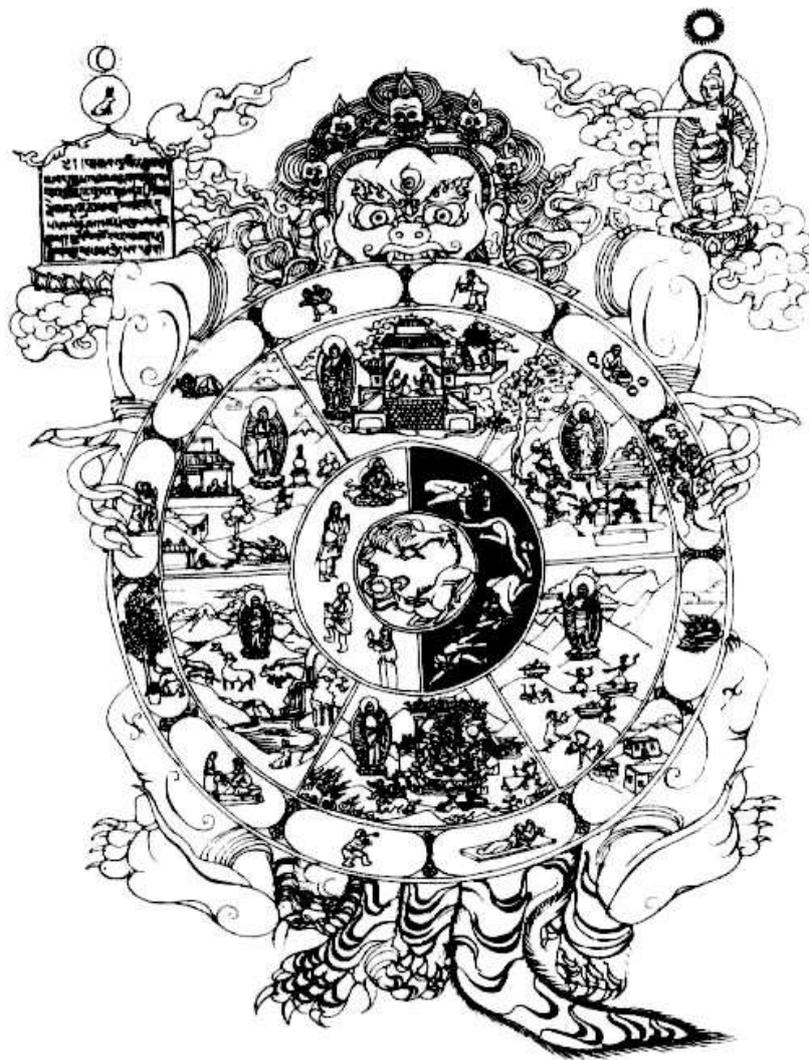


BRITISH ASSOCIATION
for the
STUDY OF RELIGIONS



BULLETIN
No 98 March 2003

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The British Association for the Study of Religions (BASR), formerly the British Association for the History of Religions (founded in 1954), is affiliated to the European Association for the Study of Religions (EASR) and to the International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR), whose object is the promotion of the academic study of religions through international interdisciplinary collaboration. The BASR pursues these aims within the United Kingdom through the arrangement of conferences and symposia, the publication of a Bulletin and an Annual General Meeting. Membership of the BASR is open to scholars whose work has a bearing on the academic study of religions and who are normally resident in the United Kingdom. Those interested in membership may apply directly by writing to the **Hon Secretary** to whom all general correspondence concerning the BASR should be sent: **Dr James L Cox, University of Edinburgh, New College, Mound Place, Edinburgh EH1 2LX.**

Correspondence concerning the **Bulletin**, including information and contributions, should be addressed to **Dr George D. Chryssides** at G.D.Chryssides@wlv.ac.uk or at **School of Humanities, Languages and Social Science, University of Wolverhampton, Millennium City Building, Wulfruna Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 3SB.** Deadlines for submissions are: 15 October for November issue; 15 February for March issue; 15 May for June issue.

Orders for the **Occasional Papers** should be addressed to: **Professor Kim Knott, Dept of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT.**

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Editorial: Anniversaries

We all know the importance of ‘sacred time’ in the study of religion, and a common theme for my students’ assignments is why religions punctuate their year with special commemorative events. Here in multi-faith Wolverhampton, it seems that there is always some festival to celebrate. At the time of writing, Parinirvana Day has just passed, and the local Chinese Buddhist Temple will be celebrating its Annual Longevity Festival later in March. Some of my Muslim students took time off to celebrate Eid al-Adha, and Holi is the next major festival for our Hindu communities, presenting participant-observers with the problem of how one removes from one’s clothes the coloured dye that gets thrown!

There are times when I feel sympathetic to my friends the Jehovah’s Witnesses, who systematically avoid such celebrations. Of course they are right in claiming that Christmas is over-commercialised, pagan in origin, not celebrated by the first-century Church, and probably not the true birth date of Jesus of Nazareth. However, there is something about an anniversary that causes most of us to suspend strict logic, and celebrate a festival whether it is strictly ‘authentic’ or not.

