rosalind I. J. Hackett and Morny Joy for all their work on establishing and running the WSN.

Meeting closed: 19.15.

# The Congress Directors' General Report on the XXI IAHR World Congress

The XXI World Congress of the IAHR was hosted by the German Association for the Study of Religions (*Deutsche Vereinigung für Religionswissenschaft e.V., DVRW*).<sup>1</sup> As every IAHR world congress, it is embedded in a specific regional context – in regard to the discursive patterns of our discipline, which is that of the German *Religionswissenschaft* and its European neighbors, as well as in regard to the specific religious environment. As the regional context is a European one, the specific task – but also specific chance – was to reflect on the impact of this environment on the general theory of religion and, in particular, the ‘discussions and allegations of a (real or imagined) Eurocentric bias of the IAHR’ (cf. Jensen 2010, 64). Like their predecessors in Toronto, Tokyo or Durban, the organizers decided to present the congress venue in terms of regional models of religion, making use of emblematic imagery such as the medieval cathedral of Erfurt on its logo (see [www.iahr2015.org](http://www.iahr2015.org)). This was meant to be a starting point for trans-regional comparisons and theoretical debates, avoiding stereotypical images of the ‘world religions’ type (see Masuzawa 2005; Bochsinger, Rüpke 2015).

The situational context of the European history of religions can be characterized by a plurality of religions in antiquity, including Christian, Jewish and Muslim presence since late antiquity and the Middle Ages respectively. This has been accompanied by esoteric traditions rooted in late antiquity, being re-constructed since early modern times. The European history of religions also encompasses strong secular strands in the intellectual history since antiquity and especially since the time of enlightenment, ongoing processes of secularization and religious individualization and a great variety of new religious ideas and movements from all parts of the world since the eighteenth century. Contrary to global theories of religious resurgence, in most European countries (except some countries in the eastern parts of Europe) there is little or no evidence for any de-secularization on the individual, institutional or state level. Nevertheless, the political situations, especially state-church relations, and the situation in regard to religious education (see below) still differ greatly from country to country.

In Germany, the history of religions has been particularly characterized by the development of a system of privileged confessions since the sixteenth century.

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<sup>1</sup> Until 2005: *Deutsche Vereinigung für Religionsgeschichte*, i.e. German Association for the History of Religions.

ry (initially incorporating the Roman Catholic church and the Lutheran churches), surrounded by a plurality of non-privileged and often persecuted religious *sects*. Instead of a single state-church, it created the idea of a 'neutral' state with close relations on equal terms to a limited number of religious institutions. This confessional way of organizing state-church-relations survived processes of secularization and religious pluralization after the time of enlightenment and still has a profound impact on the perception of religion in Germany, although it does not correspond to the current religious affiliation of the population. Whereas (out of a total population of 80 million) 24.6 million people (c. 31%) are members of the Roman Catholic church and 23.9 million members (c. 30%) of the Protestant *Landeskirchen* (REMID 2014), the group of the 'non-confessionals' comprises a comparable number of estimated 24 million people (c. 30%). Especially in Eastern Germany (i.e., the regional states previously forming the German Democratic Republic), church membership is the lowest in Europe – and probably in the world. In the federal state of Thuringia, with its capital Erfurt for instance, the number of non-confessionals amounts to 68% (with 8% Catholics, 24% Protestants). The situation is similar in the big cities in North and West Germany, especially in Berlin and Hamburg. Even in regional states with high rates of church membership (in particular: the southern states Bavaria and Baden-Wuerttemberg), a majority of church members is fairly distanced from the respective confessions.

Nevertheless, the traditional system of church-state-relations with its specific 'confessional' character still has a profound influence on public institutions. The strictly confessional model of religious instruction in public schools can serve as an example, being the only school subject explicitly anchored in the German constitution (*Grundgesetz, Artikel 7.3*).<sup>2</sup> On the academic level, this system leads to the perpetuation of confessional faculties of theology, namely Protestant or Roman Catholic.<sup>3</sup>

Facing the challenges of religious pluralization, Germany still sticks to these traditions. Therefore, presently the German state tries to develop additional cen-

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<sup>2</sup> In regard to the general situation of Religion Education in Europe and the (possible or actual) contribution of *Religionswissenschaft / the Study of Religions* see the Numen special issue 2008, 121 – 236, ed. by Wanda Alberts and Tim Jensen; cf. Alberts 2008; in regard to Switzerland and Germany see Frank and Bochsinger 2008; see also Alberts 2007, Frank 2010, Frank 2014.

<sup>3</sup> Following suggestions of the German *Wissenschaftsrat* [Wissenschaftsrat 2010] there are presently great efforts on the federal as well as regional level to enhance this model of confessional theology – as well as confessional RE in public schools – by an Islamic variant. As a critical comment to this development, which also affects traditional academic structures in German Oriental studies, see Stroumsa 2010.

ters for 'Islamische Studien' (which is in fact meant to be *Islamic Theology*), implicitly forcing the German Muslims to create a common representative organization in a quasi 'confessional' way. In the case of Judaism, the *Hochschule für Jüdische Studien* was founded in 1979 as a private, state-recognized institution of higher learning, financed by the local and federal governments (in addition, in 1999 the *Abraham Geiger Kolleg* was founded at the University of Potsdam as an academic seminary for rabbis and cantors, co-financed by public and private institutions).

As a result of these contextual conditions, German *Religionswissenschaft* has developed a strong contra-identity against confessional theologies from its beginnings in the nineteenth century. Even scholars trained in theology like Nathan Söderblom from Sweden, being the first chair for 'Religionswissenschaft' in Germany from 1912 to 1914 in Leipzig, or the Marburg theologians Rudolf Otto and Friedrich Heiler, or later Gustav Mensching in Bonn, defined 'Religionswissenschaft' as non-confessional and non-dogmatic. They agreed on this point with non-theologians like Friedrich Max Müller, who – because of his German origin and publications – is usually held to be the founder of *Religionswissenschaft*, and also Joachim Wach or Walter Baetke (both Leipzig) in the first decades of the twentieth century.