Festivals and anniversaries do more than provide an excuse for having a good time, however. Apart from the celebration, events like Christmas and New Year afford opportunities for people to take stock of their lives. Compiling one’s Christmas card list, for example, involves the salutary exercise of deciding which of our friendships have survived the past year, and which have no further mileage, and the practice of making new year resolutions — even if they are subsequently broken — involves reflection on one’s shortcomings and how one better one’s life.

This edition of the *BASR Bulletin* falls within an important anniversary period for the organisation. The Bulletin itself was 30 years old last year: being new to the editorship at the time, I fear I missed the exact date, and have to mark it belatedly, with apologies. Next year, we celebrate our half-centenary as an Association, the marking of which is not reliant on your editor’s memory, but is being organised by the Executive Committee and much of our membership.

In contrast with the majority of religious believers, however, authenticity is a key issue. The 2004 BASR Annual Conference will take place in Exeter College, Oxford, where the Association (then the British Section of the BAHHR) was founded in 1954, and the organising committee — with the exactness that one would expect of scholars — is at pains to ascertain the precise location of the room in which E. O. James, its first president, and others met fifty years ago.

Looking back to one's past is not mere sentimental nostalgia. As the BASR approaches its half-centenary it is salutary to reflect that we stand in the shoes of the celebrated scholars mentioned in the archival material that Peggy Morgan, our President, has collected for this Bulletin.

Our anniversary also offers an opportunity to reflect on how the study of religion has developed over these years. The public, as well as our students, can sometimes feel that academics inhabit ivory towers, generating endless debate that reaches no firm conclusions and makes minimal progress. Even a cursory glance at the subject's history should reveal that Religious Studies has made remarkable progress over these years. The availability of the subject has vastly expanded, we have moved beyond 'comparative religion', we study faith in a plural society rather than learn historico-philosophical accounts of other cultures; we have taken aboard new religious movements as a serious area of study; the study of women in the religion is an important corrective to apparent male dominance, both within religion and in academic life; and, most recently, the role of IT and its influence, both on religions themselves and in the way we study them, offers a fruitful area for further development.

I hope that our anniversaries, and the *BASR Bulletins* that appear in this important period will provide us all, as scholars, with a useful opportunity to reflect on our subject's future as well as its past.

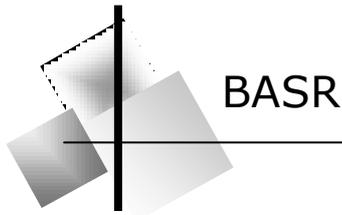
George Chryssides

The annual subscription for the BASR and Bulletin is £15.00 (£8 for postgraduate students and researchers without full employment). Scholars residing abroad may subscribe to the Bulletin for £10.00 a year. Subscriptions are due in October. The BASR is a registered charity (No 801567), and members are encouraged to pay their subscriptions by Gift Aid (if in taxed employment), by direct debit or annual cheque. Cheques should be made out to the 'British Association for the Study of Religions' and sent to the Treasurer: **Dr Helen Waterhouse, Arts Faculty, The Open University, Milton Keynes MK7 6AA.**

—Visit our website at <basr.org.uk>—

BASR OCCASIONAL PAPERS (order from Kim Knott)

- 1 Miranda Green, *Women and Goddesses in the Celtic World*, 1991
- 2 Christine Trevett, *The Quaker Margaret Fell: Religion and Gender in a C17th Dissenting Group*, 1991
- 3 Ann Bancroft, *Hildegard of Bingen to Meinrad Craighead*, 1991
- 4 Julia Leslie, *Religion, Gender and Dharma: The Case of the Widow Ascetic*, 1991
- 5 Peter Antes, *How to study religious experience in the traditions*, 1992
- 6 Marion Bowman, *Phenomenology, fieldwork and folk religion*, 1992
- 7 George Chryssides, *Unificationism: A study in religious syncretism*, 1993
- 8 Michael Pye, *Syncretism versus synthesis*, 1993
- 9 Ria Kloppenberg, *A Buddhist-Christian encounter in Sri Lanka: Pandura Vada*, 1994
- 10 Peter Donovan, *Maori rituals add magic to contemporary civic life*, 1995
- 11 Ninian Smart, *Sacred nationalism*, 1995
- 12 W.S.F. Pickering, *Locating the sacred: Durkheim and Otto*, 1995
- 13 Terence Thomas, *'The sacred' as a viable concept in the contemporary study of religions*, 1995 (bound together with 12)
- 14 Margaret Chatterjee, *Do we need authority in religious life?*, 1996
- 15 Chris Arthur, *Media, meaning, and method in the study of religion*, 1996
- 16 Gerrie ter Haar, *Chosen people: The concept of diaspora in the modern world*, 1996
- 17 Richard Gombrich, *Religious experience in early Buddhism*, 1997
- 18 James Cox, *Alterity as identity: Innovation in the Academic Study of Religions*, 1998
- 19 Elizabeth Amoah, *African spirituality and religious innovation*, 1998
- 20 Ian Reader, *Religion, conflict and the sacred mission: On understanding the violence of Aum Shinrikyo*, 1999
- 21 Brian Bocking, *Religious Studies: The New Queen of the Sciences*, 2000
- 22 Kim Knott, *The Sense and Nonsense of 'Community': A Consideration of Contemporary Debates about Community and Culture by a Scholar of Religion*, 2002
- 23 Armin Geertz, *Religion and Community in Indigenous Contexts*, 2002
- 24 Guilia Sfamini Gasparro, *Religion and Community in the Ancient World*, 2002
- 25 Tariq Modood, *Multiculturalism, Muslims and the British State*, 2002



BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS

ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2003

15-17 September

Chester College

RELIGIONS IN TRANSITION:

Diachronic and synchronic perspectives

KEYNOTE LECTURE:

**'Diachronic and Synchronic Factors in Religious Transition:
The Case of New Religious Movements'**

Professor Elom Dovlo, Associate Professor in the Study of Religions,
University of Ghana, Legon.

The topic is intended to investigate the dynamic character of religious change in the broadest possible sense. It could include, for example, analyses of religious syncretism, transplantation, diaspora and emergent religion, or encounters among religious communities from historical perspectives or in contemporary situations.

Offers of papers and reports of work in progress *preferably by email* by 1 June 2003 to: Dr Ron Geaves (r.geaves@chester.ac.uk), Department of Theology & Religious Studies, Chester College, Parkgate Road, Chester, CH1 4BJ.

A limited number of student bursaries are available for post-graduates presenting papers or work in progress reports; applications by 1 June 2003 to Marion Bowman (m.i.bowman@open.ac.uk)

Registration form, bursary application form, and programme details (when available) on the BASR web site (basr.org.uk).

Looking Forward to Looking Back

From Past Bulletins of BAHR / BASR

(introduced by Peggy Morgan)

The Bulletin of the Association was thirty years old in November 2002 and the Association is 50 years old in September 2004, when an anniversary conference is planned where it began, at Exeter College, Oxford from 13th to 16th September in that year. As we approach that 50th anniversary, members may be interested in some key items from past Bulletins, which we shall feature in the run-up to the conference.

The first of our features is reprinted from the BAHR's Bulletin No 31, June/July 1980 (the name was not changed to BASR till 1989 and the new constitution printed in Bulletin 57: March 1989). The Association had been founded at a meeting at Exeter College, Oxford in September 1954 as the British Section of the International Association for The History of Religions. (The constitution documenting the change of name to BAHR can be found in Bulletin No.12: July 1975). D. W. Gundry (1904-1990) was the first honorary secretary and treasurer and *The Daily Telegraph* obituary for him was printed in Bulletin 61: June 1990. Geoffrey Parrinder (b.1910) is a founder and life member of the Association and served as secretary from 1961 after Professor Gundry's departure to Ibadan and as its second president from 1972-1977 after the death of E. O. James, who had served as president from 1954-1972. A profile of Geoffrey Parrinder by Martin Forward is in Bulletin 68: March 1963 and a volume entitled *Turning Points in Religious Studies* (T. & T. Clark, 1990), edited by Professor Ursula King who is one of his former students, was presented to him on the occasion of his eightieth birthday. Professor King also contributed an article 'Celebrating Forty Years of BASR' in Bulletin 73: November 1994.

The Beginnings of the British Association for the History of Religions

By D. W. Gundry (Leicester)

It must not be assumed that there was little interest in the study of religions before the establishment of formal departments of religious studies in our universities, colleges and schools. Much pioneering work, involving fundamental research, was, ironically enough, done by Christian missionaries. One has only to think of the works of Jesuit scholars, as well as others later, like Codrington in Melanesia, Legge in China and Farquhar in India.

Then there was the impact of Kantian and Hegelian philosophy, which led to the phenomenological approach to the study of religions, and the contribution to linguists, such as Max Müller and Monier Williams. Into the nineteenth and early twentieth-century melting pot were added the ingredients of early anthropologists, like Tyler, folklorists, like Lang, and the relatively new human sciences, notably psychology. The complex story is told in the books of Louis Jordan early in this century, pleading for the recognition of “comparative religion”, and in the recent history by E. J. Sharpe, though he appears to have overlooked the story of our British Association.

For a long time there were no distinct facilities for research and teaching in this field in British universities. Foreign universities were well ahead. Basle was probably the first: it provided lectures on the history of religion from 1840 onwards. Several continental and American universities founded chairs or lectureships in the 1870s. On the whole, the work done in the United Kingdom was that of scholars in their own specialism. Broadly, the reasons for the disinclination to set up the study of religions as a discipline in its own right were: the fear of some theologians that it would breed infidelity, the vested interest of scholars in furthering their own subject, and the suspicion that it would only replace one ideology with another — some kind of idealist philosophy of religion in place of traditional metaphysics.