As a further consequence of this long-term competitive environment, since the 1970s and 1980s, the leading strands of German speaking *Religionswissenschaft* discovered the 'cultural turn' for their discipline, carrying forward Clifford Geertz' perception of religion as a cultural symbol system and – at the same time – drawing from non-religious classics such as Max Weber or Émile Durkheim. This 'turn' was specifically directed against the older tradition of German, Dutch and Scandinavian 'Phenomenology of Religion' (*Religionsphänomenologie*), now seen as 'theological' despite its non-confessional self-conception. Today, this position has been mainstreamed within German *Religionswissenschaft*, defining itself as a secular or cultural discipline. It is now the standard model in nearly all German speaking universities, as far as they provide courses of studies in *Religionswissenschaft* on undergraduate or graduate level (see DVRW 2014). It also prepared a widening of the principal subjects: Whereas in traditional university settings, the discipline was specialized on 'non-Christian' (or at least: non-state church) topics, usually focusing on non-European strands of the History of Religions (*Religionsgeschichte*), it now added a systematic approach towards *Europäische Religionsgeschichte* (history of European religions) on the one hand, and *religiöse Gegenwartskultur* (contemporary religion) – be it in Europe or in other continents – on the other.

In more recent decades, German speaking *Religionswissenschaft* also contributed to other theoretical fields, such as aesthetical perspectives, ritual theory

or cognitive studies. The present dynamics of German *Religionswissenschaft* are well mirrored in the *Arbeitskreise* of the *Deutsche Vereinigung für Religionswissenschaft*: History of Religions in Asia; Contemporary Religions in Asia; Aesthetics of Religion; Islam, Religions and Politics; and Modern Mass Media.

At the same time, the dimension of *interreligious* or *interconfessional dialogue* was relegated from the disciplinary level (being at the very center of interest of earlier scholars like Friedrich Heiler or Rudolf Otto) to the level of a subject to be studied from an academic outsider or meta-position. Nevertheless, some representatives do not follow this model, but prefer the tradition of German *Religionsphänomenologie* or try to adopt Anglo-American models of a non-confessional, pluralistic theology. Regarding the specific German situation sketched above, it is worth noticing that nearly all such scholars belong to Faculties of Theology. Other members of these faculties consequently follow the 'cultural turn' – or they make a clear-cut distinction between their contributions to a secular *Religionswissenschaft* on the one hand, *mission studies*, *ecumenical* or *intercultural theology* on the other (e.g. *Fachgruppe Religionswissenschaft und Missionswissenschaft* 2005).

With this sketch of the German situation, we hope to provide some basic information about the host country and its academic setting, but also take it as a case study for situating the dynamics of religion in a context of research: The German case might serve as an example in order to show how the study of religions – even in a situation of transnational studies and global networking – is still intertwined with specific national, or societal frameworks, be it those of the USA or Canada, China or Japan, South Africa or Nigeria, Brazil or Mexico. Even in the neighboring European countries the situation may be very different. Far from being comprehensive, we would like to give just some examples:

Although there is an intensive common academic discourse, even in the other German-speaking countries the religious context is partly different: Whereas the situation in Austria (the *Österreichische Gesellschaft für Religionswissenschaft* being the IAHR member organization) is characterized by a strong majority of Roman Catholics in combination with a long tradition of tolerance towards religious minorities, going back to the eighteenth century, in Switzerland (the *Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Religionswissenschaft/Société Suisse pour la science des religions* being the IAHR member organization) the experience of the confessional wars led to a rather secular framing of the constitutional law. Nevertheless, Switzerland is still characterized by an internal variety of cantons, some of them with a strong Roman-Catholic or Protestant (Evangelic-reformed) imprint, others widely secularized.

Looking beyond these countries, the situation in the United Kingdom (the *British Association for the Study of Religions* being the national IAHR member or-

ganization) seems to be much less 'confessional' on the everyday as well as the academic level; at the same time we feel that there is a similar imperative for a distinct professional identity of the academic study of religions. On the other hand, the dividing line between *phenomenology of religion* and *cultural turn* seems less distinct than in Germany – perhaps due to the influence of Ninian Smart's modernized version of the phenomenology of religion approach. In France, the situation is again different, as there is no comparable conceptualization, combining the research fields of *histoire des religions* and *sociologie des religions*, both including leading European scholars, in a common academic discipline (the *Société Ernest-Renan: Société Française d'Histoire des Religions* being the national IAHR member organization). In French-speaking Switzerland however, the term 'Science des religions' has developed as a common notion, intertwining historians and sociologists/anthropologists of religion, e.g. in the French naming of the IAHR member association *Société Suisse pour la science des religions*. In the Czech Republic (the *Czech Society for the Study of Religion*, founded in 1990 as the IAHR national member) the academic study of religions has greatly developed in recent years as an academic discipline in a widely secular context (comparable to Eastern Germany), whereas in Poland, with the *Polish Society for the Study of Religions* as member organization, the contextual situation again is different, being characterized – inter alia – by a strong presence of the Roman Catholic church. In Italy, or in Scandinavia, as well as in other European countries, the situation also differs widely from the examples sketched above.

Apart from these differences in relation to the historical developments and institutional settings, all European countries face a growing presence of new religious movements, transnational organizations, individualized forms of religion and spirituality, revitalization of 'old' religious traditions, different forms of religious neo-conservatism, and also a considerable degree of secularization. The annual conferences of the *European Association for the Study of Religions*, with their strong focus on Western esotericism, ancient and modern paganism, religion and migration, as well as on comparative issues, are a mirror of these developments, which are, to a great extent, independent from national or societal ramifications. The authors of this contribution are convinced that Europe is not an 'exceptional case' in this regard, but that these are current topics under discussion all around the world. Looking back at the different local/national/continental contexts including its past and present power relations may help to situate the multiple *dynamics of religion* in a common worldwide discourse of our discipline, the academic study of religions.

## The Call for Bids to Hold the 2015 IAHR Congress

The Call for Bids to host the XXI Quinquennial IAHR World Congress in 2015 was published in October 2009 in the IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement November 2009. The IAHR Executive Committee decided at its annual meeting in Messina, September 12–13, 2009 to publish the call for the 2015 Congress to all member associations and societies. The deadline for submissions was May 1, 2010; however, it was extended at the Toronto 2010 Congress to April 1, 2011.

The German Association for the Study of Religion (DVRW) decided to submit its proposal to the IAHR to host the XXI World Congress at a German university. After issuing an internal call for bids, three universities submitted proposals: the Ruhr-Universität Bochum, the Universität Erfurt and the Universität Potsdam.

Though all internal bids were equally strong, making a decision hard, the DVRW decided to support the Erfurt bid, which was submitted in the fall of 2010. The University of Erfurt was committed to hosting the Congress on their campus, while the City of Erfurt and state of Thuringia supported the bid by providing the services of a booking agency free of charge. The Erfurt bid was accepted by the DVRW at their executive committee meeting January 29/30, 2011. Though the decision was not unanimous – underlining the strength of the bids of both Bochum and Potsdam – the majority of the executive committee held that Erfurt had the necessary international academic network along with the academic and practical expertise to organize the Congress. It was also easy to reach by train and plane for all possible participants, as well as providing an interesting and varied cultural and historical landscape with its rich medieval history, Weimar classicism and, more recent, Socialist past. The case was also made that the rather small size of city and university would provide short ways, a higher degree of socializing and a denser Congress atmosphere in general.

The Erfurt bid was submitted by Christoph Bochinger, Bayreuth (president of the DVRW) and Jörg Rüpke, Erfurt (speaker of the Research School 'Religion' in Erfurt) on March 22, 2011. The bid was signed by Christoph Bochinger, Bayreuth, Jörg Rüpke, Martin Fuchs, Vasilios Makrides, Martin Mulsow, Anselm Schubert, Wolfgang Spickermann and Katharina Waldner (all Erfurt).

The bid made a strong case for Erfurt as host of the IAHR Congress, stressing the historical importance of the region for medieval and Christian reformation history and as a valuable location for scholars of religions, as it is situated at the crossroads of western and former socialist societies. Though the host institution is located in a relatively small city, as are other leading departments for the study of religions in Germany (e.g. Marburg, Heidelberg, Bayreuth), the host institution made the case that the institutional staff cooperating within the Re-

search School 'Religion' (RSR) has considerable experience in organizing national and international congresses of varying sizes, including the DVRW biannual meeting with around 300 participants in 2003 to the DAV Annual Meeting in 2012 with 1,000 participants, for which Jörg Rüpke acted as head of the organizing committee. The University of Erfurt supported the bid by creating a position for the prospective Congress Coordinator for five years, i. e., throughout the planning process and execution of the IAHR Congress (the position has been held by Elisabeth Begemann).

The Erfurt bid also included further information regarding the venue, travel incentives, points of interest for visitors, hotels (incl. prospective hotel costs), recreational activities in Erfurt, as well as the necessary infrastructure for a Congress of the potential size. It also included a first suggestion for a Congress theme, a first budget outline and preliminary schedule of activities as well as potential dates for the XXI IAHR Congress.

The IAHR Executive Committee unanimously accepted the joint proposal of DVRW and Erfurt at their annual meeting in Thimphu, Butan, July 3, 2011.

## **Organizational Structure and Congress Theme**

After the Erfurt bid was accepted by the IAHR, the steering committee overseeing the bid was transformed into the Organizing Committee, chaired by Jörg Rüpke and Tim Jensen as IAHR General Secretary, as well as Mar Marcos as IAHR Deputy General Secretary. Other members were Christoph Bochinger, Bayreuth, Wanda Alberts, Hannover, Martin Fuchs, Erfurt, Vasilios Makrides, Erfurt, Hubert Seiwert, Leipzig, Katja Triplett, Göttingen, and Katharina Waldner, Erfurt. The IAHR XXI World Congress Organizing Committee was supported by Elisabeth Begemann, Erfurt (Congress coordinator) and Bernd-Christian Otto, Erfurt.

The Organizing Committee decided on 'Dynamics of Religion: Past and Present' as theme for the upcoming IAHR Congress. A preliminary subdivision of the theme was included, outlining five areas to be addressed: adaptation, innovation, individual appropriation, traditionalism, and representation. These were later reformulated to 'Religious Communities in Society: Adaptation and Transformation', 'Practices and discourses: Innovation and tradition', 'The individual: Religiosity, spiritualities and individualization' and 'Methodology: Representations and Interpretations' (see above). The Call for Papers and Panels was issued in March 2013.

In a next step, the organizing committee deliberated about possible members for the Academic Program Committee. It was the intention of the Organizing Committee from the beginning to provide for valuable program elements of high

academic standards. They therefore opted for peer review of all incoming program proposals. Members of the Academic Program Committee were chosen accordingly. Their task was to evaluate submissions and accept or reject them for the Congress program based on the academic merit of the proposal alone, as all submissions were anonymized upon receipt. Scholars invited to the Academic Program Committee would therefore have to be internationally renowned scholars, experts in their various fields, and committed to the furthering of religious studies. In order to be able to provide knowledgeable feedback to the widely varying submissions organizers expected, a total of eighteen scholars were asked to act on the Academic Program Committee. They provided invaluable help during the planning process and the development of the XXI IAHR Congress program, evaluating a total of 1,655 individual papers, 1,102 of which were submitted as part of organized panels. Most of the submissions were of an academic standard that rendered papers acceptable for inclusion in the Congress program. Some were sent back to proposers for revision with the readers' comments. Only 156 papers had to be rejected outright, with no further possibility for revision.