On the first of these objections, one has only to recall the attitude of Kraemer, certainly in his earlier writings. On the second, I well remember advancing a stronger claim for my subject, the history of religions, in the faculty of theology at Bangor, only to be told by one of my colleagues — an old-fashioned liberal too — that subjects like the philosophy of religion and the history of religions were peripheral! The third objection is seen in the hesitancy of the late H. J. Rose, when I invited him to be one of the founding members of the British section of the IAHR in 1954. He wanted to be sure that we were not going to plug a particular kind of theology or philosophy of religion. No doubt a like viewpoint lay behind the disinclination of some to accept subvention from the Spalding Trust in its early days.

Gradually, however, the study of religions edged into university curricula. Some universities introduced the subject as an option in the faculty of theology, calling in scholars to give part-time tuition. A. C. Bouquet fulfilled this role at Cambridge for many years. J. Estlin Carpenter started the subject at Manchester College, then in London, in 1876; and Fairbairn introduced it at Mansfield College, Oxford, in 1886, though it did not become part of the university curriculum till much later. The University of Manchester took the plunge in 1904: it required all theological students to follow an initial course in the comparative study of religion, and set up a professorship, the first occupant being the Buddhologist, T. W. Rhys

Dauids. Later in 1920 King's College, London, established a lectureship, held by F. Harold Smith, who afterwards occupied the Manchester chair. E. O. James amusingly told me that when in 1933 he was appointed to the new chair of the history and philosophy of religion at Leeds, the Vice-Chancellor remarked that if leather technology and brewing were regarded as academic subjects they should certainly have something religious but not too much so. It is interesting that his chair later became that of theology, perhaps reflecting the fashion for biblical theology at the time; but it has now reverted to something nearer its original.

Only since the Second World War has the subject come into its own as an independent discipline. University College, Bangor, founded a lectureship in 1944. Strange to say, one of the first institutions to set up a full department of religious studies was not in Great Britain itself but University College, Ibadan, Nigeria, in 1949. Later, in 1967, came the department in the new University of Lancaster. Today, as at Southampton, Nottingham and Leeds, the relevant departments are known as "theology and religious studies"; and most universities now offer some facilities in this field.

Earlier, as indicated above, work was largely that of specialist scholars in particular fields or of historians and philosophers working in isolation. Clearly there was a need for a more organised approach to the subject, as had long been recognised on the Continent. The beginnings were made in 1954. Professor E. O. James confided to me that Professor R. Pettazzoni, of Rome, had expressed his regret that there was no British section of the International Association for the History of Religions: and I had a talk myself with Professor Pettazzoni in Rome during April of that year. Professor Bleeker of Amsterdam also gave his enthusiastic encouragement to any British enterprise.

In order to initiate the British branch I corresponded with a number of leading scholars having varied interests in the study of religions, enlisting them as founder members. Among the founder members were R. A. Barclay, S. G. F. Brandon, Dorothy Emmett, T. Fish, M. Gluckman, H. D. Lewis, W. R. Matthews, Margaret Murray, E. G. Parrinder, I. T. Ramsey, H. J. Rose, H. H. Rowley, D. Howard Smith and J. S. Trimmingham. Within a short time we added A. C. Bouquet, Lady Drower, I. L. Foster, W. F. Pickering, W. Montgomery Watt and R. C. Zaehner. W. Cantwell Smith also joined our number, as there was then no branch of the IAHR in Canada.

The inaugural meeting was held at Exeter College, Oxford, on 24 September 1954, when we decided to set up the British Section and hold an annual conference. Professor James was formally elected president; and I was elected honorary secretary (and treasurer).

Our second conference took place on 22 and 23 September 1955 at the University of Manchester, at the invitation of Professor Brandon. Professor

T. Fish gave a lecture on Mesopotamian religion; and we discussed the position of the history of religions in the British universities. In 1956 we met on 27 and 28 September at Jesus College, Oxford, hearing papers from Professors Zaehner and Ramsey. The 1957 meeting was on 26 and 27 September at the University of Leeds, with the Revd R. A. Barclay as host and with papers by Mr Rundle Clark and Professor Brandon. In 1958 we moved to Passfield Hall, London, where on 25 and 26 September papers were given by Dr N. Birnbaum and the Revd D. Howard Smith. We met again at Passfield Hall on 24 and 25 September 1959; and our special lecturers were Mr E. Conze and Dr Parrinder.

There was no meeting of the British Section in 1960, as most of us attended the Tenth International History of Religions Congress, held from 11 to 17 September at Marburg, famous in the history of religions for its associations with Otto and Heiler. The special theme was that of cosmology and eschatology in the world religions. As Professor Pettazzoni, the president, had died, Professor Widengren took the chair; and Professor Bleeker was the indefatigable secretary. By this time the British Section was already well linked up with the parent body, to which it had contributed \$59, which was more than the \$50 from the U.S.A. but less than the \$324 from Germany and the \$76 from France. Perhaps we would have been more generous if the IAHR financial report had not listed us under "Angleterre" so ignoring the other members of the United Kingdom!

Continued by E. G. Parrinder (London):

On the suggestion of Professor S. G. F. Brandon of Manchester it was decided that the annual conference of the BAHR would meet in London, instead of alternating between London and the provinces. Conferences were held there from 1961-1977, with exceptions for the five-yearly international conferences which some members attended at Claremont (California) 1965, Stockholm 1970, and Lancaster 1975. Professor E. O. James remained president until his death in 1972, when Professor E. G. Parrinder, who had been secretary-treasurer since 1960, became president for the next five years.

The BAHR continued quietly, meeting usually at Passfield Hall, Endsleigh Place, for two half days and a night. Most members stayed the night, though some lodged with friends elsewhere. Professor and Mrs James always drove up from Oxford and stayed at Passfield Hall. After tea a paper was read and discussed, and a further paper with discussion came after dinner, then most members adjourned to the Crown Hotel bar lounge for more talk. There was another paper and discussion next morning, followed by the Annual General Meeting which ended about midday. Subjects for

discussion ranged over many fields, though wide interests were represented and some areas were little considered. Recently the introduction of sectional groups, especially Indian and African, has remedied this to some degree but with the danger of isolating such lectures from discussion in the full BAHR.

Since the meeting in Rome in 1955 there was a concern to guarantee the academic standing of the BAHR. At Rome a so-called witch, Gerald Gardner from the Isle of Man, had presented himself along with the British delegation to the IAHR, to the scorn of continental representatives. Although the BAHR, like Great Britain herself, had no written constitution at that time, it was agreed that members, and those invited to join in future, should hold university posts or be recognized academic authorities. While this restriction may have kept numbers small, it was felt that it ensured the role of the BAHR in British universities and enabled it to co-operate with similar branches of the IAHR. Other societies existed for different purposes, but if changes were made in the BAHR care would be needed to maintain academic standards. Rather like the London Society for the Study of Religions (described in *Bulletin* 29) the BAHR was 'restricted in its membership', neither sought nor enjoyed publicity, and had no 'resources for publishing its proceedings.'

(**Note:** See the early report by D. W. Gundry 'The History of Religions in Britain' in *Numen* III, 1956, pp. 77-8. British contributions to the study of religion are also discussed by E. Sharpe, *Comparative Religion*, London, 1975, pp. 287-90).

The next piece, which is on E. O. James is also from *Bulletin* 31: June/July 1980. W.S.F. Pickering became a member in 1956, a year or so after the Association (or the British section of the IAHR, as it was then) was founded and has often contributed to its activities since then most recently giving a paper at the 2002 conference. He is currently General Secretary of the British Centre for Durkheimian Studies in Oxford. He has written the piece on E. O. James for the new *National Oxford Dictionary of Biography*. A comprehensive article on the life and work of E. O. James is being prepared for the journal *Religion* in a series on past masters.

From *BAHR Bulletin* 31: June / July 1980 ed. Ursula King

Edwin Oliver James: Some Personal Reminiscences and Reflections

By W. S. F. Pickering (Wolfson College, Cambridge)

I had the privilege of being, I believe, Professor E. O. James' last graduate student. As Cleave-Cockerill Fellow at King's College London in 1953, I was placed under his supervision to write a thesis on Kierkegaard. However, at a fairly early stage he suggested I turned to the sociology of religion, for he believed that Kierkegaardian studies had almost come to an end, whereas the sociology of religion, then virtually unheard of, was the subject that was going to be developed in the future. He was wrong about the first but right about the second. His interest in the sociology of religion sprang directly from his early enthusiasm for archaeology and anthropology (cf. *The Social Function of Religion*, written by him in 1940). His concern for what was then known as comparative religion seems to have come relatively late in his academic career. After three years as extra-mural lecturer in anthropology at Cambridge, he was appointed in 1933, at the age of forty-five, as the first professor of the History and Philosophy of Religion at Leeds University. He accepted the mammoth task of covering all the major religions, their history and doctrine, as well as a consideration of primitive religions — a task that today, with the enormous growth of scholarship, is not to be contemplated. His approach was encyclopaedic and synthetic, and the use of the comparative method dominates many of his books, especially the later ones such as *The Concept of Deity* (1950), *The Nature and Function of Priesthood* (1955) and *Marriage and Society* (1952). He was not on the whole a theorist nor was he troubled by problems of methodology. If anything he veered towards an evolutionist approach, and as a convinced Christian he held that all religions by processes of growth and development led to a culminating point in Christianity. He was not by temperament a philosopher or theologian, but his early interest was in pre-history and its implications for Christian belief. He studied under R. R. Marett in Oxford for his B.Lit. which he was awarded in 1916 and then took a Ph.D. in University College, London, with Flinders Petrie. He did not enter wholeheartedly into social anthropology as it was developed by Radcliffe-Brown and later Evans-Pritchard. His early books included *Primitive Ritual and Belief* (1917) and a standard text book on anthropology (1919). He visited the palaeolithic caves in France and Spain when he was a young man and in this he was helped by his wife, Clarese, two years older than himself, who spoke French and Spanish and who was utterly devoted to him and his work. James also met, I believe, Teilhard de Chardin at various pre-historic sites.