The peer review process proceeded in two steps: first, the incoming proposal was anonymized and assigned a number by the Congress coordinator, then sent out for review to the appropriate member of the Program Committee. Their evaluation was included in the comprehensive Congress database, which was then, in regular intervals, sent out to the chairs of the Program Committee, Christoph Bochsinger and Mar Marcos. Both chairs had a fixed list of reviewers whose evaluation they were to either confirm or, in cases of indecisive votes, overturn when the necessity of redress arose, now also in knowledge of the proposer. Only very few evaluations were overturned; this happened, for example, in some instances in which the chairs of the Program Committee saw the merit of a given proposal not in the traditional panel form, but rather in the format of an open session, i.e., a format which allows for more discussion, away from the regular format of reading papers.

The review process was therefore twofold: a double-blind peer-review in the first instance, and the possibility of non-blind peer review in the second.

Prior to the evaluation process, the organizers had approached the lifelong members of the IAHR and asked them to act on the Advisory Committee of the XXI IAHR Congress in cases of dispute. We are happy to say that only once was there need to approach the Advisory Committee in this function, and this instance was not in the context of a disputed submission, but an instance in which the IAHR Congress was clearly meant to be used as a forum for 'confessional, apologetical or other similar concerns', contrary to the stated objective of the association. We extend our thanks to the Advisory Committee for the help rendered in this case!

After issuing the Call for Panels, Papers and Posters, the Organizing Committee installed a September 15, 2014 deadline for organized panels, a December 15, 2014 deadline for individual papers and posters. Applications were accepted beginning August 1, 2013 via the IAHR Congress website ([www.iahr2015.org](http://www.iahr2015.org)). However, the September deadline was extended to merge with the December deadline, as the number of submissions was still low in September. The by far largest part of proposals was received in the two weeks before the December deadline.

In evaluating the proposals, the Academic Program Committee and the Congress coordinator made good use of a password-protected cloud storage folder which enabled all parties to upload anonymized submissions, reviews and suggestions in large amounts, a much easier way of communication decisions than via e-mail. To ensure the safety of the data uploaded into the cloud, not only was the folder password-protected, but all submissions were also deleted after the reviewers' evaluations had been included in the Congress data base from the cloud folder.

All evaluations were finalized and communicated to the submitting parties by January 31, 2015. Those whose papers and panels had been accepted for presentation at the IAHR Congress were then asked to register for the Congress by May 15, 2015. This early deadline allowed for ample time to develop the final program before the Congress and for participants to plan their trip to Erfurt early on, which was especially important for participants coming from countries with visa restrictions.

## Finances

The XXI IAHR Congress was predominantly financed by the participants' fees. However, it was a major concern of the organizers to keep the Congress fee as low as possible in order to allow as many scholars as possible, from all stages of their academic careers and from economically well-off as well as economically challenged countries, to attend the 2015 meeting.

The initial Congress fee was set at € 150.00. Registration for this 'early bird' fee was possible until March 15, 2015. Regular registration at € 180.00 was possible until May 15, 2015, the date at which all active participants in the Congress program were to be registered to be included in the Congress program. Late registration for € 200.00 was possible until June 30, when registration closed, though some daily (€ 80.00) and weekly passes (€ 230.00) were available on site. The fee also incorporated a 'green fee' of € 30.00 per person, which was

agreed upon between the myclimate foundation and the organizers, to even out the carbon footprint of the Congress.

The Congress fee was structured in this way to encourage participants to register early on for the lower fee, thus for the organizers to be able to also develop the final program early on. This procedure was only partially successful, as most active participants registered on the last day possible, though a good half of all participants made use of the pre-March fee.

The Congress was also sponsored by various institutions and individuals, for which we are grateful. To mention is, of course, the University of Erfurt, which provided the necessary infrastructure free of charge, including the venue and a number of full- to part-time positions. Further means were granted by the German Research Foundation (DFG), which sponsored the Congress with € 34,000.00 within the framework of its Research Funding: International Scientific Events program. Another grant was given by the Ernst-Abbe-Stiftung, Jena (€ 20,000.00). We extend our heartfelt thanks to both institutions.

The Congress was initially sponsored by the DVRW, which bore all travelling and advertising costs of the first two years, until other means of financing the Congress were available. To this were added Congress helper stipends which aided students willing to support the Congress as official helpers to travel to and from Erfurt.

The state of Thuringia generously sponsored the rent for the opening venue, the Theater Erfurt, where both opening keynote and welcome reception were held on Sunday, August 23.

Individual keynotes were sponsored by the family of the late colleague Gary Lease (1940–2008), the *European Association for the Study of Religions* (EASR) and the *Japan Federation of Societies for the Study of Religions* (JFSSR).

Last, but not least, the IAHR contributed a large sum explicitly to be used for travel grants which allowed colleagues from all over the world to attend the Congress in Erfurt.

At the end of the Congress, the organizers are happy to say that all financial obligations have been met and that a slight surplus not only secures the Open Access publication of the Congress proceedings, but allowed for further travel grants to be paid out.

## Congress Attendance and Participation

With an eye to the past two Congresses in Tokyo and Toronto, the organizers calculated for 2015 with a participation of around 800 scholars in Erfurt. The Call for Panels, Papers and Posters was issued early on and distributed widely, mak-

ing use both of traditional ad media (flyers and presence of organizers at various conferences) and multiple e-lists. The Call was also, of course, included in a number of IAHR e-Bulletins. As planning for the 2015 Congress began early on, signs that word spread could be readily observed. The first proposal was received well before the CfP was issued in March 2013, sent in, as others were, per e-mail before the registration form on our website went online in August 2013.

Submissions via the portal were then, however, initially slow, despite the interest in the Congress. Only 133 proposals for panels with convened papers as well as individual papers or poster came in before the September 15, 2014 deadline, which made it a necessary decision to extend the deadline for organized panels to merge with the deadline for individual papers in December. And indeed, most submissions were made in the two weeks, and especially the weekend, preceding the deadline of Monday, December 15, 2014. Of the 722 proposals (convened panels and individual papers/posters), 237 were received on the last possible day, 554 within the last week. This amounted to a total number of 1,655 paper proposals that were received and reviewed by the Program Committee, 1,442 of which were accepted for the final program.