His interest in pre-history and then comparative religion (and of course he was a very prominent folklorist) is shown in that after he went to London University (King's College) from Leeds in 1945 to be professor of the Philosophy of Religion, the chair was changed in 1948 to the History and Philosophy of Religion. The spectrum of his lectures was without bounds, far wider than comparative religion itself! He gave courses of lectures on philosophy, from Aristotle through to Hume, to Hegel and Marx. His lectures covered arguments for the existence of God, primitive sacrifice, not to mention all the major religions. A few years after he retired in 1955, he said to me: 'The University has had to appoint two people to do my work!' And later, I believe, it was three! But one doubts if overall student numbers increased.

In the late 1940s and through to the 50s and beyond, James became the foremost scholar in this country in comparative religion and general religious studies. The list of his publications is extraordinarily impressive and long, something like thirty books, let alone numberless articles and contributions to other books (see the bibliography up to 1962 in his *Festschrift*, given to him on his 75th birthday, S. G. F. Brandon ed., *The Saviour God* (1963)). He seemed prepared to write on any religious subject.

There was only one rival chair to his in London and that was in Manchester, which was occupied for a year by S. G. F. Brandon, his most successful student, who predeceased him by a year. When the British Section of the IAHR was formed, James was the obvious person to be chairman and was so from its beginning in 1954 until 1972, when he died as a result of a car accident in an Oxford car park. (His hazardous driving was the subject of many stories). Oxford was very close to his heart and he lived there for about the last twenty years of his life. He was always disappointed that he had never been made a fellow of an Oxford college — he was Fellow of University College, London, and King's College, London, though in his last years he was chaplain of All Souls. In 1939, the University of St. Andrews conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Divinity. But the Church of England failed to recognize his sense of Christian commitment and scholarship. At least it might have given him an honorary canonry.

'EOJ', as he was known to people at King's, was a genial, kindly man with a ready sense of humour. He was totally dedicated to his academic work and was writing books until the day he died. But despite a readiness to help young, aspiring academics, he did not create around him a band of disciples who wished to extend his work. On the other hand he made no academic enemies. He was essentially an individualist who found all the close friendship he needed in the person of his wife, who was fond of entertaining 'Tedwin's' students. In physical appearance she was very much his female counterpart. He died a somewhat lonely man with only a few

people attending his final rites and no memorial service was held for him. At his death all his manuscripts and correspondence were immediately burned by his executors and his books given to the Ashmolean. Significantly he worked in the Ashmolean and not the Bodleian and to the day he died at the age of 84, he would regularly come to the Museum at an early hour to begin his work.

It seems that James started life as an untrained schoolmaster who was ordained deacon in the Church of England in 1911 without apparently having a degree or attending a theological college. He was vicar of a number of parishes from 1916 to 1933, mainly Anglo-Catholic in churchmanship, including a slum parish in the East End of London. He once confessed to me that his greatest mistake had been to try to combine the responsibilities of an incumbent with those of scholarship. Had he been more single-minded, he felt he would have achieved greater things in the academic world. In the face of his prodigious number of publications, this seems a remarkable confession. Perhaps it was because some of his best books were written after he had retired and had had the time to reflect on the vast amount of material he had at his finger tips. Perhaps it was also that despite his delightful smile there was always lurking a clouded, sad streak.

Someone of my generation feels miserable (a word he so frequently used) at the thought that the likes of 'EOJ' will not be seen again. He has gone and no one has replaced him: but then so much of what he stood for has gone also.

II. RELIGIOUS STUDIES NEWS (U.K., Europe, International)

PRS -LTSN: Philosophy and Religious Studies Learning and Teaching Support Network: Invitation for Consultation

LTSN is currently seeking to commission from academics in TRS departments several guides on the teaching of 'people of faith in an H.E. environment'. It is envisaged that the guides will initially focus on the world's major religious traditions, but may subsequently address minority religions and new religious movements. Further details can be viewed on the PRS-LTSN web site, at www.prs-ltsn.leeds.ac.uk/relig_studies/guides.html

CONFERENCE REPORTS

REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ORGANISATIONAL SPIRITUALITY (ICOS) University of Surrey 22-24 July 2002

The conference was organised by the Human Potential Research Group (HPRG) which is part of Educational Studies at the University of Surrey. I was part of the planning and co-ordinating task group. The conference was attended by about 220 people from a range of backgrounds, academic, educational, consulting, training, management, etc. Each day began with a plenary lecture. After that, the time was devoted to academic papers or workshops, which were of varying lengths. There were up to 11 events running simultaneously. This made choosing, not to mention organising, quite a difficult task. Remarkably, it went very smoothly. Most of the papers had been distributed to delegates in advance on CD-ROM. Positive feedback was received from the vast majority of participants, eager to return in two years time.

The papers and workshops were focussed around four themes:

- Living Spirit at Work
- New Leadership
- Transpersonal Realities
- New Age and Esoteric Spirituality

Disappointingly, the world of business was under-represented. It was difficult to gauge the religious background of participants. A number of Christians I spoke to had been hoping for more of a 'faith-focussed' input. Only a few of the academic papers presented had a Christian content. The majority of papers and workshops reflected 'New Age' and esoteric spirituality.

The speakers at each of the plenary sessions were Richard Barrett, formerly of the World Bank, Anita Roddick of Body Shop, Michal Levin (journalist and broadcaster) and finally, John Heron (founder of HPRG).

Richard Barrett spoke on 'The Impact of the Evolution of Human Consciousness on Work and Organisations in the 21st Century'. He has published a number of books on his subject area including 'Liberating the Corporate Soul' and more can be read about him and his ideas at www.corptools.com and www.richardbarrett.net

On the Tuesday morning Michal Levin spoke on 'The New Leaders — a Personal Perspective'. A fascinating speaker, she was once a journalist and newsreader on BBC's News Night programme. After discovering she had a non-malignant brain tumour and following its removal, she focused on her

own path of self-discovery through meditation. Through this she has discovered great intuitive skills, which she now uses to coach individuals and indirectly organisations, working with senior executives in business, artists, and others in the performing arts.

On the Tuesday evening there was a special lecture by Anita Roddick of The Body Shop on 'Bringing your Heart to Work with you'. She has spent much of her working life seeking to source her materials from the poorer communities of the world, and often from the women in those communities. She has her own web site at www.anitaroddick.com

The final plenary lecture 'Our Process in this Place' on Wednesday was by John Heron who is now retired and living in New Zealand. He is the author of the original work *The Complete Facilitator's Handbook*. He believes that the primary purpose of learning outcomes should be the 'transformation of being.' He presented "a view of human spirituality as pre-eminently situational, relational, enacted, participatory, holistic, political and practical. It manifests divine becoming as collaborative action-inquiry transforming our way of being and doing in our world. Its primary locus is our process in this place, generating social and environmental change right here."

The second ICOS will be held between 14-16 July 2004. Location to be confirmed. More detail available on the Conference web site www.hprg.org

Dermot Tredget

Islam and the West — Post-September the 11th
University of Gloucestershire 12 November 2002

This conference organised by the Department of Theology and Religious Studies, and attracted a mixed audience of University academics, researchers and students. There was a good turnout, perhaps due to the topical nature of the conference theme.

Speaking on 'The finality of the Qur'an and the contemporary politics of nations', Kenneth Cragg said that the Qur'an as the 'final Scripture' and Muhammad as 'the seal of prophethood' have long been the dogma and the confidence of Muslims. Hence Muslims cannot consider the Qur'an to be less relevant to Islam's 15th century as it was when only a score of years old.

Early and mediaeval commentators sought to answer the question: 'Why the final revelation there and then in the seventh century?' They might need new interpretations. Cragg argued that such an exegesis is now being

urgently desired. He exhorted Muslims in the twenty-first century to look to the Meccan rather than the Medinan paradigm in their approach to the world and the happenings of contemporary times.

Andrew Walls ('Post-Western Christianity and the post-Christian West') said that the twentieth century saw a massive shift in the demographic and cultural composition of the Christian community. One of the most rapid recessions in Christian history took place, with its epicentre in the old European Christendom. This recession occurred almost simultaneously with an extraordinarily rapid accession to the Christian faith, centred in sub-Saharan Africa and certain areas of Asia. At the same time a series of movements, diverse in character, revitalised Christianity in Latin America, making it less and less like the old Christendom from which it was derived. The United States, despite its current religious buoyancy, is displaying signs that were visible in Europe when its own recession began. The result is that Christianity is at the beginning of the 21st century progressively becoming a non-Western religion. Its dominant, representative, norm-setting forms will increasingly be those characteristic of Africa, Asia and Latin America. Increasing interaction with African and Asian cultures and history is likely to produce new emphases in theology, polity and priorities.

In his paper 'Islamic fundamentalism, al-Qaida, the Taliban and the nature of the Islamic State' Phil Andre drew on the work of Dilip Hiro, Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby to provide a working definition of 'fundamentalism' after revealing that, for Muslims at least, there is unease when this name is applied to Islam. Attention then shifted to the origins of Taliban, how the movement established its authority across most of Afghanistan, and the policies it put into practice from late 1996 until its demise in late 2001. The aims and objectives of al-Qaida were examined, and it was suggested that Taliban sought to create an Islamic 'utopia' in one country. The speaker then drew on the Qur'an to outline some of the characteristics of the Islamic state as defined in scripture before comparing and contrasting the scriptural vision of the Islamic state with the Islamic state Taliban and al-Qaida sought, or seek, to create. Brief reflections on Islamic states in the past was made to argue that such states need not be as oppressive or detrimental to the interests of minorities as Taliban's experiment suggests.

Taking as his theme 'Is Islam against the West?', Theodore Gabriel pointed out that the perception has been gaining ground for some time now that Islam is against the Western world and this has intensified since the incidents of September 11 2001. Such perceptions sometimes tend to obscure and confuse injustices perpetrated against Islamic peoples and their legitimate grievances.

The speaker said that there are three issues to be examined in this question of 'Is Islam against the West?' One strand is in the religious domain and is mainly the issue of Christian-Muslim relations. Another is ideological and cultural and involves disparities in what could be called values and ways of life. Lastly and most importantly are purely political issues, of which the Palestinian issue is the foremost.