In planning the Congress, organizers had reckoned on a number of 800 participants, the means between a possible low attendance of only 600 and a high attendance of 1,000. To receive a number of more than 1,600 proposals for the IAHR Congress was unexpected and satisfying, though initially overwhelming. However, not all prospective participants with accepted papers or panels made it to the Congress, having to withdraw for various reasons, be they personal, professional or financial.

But still, the final count of registered participants pre-Congress was 1,370 persons registered, 125 of which cancelled on short notice (i.e., before August 12, 2015). Happily, the number of last-minute cancellations remained exceedingly low, only 29 colleagues needing to withdraw for various reasons in the week before or during the Congress. Another eighty colleagues attended the Congress spontaneously for at least one day, purchasing daily or weekly passes on site.

## Congress Venue

The XXI IAHR World Congress took place on the campus of the University of Erfurt. Space and infrastructure was provided by the University free of charge for use during the Congress. This included all available seminar rooms in multiple buildings as well as the cafeteria, the gym and the grounds, where a tent was erected for larger sessions and the Congress barbecue Wednesday evening.

The number of participants demanded that almost all seminar rooms were in perpetual use during the entire Congress week. However, it also demanded that extra space was found, as the daily plenary keynote addresses made it likely that not enough space could be provided in the lecture theaters on campus, the largest one of which seats 195.

The situation was worsened by the fact that the main lecture theatre, the Auditorium Maximum, was closed in February 2015 due to safety considerations, after an electrical outlet caught fire. The damage could, unfortunately, not be repaired until the beginning of the Congress, which is why the building was not to be used to ensure the safety of our participants. The organizers looked for alternatives, instead, and found two suitable ones and one which did, unfortunately, not work out.

The University gym could be blocked by the Congress and turned into a lecture hall seating 500 for the Congress. Though extra technical equipment had to be rented to provide for the appropriate sound and visual conditions, the gym provided a good alternative and was almost perpetually in use. The Congress also rented the lecture theater of the Helios Clinic across the street from the University campus. Though somewhat further off than all other venues, this venue also helped in deflecting overcrowding during the sessions.

A third measure was to put up a tent at the entrance to the campus. Though the tent was used on Monday, organizers had to concede defeat on Tuesday, as high winds and the nearby street made it impossible to ensure that speakers would be heard and understood. Though the tent remained standing throughout the Congress week, it did not provide a good alternative for sessions or keynote addresses.

While the Opening keynote had always been planned to take place in the Theater Erfurt, the same cannot be said for the Closing keynote and General Assembly. For this, we had counted on using the auditorium. Since that was, post-February, no longer an option, it became necessary to look around for alternatives. We were lucky to find a good alternative in the Alte Heizkraftwerk, which is not only right across the street from the site of the Opening night venue, thus being easy of access and providing a neat framework to the Congress, but also provided a nice contrast again to the opening venue, as the Kraftwerk is an old, almost derelict former power station, that is now used for cultural events in Erfurt. As luck would have it, the Achava festival took place in Erfurt at this time, wherefore the Kraftwerk was fully equipped with stage, chairs, technical and sound equipment, and ready for our use. An agreement with the festival's coordinator was quickly reached and we are grateful to them for allowing us use of the Kraftwerk at that time.

The overriding principle in planning for the IAHR Congress was that the venue be easy of access and that all roads be as short as possible. Since the University of Erfurt is rather small with only 5,500 students, all buildings are conveniently grouped together on campus. Participants could thus reach their sessions easily and with time to spare during the 30 minute breaks in the program. The cafeteria and various cafés on campus also provided nourishment during the program hours. The comparatively small (but historically rich) venue at Erfurt was felt to be a good setting for an IAHR congress, enabling easy communication and short distances. The Erfurt Congress was, in the history of the IAHR, one of the largest Congresses to be held.

## Financial Support to Attend the Congress

The XXI IAHR World Congress granted a number of Travel Grants to attend the meeting in Erfurt of up to € 1,000.00. Eligibility for a travel grant was given under the following conditions:<sup>4</sup>

1. The applicant was to be a paid up member of a national or regional association which is a member or an affiliate to the IAHR.
2. The applicant must have shown evidence of having sought funding from other available institutions or associations, such as the applicant's home university or national funding organization.
3. The applicant had to submit an abbreviated CV.
4. The applicant must have been included in the Congress program with a paper, as panel organizer or the like, fully approved by the Program Committee.
5. The applicant had to be registered as participant to the XXI IAHR World Congress (though this point was waived in a few cases, as the financial situation in these cases was such that attendance to the Congress was only possible with a travel grant; paying the Congress fee in advance would have been an exceeding hardship. However, once notice of the travel grant had been given, registration for the Congress had to be made before May 15 to remain eligible for the grant).
6. The applicant, if a student, was to present a letter of recommendation either from an official within the respective national association or from a senior scholar.

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<sup>4</sup> Full guidelines to be found under <http://www.iahr2015.org/iahr-registration/1698.html>

At the XXI IAHR Congress, we were happy to award 47 travel grants to colleagues from all over the globe. This was largely possible due to the generous contributions by the IAHR, the DFG and the Ernst-Abbe-Stiftung, which paid not only for the grants, but also allowed us to invite distinguished scholars as keynotes to Erfurt, as well as providing all Congress participants with a weekly pass for public transportation, easing the strain of having to pay for trips between the various hotels in the inner city and university campus, where the Congress was held, for all participants. This option was, as far as we can tell, made good use of.

Travel grants at the IAHR Congress amounted to a sum of € 34,720.76. They were granted for travel and housing costs. The Congress fee was not waived.

The Congress received 65 applications for travel grants. They were viewed and evaluated by a Travel Grant Committee which consisted of three members of the Organizing Committee, and subject to the final decision of the Organizing Committee. The criteria for evaluation were, apart from the above mentioned points, the academic value of their presentations at the IAHR Congress and such 'soft' criteria as economic situations in home nations, currency value, involvement in Religious Studies associations etc. As the Congress is meant to provide the opportunity to further the Study of Religions – in this context, on the international level – it was important to support those applicants who dedicate their professional lives to furthering the study of religions in their respective nations or regions and giving them the opportunity to meet fellow scholars who might aid them in this undertaking.

All grants were given up to and not exceeding a certain sum. We are very happy to say that quite a number of awardees were very careful with the money that was granted to them, and remained under the sum they were awarded.

The full list of travel grant awardees will of course be made available to the hosts of the XXII IAHR World Congress.

## **Green Congress**

The XXI IAHR Congress organizers cooperated with the myclimate foundation to offset the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions produced by the Congress, especially as regards short- and long-distance travel and waste material produced in the course of the Congress. The 'green fee' was calculated by the foundation and paid by the DVRW and the Congress, amounting to € 30.00 per person. This was a point which we felt strongly about, understanding our responsibility not only to the field of religious studies, but also to society at large and the future.

For this reason, both Session Guide and Abstract Book were only provided electronically, for download on the Congress website in all formats (PC, laptop, tablet or smart phone). We were also glad to provide participants with the Congress app, which was sponsored by the publishing house de Gruyter. It not only provided information on the program and the venue, but made quick updates possible, which became vital especially in the few cases in which a venue needed to be changed (such as the tent as lecture theatre) or presentations were cancelled.

We also encouraged our participants to make use of public transportation as much as possible, i. e., not only to use the Congress ticket allowing use of trams and buses free of charge for participants during the Congress week, but also, beforehand, encouraging our guests to come by train, if somehow possible. As the city of Erfurt is, in its center, relatively small and compact and all Congress hotels (as well as some of the budget accommodations we recommended) were located there, and the distance between train station, hotels and city center on the one hand and campus on the other is not great, taking the tram or the bus up to the Congress site or even walking there (especially along the river Gera, a picturesque route through various parks, which some of our guests made ample use of) was an easy and convenient way to move about during Congress week.

In order to minimize waste material and avoid masses of empty plastic water bottles, we organized for a water bar to be available during the Congress week, which was quite well received. We provided all participants with multiuse, durable cups emblazoned with the Congress logo for this use, which they were welcome to take home with them as a Congress souvenir.

However, the Congress did not offer free coffee breaks. Our reasoning was the following: while we did want to provide participants with the necessary refreshments, experience has shown that providing coffee in the necessary amounts to supply 900+ participants each day with coffee during various coffee breaks throughout a regular Congress day would amount to enormous amounts having to be brewed, as an optimal amount would be almost impossible to find – no matter how carefully calculated –, daily acceptance of the amount on offer would vary strongly, leaving either too little or too much coffee, which would then have to be poured out, undrunk. This was quite in contradiction to our stated aim of planning and executing the Congress as environmentally friendly as possible. Since the growing of coffee in huge plantations far from Europe leaves an measurable carbon footprint (in terms of the Congress: close to 30 kg CO<sub>2</sub> per day for two coffee breaks), we opted against offering free coffee. We ensured instead that all cafés on Campus, which would normally have had restricted hours during the semester break, remained open during all Congress hours, providing coffee, tea and other refreshments on demand, not producing great amounts of

extra beverages which would then have to be disposed of, unused. This was accepted by most participants, though some complaints regarding the lack of free coffee were also voiced. The fee was accordingly lower.

Since we also sought to minimize waste and printed material for the Congress, we did not provide Congress bags and discouraged advertising in printed formats. We offered ad placement instead in our online formats, in the Session Guide and Abstract Book with links embedded in the ads that would direct users to the advertisers' pages directly. This was supplemented by offline ads included in the app. Though many publishers asked for printed material to be placed in Congress bags initially, this being the 'regular' format, many were happy to make use of the format offered and placed ads, with embedded links, in our online program guides. Overall, this offer was well-received, beyond the circle of publishers and projects which were present at the Congress and participated in the Book Exhibit.

Although we cannot, of course, claim to have been an entirely green Congress, we do believe that our efforts before, during and after the Congress contributed somewhat to alleviate the stress on the environment produced by an event of this size and can only encourage others to consider similar measures for their own conferences.

## Congress Survey

A Congress survey among participants was conducted by the organizers well after the event. The timing was somewhat unfortunate, as we had intended to send out the survey much sooner; however, due to the multiple commitments of the organizers at their universities and in their research projects, preparing and sending out the survey was held up.

Participation in the survey was c. 20% (N=278). Most participants declared themselves satisfied (42%) or very satisfied (23%) with the Congress. The predominant reason for attendance was, of course, to present research (48%), while networking (37%) was another important reason for attending.

The academic program was overall declared to have been satisfying (48%) or very satisfying (18%). Especially the keynotes, which were meant to be, by the organizers, the 'anchors' to the Congress' overall topic, were deemed to be fitting for the IAHR Congress (92%), with 89% deeming the chosen topics as also fitting of the World Congress. Their presentations were overall judged to have been of high quality (70%).

Regarding the selection process, most found the review process helpful (41%) or very helpful (20%), with less than 2% stating they would have prefer-

red a program without peer review. The overall quality of sessions or panels was judged by 92% to be satisfactory or mostly satisfactory.

Regarding the social media and the Congress app, there is definite room for improvement, as only 7% made regular use of the Congress' Facebook and Twitter pages, and only 18% used the Congress app. A possible reason for this is that the Congress app was finished only just in time for the Congress, so many may not have been aware of it. While we had planned a much earlier release date, the number of sessions to be included in the app slowed us down again. We therefore urge the organizers of future Congresses to plan with ample time to spare in developing their Congress app.

In planning the Congress, we were aware that the lack of a printed program book would be a possible point of criticism. Therefore we communicated early on, via our website, that the full program book would only be available online, while also making sure that our guests would be provided with free campus WiFi. Indeed, the lack of a printed program was regularly commented on, with 54% stating that they would have preferred the program to have been provided in the regular, printed format. However, with 46% stating that they were happy without a printed program, we would like to encourage future Congress organizers to consider alternative, environmentally friendly ways to publish the program.

The majority of Congress attendees also agreed with the incorporated green fee (24% agree, 44% fully agree), which is another feature that can safely be recommended by us for future Congresses.

Our reasons for not providing coffee and other refreshments during breaks in the program have already been stated above (see the previous chapter). Almost half of the Congress participants agree with this policy (48%), without knowing our reasoning behind it (we are afraid we did not communicate them before the Congress, which, admittedly, was an oversight in preparing our guests for the event). When asked if participants would accept a higher fee to provide for catering during the breaks, 58% responded with 'no'.

The other major issue that was raised both during the Congress and in the comments of the survey, and which is reflected in the survey, regards the Congress' policy of asking participants to send their presentations in early. While we do understand that many continue to work on their presentations until the very last minute, this measure was put into place (and communicated over various channels) to keep the notebooks used during the Congress running throughout the entire week. Many participants were angered by this policy; our relaxing it on the second day of the Congress, however, immediately led to some of the hardware being infected with viruses. To have them ready and running the next day, the tech team worked late into the night to restore the notebooks to

a useable state. The policy was certainly not put into place to inconvenience our participants, but on the contrary, to have both our notebooks and their memory devices safe and functional and to allow a smooth running of the program. Despite repeated communications on this matter, the measure was not widely accepted. In retrospect, a more relaxed handling of this aspect would have seemed advisable, though it would have to have come at the cost of a larger tech team, which, in turn, would have raised the Congress fee for all participants.

Overall, most participants in the survey declared themselves happy and satisfied with the Congress (42% plus 23% very satisfied), the staff (34% plus 41% very satisfied) and organizers (40% plus 25% very satisfied).

The findings of the survey will of course be made available to future Congress organizers to aid them in their planning process.

We thank all participants in the survey for their trouble!

## Publications

Publications by the Congress organizers include the official Congress website, the Abstract Book (412 pp.) and Session Guide (28 pp.), both of which are available for download on the Congress website. The 2015 Congress being conscious of its responsibility to the environment, only very few copies were printed out and were available for sale (for a small fee) in the Congress secretariat during the Congress week. Despite the low fee less than ten copies of the Abstract Book were sold.

A hardcopy volume of the keynote presentations at the XXI IAHR World Congress is published in the fall 2016. An Open Access publication will not only include the keynote presentations, but also the abstracts of all papers delivered at the Congress in August.

Other papers presented at the IAHR Congress are under preparation in various journals and collective volumes, though the organizers are currently not aware of the preparation of a publication dedicated to a specific section or panel presented at the IAHR Congress.

## Acknowledgments

Before and during the Congress, we received much support from various institutions, departments and individuals, which must not remain without mention.

We are grateful to acknowledge the German Associations for the Study of Religions (DVRW), not only for supporting us financially from the word 'go' and

bearing all initial costs until other sources of funding could be made available for the Congress, but for the support and faith they showed to Erfurt to plan and organize the IAHR Congress and to faithfully mirror the width and depth of Religious Studies in Germany.

The German Research Foundation (DFG) supported us with a generous grant which enabled us to invite leading scholars in the field of Religious Studies from all over the globe to participate in the Congress. Much thanks to Eyke Dung, who coordinated our application and was always ready to help out with advice and aid.

The same thanks must be extended to the Ernst Abbe Stiftung in Jena, which is dedicated to support science, research, innovation and social projects in Thuringia. In supporting the XXI IAHR Congress, they contributed significantly to furthering Thuringia and Thuringian universities as centers for humanities and Religious Studies, especially, for which we are grateful.

The IAHR itself made available a significant sum of money to allow scholars from all over the world to attend the Congress. But our thanks to the IAHR extends beyond the financial to the much valued and always readily rendered advice whenever and wherever it was sought. In the planning process, it was immensely helpful for us to meet with the IAHR Executive Committee at regular intervals to present the current stage of planning and to work out the next steps to be taken, with the approval and input of the IAHR.

Many thanks to the *European Association for the Study of Religions* (EASR) and the *Japan Federation of Societies for the Study of Religions* (JFSSR), who both offered sponsorships for keynote speakers at the IAHR Congress. The EASR sponsored the keynote lecture by Kim Knott, while the JFSSR took on the sponsorship of Susumu Shimazono. We are grateful to both associations for the support they gave as member associations to the IAHR, underlining the significance of World Congresses of this kind.

Our heartfelt gratitude also goes to the family of our late colleague Gary Lease, who sponsored the Opening Keynote and Gary Lease Memorial Lecture with a significant contribution, which not only paid the travelling costs of the keynote speaker in full, but which also aided in covering the further costs of the Opening Keynote and Gary Lease Memorial Lecture.

The State of Thuringia made possible the opening and renting of the Theater Erfurt as venue for the opening ceremony, keynote and reception. We are very grateful to them for their support and ongoing interest in the Congress.

A further German sponsor wishing to remain anonymous supplied a significant grant which was to be used to aid in paying for the needs of the Congress helpers, marking them out and thus making them easily identifiable to all participants by providing the Congress with the trade-mark light-blue helper shirts.

We gratefully acknowledge the contribution by Prof. Dr. Andreas Barner, president of the German Stifterverband, for his personal sponsoring of the Congress at a very early stage and by the Teekampagne, which kept our Congress helpers alert during their hours of work.

Last, but not least, we are happy and thankful to mention Thuringia Tourism, which cooperated with us from the very beginning to provide not only the platform, but also the means to register papers, panels and participants and provide them with hotels, tours and all other kinds of touristic services they may have required. Ms. Boegel and her team were tireless in their support to our Congress, adapting to our needs and demands and rendering invaluable aid.

The Congress could not have taken place in Erfurt without the continued support of the university itself. Both the Max Weber Center for Advanced Cultural and Social Studies and the Department of Religious Studies supported us with uncounted hours of manpower, especially in the last months before and during the Congress, in which the 'normal' operation of the Center came almost to naught, all units being busy with preparations for the Congress.

The president and chancellor of the university provided us with the necessary infrastructure and framework for the Congress and were always ready to help and to advise in all matters which went beyond the organizers' ability to solve.

The Registrar's Office provided the Congress with the necessary space for the event and was always available to help in cases of unforeseen problems, such as the closing of the Auditorium Maximum, to come up with possible and doable solutions.

All our ad material was carefully prepared and adapted to our needs by the Communications office. Their meticulous attention to detail and their creative input greatly eased the task of providing our prospective participants with attractive and informative material. They were also happy to jump in and coordinate messaging via the social media sites and the app during the Congress, for which, also, we are immensely grateful.

The Financial department helped, and continues to help, with all matters financial concerning the Congress. Little did we know at the beginning what this would entail, but we are truly grateful to the effort and to the many solutions found, despite multiple obstacles due to legal restrictions and international monies flow.

The Facilities Management did invaluable work before, during, and after the Congress, being always ready to answer to any call, long before announced or at short notice, not only preparing the campus for our guests, but to help with the largest delivery as well as with the smallest detail to be fixed.

The same gratitude is extended to the Media Center, which was available throughout the Congress week to make sure that the university-based media used during the Congress worked efficiently and that all sessions were provided with the media they needed.

Finally, campus security went beyond their call to make sure that all participants would be safe and well during the IAHR Congress, being available day and night and aiding wherever help was needed.

The IAHR Executive, President Rosalind I.J. Hackett and General Secretary Tim Jensen, were always available for advice and gave invaluable input at various stages of the planning process.

The greatest burden in developing the Academic Program, and with that, the heart of the IAHR Congress, was laid upon the Academic Program Committee. They performed admirably in reviewing the hundreds of proposals we received, providing reviews, suggestions for revisions and many, many helpful comments which aided in finally putting together a program that was worthy of a World Congress of Religious Studies.

Finally, we extend our gratitude and thanks to the Congress secretariat and the more than one hundred helpers who were on site to make sure that the Congress was executed to the satisfaction of, if not all, than almost all participants, working relentlessly and long hours to make sure that the Congress would be a success for both participants and the IAHR itself.

## Media

Regarding the cooperation with the media at the XXI IAHR Congress, much of what has been stated by the organizers at the last Congress in Toronto can be reiterated here: though we worked with our Communications office early on to alert the media to the Congress taking place in Erfurt, interest in the event itself remained somewhat low.

A news release issued by the Communications office was picked up by a number of newspapers, both regional and national, though follow-up information was only published in two cases. Three TV spots highlighting the Congress were aired on regional TV (MDR), focusing respectively on the field of Religious Studies in general and the Opening Ceremony at the Theater Erfurt, and on prominent colleagues in the field and their research. The major obstacle here seemed to be the depth of the field itself, which made it harder for journalists to find the general focus which would provide the interest for their audiences. Though there were quite a few papers and sessions at the Congress which bore directly on current news, e.g. the rise of the IS and martyrdom, it seems

it was felt that a Congress of Religious Studies did not offer much of general interest to media audiences. Of the three press passes issued, none was requested by a larger German news outlet, and only one was picked up.

However, newspapers did make use of the opportunity for phone interviews to support further information on the Congress during the Congress week.

The social media outlets, both Facebook and Twitter, were used predominantly by Congress participants themselves and did not, as far as we can tell, add to further interest in the Congress beyond the circle of colleagues already active in the field of Religious Studies.

## **Congress Website**

The Congress website, [www.iahr2015.org](http://www.iahr2015.org), will be active for the next two years. Further information regarding the Congress, such as the notification of the Open Access publication due in the fall of 2016 will be posted there when available.

The Congress organizers also made use of social media during the preparation for and the running of the XXI IAHR World Congress. Both Facebook and Twitter accounts (FB: International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR) 2015; Twitter: @iahr\_congress) are still active and will be used for further information regarding the 2015 Congress.

## **Concluding Remarks**

The quality of the papers, the novelty of the results and the relevance for our understanding of the changing face of religion in past and present as discernible from the discussion have made the XXI World Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions a huge success. We are happy to be able to present the many results of the Congress in a permanent as well as freely accessible form. We would like to thank again all those involved in the organization as well as all participants. In this moment, special thanks go to Elisabeth Bege-  
mann, who has been the backbone of the actual running of the Congress in all its phases, before as well as after.

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Bayreuth/Erfurt, June 2016  
 Christoph Bochinger

Jörg Rüpke



# The Congress Administrator's Statistical Report

**Full number of participants: 1,296**

Ph.D.: 948  
(Doctoral) students: 348

## **Gender balance:**

41.5% female  
58.5% male

## **Number of countries represented: 61**

1	Abu Dhabi
16	Australia
8	Austria
1	Belarus
6	Belgium
4	Brazil
1	Bulgaria
41	Canada
8	China
1	Croatia
1	Cuba
27	Czech Republic
41	Denmark
1	Egypt
4	Estonia
27	Finland
24	France
302	Germany
2	Ghana
1	Greece
8	Hungary
11	India

1	Indonesia
2	Iran
9	Ireland
6	Israel
43	Italy
113	Japan
11	Korea
4	Latvia
3	Lithuania
2	Malaysia
7	Mexico
1	Morocco
1	Myanmar
67	Netherlands
7	New Zealand
13	Nigeria
35	Norway
2	Pakistan
9	Philippines
16	Poland
3	Portugal
4	Romania
15	Russia
1	Serbia
1	Singapore
11	South Africa
19	Spain
45	Sweden
55	Switzerland
2	Taiwan
2	Thailand
1	Tunisia
5	Turkey
1	UAE
99	UK
14	Ukraine
128	USA
1	Vietnam
1	Zambia

65% Europe  
16% Asia  
13.3% America  
2.3% Africa  
1.7% Australia and New Zealand

**Number of travel grants: 47**

Total amount spent for travel grants: € 34,720.76

**Submissions:**

313 organized panels  
409 individual papers  
Total: 1,655 papers

**Included in the program:**

1,167 speakers  
1,499 papers  
342 panels (including multiple session panels, Open Sessions)