The speaker also examined Wahabi/Salafi ideology and its rapid spread in the world and how much this contributes to the present state of Islam-Western relations. He asked whether the attitudes of the Wahabi/Salafi Takhfiri groups' attitudes represented the views of the Islamic Umma in general.

Dr Mashuq ibn Ally, Director of South East Wales Equalities and Citizenship Council, delivered his lecture on the Role Islamic Revivalist Movements in Relation to Social Justice. The topic covered the historical genesis of the Movements, which date back to the Prophet Muhammad, the conceptual framework of Islamic Revival, touching on the two main twentieth century movements: Ikhwan-ul-Muslimin and Jama'ati Islami, Pakistan.

Dr Ron Geaves took the theme 'Who defines moderate Islam post-September the 11th?' and said that the tragic events of September 11 and the resulting conflict with the al-Qaida and the Taliban has created a new politically motivated discourse in which the British and the U.S. governments have tried to differentiate between 'terrorists' and the majority of Muslims in the world who are increasingly defined as 'moderate'. This is not only a overwhelmingly simplistic analysis of the religious and political realities of the Muslim world; it raises a number of methodological questions in regard to how religious commitment is perceived within pluralistic, secular and liberal western democracies. The paper explored both the complications of this policy with regard to competing Muslim diversity, and also analysed the problematic nature of defining certain movements as outside the realm of acceptable 'religion', utilising the work of various theologians such as Lindberg and Da Costa who have explored the difficulties presented by 'truth claims' when they confront the pluralistic worldview.

Theodore Gabriel

ESRC Research Seminar in European Ethnology, 10-11 January 2003

The fourth ESRC Research Seminar in European Ethnology took place at Walton Hall in Milton Keynes, the home of the Open University, on 10 and 11 January 2003. The title was *From Vernacular Religion to Contemporary Spirituality: Locating religion in European ethnology* and it was appropriately hosted by the Belief Beyond Boundaries Research Group, based in the OU's Religious Studies Department.

Papers were invited which applied ethnological method to examples of the rich diversity of religious tradition and practice in contemporary Europe. The result was a most interesting two days which fruitfully juxtaposed presentations which might in other circumstances have found themselves separated by disciplinary or national boundaries. Contributors came from the U.K., Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Russia, Canada, and Japan. Topics covered included the survival of folk traditions, neo-paganism, modern evangelical Christianity and developments within the traditional churches, while several contributors dealt with religion among diaspora communities in Britain — Hindus, Muslims, Maoris and German Lutherans.

A striking example of the trans-European approach was provided by Margaret Mackay in the first keynote lecture, in which she compared Hungarian and Scottish Calvinism. Accompanying slides showed that Calvinism in Hungary is a colourful affair superficially dissimilar to the rather grey Scottish variety with which we are more familiar. The second keynote speaker was Torunn Selberg, who made a strong case for rejecting the term “superstition” as a meaningful way of categorising forms of popular religious practice.

This meeting was notable for its friendly atmosphere and all participants seemed to enjoy it. Thanks are due to all in Belief Beyond Boundaries who worked so hard to organise it.

Elaine Housby
Ph.D. Student, The Open University

FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES

**European Association for the Study of Religions
3rd Congress**

The Globalisation and the Localisation of Religion

8-11 May 2003

**in association with the Norwegian Association for the
History of Religions**

**in collaboration with the
Department of History of Religions in
The University of Bergen, Norway**

In the context of the study of religion, **globalisation** refers to the effects rapid means of communication, as well as economical, political and cultural forces of integration are having on the interaction of religious traditions, on the internal developments of these traditions, and on the emergence of new religious forms. **Localisation** refers to the accommodation, and creative reinterpretation, of larger religious traditions and trends within local contexts.

Papers should address both theoretical aspects and empirical cases relevant to the theme. Contributions exploring historical analogies to contemporary globalisations processes are also welcome.

Proposals for papers and for panel sessions may be sent to Einar Thomassen, IKRR-Religion, Oisteinsgate 3, N-5007, Bergen, Norway.

E-mail: <einar.thomassen@krr.uib.no>

For information on accommodation, fees and practical matters see the EASR website at <www.easr.de> or consult the BASR website at <basr.org.uk> and click on the EASR link.

GUIISING: THE HISTORICAL USES OF MASKS AND DISGUISES

**A Conference jointly hosted by the
Warburg Institute and the Folklore Society
Friday 16 - Saturday 17 May 2003**

Warburg Institute (School of Advanced Study, University of London)
Woburn Square, London WC1H 0AB

Guising, both literal and figurative, has been important to many cultures and many periods. Masks have been worn in rituals and in war, disguises have been adopted out of necessity or the pursuit of pleasure. From Rabelasian revellers to armed revolutionaries, people in the past have been ready to become 'other'. Given current interest in fragmented identities and multiple subjectivities, it is worth exploring when and how our predecessors chose to speak with different voices.

This conference, jointly hosted by the Warburg Institute and the Folklore Society, aims to bring together students and scholars from many fields to consider the occasions, the costumes and the performance of guising, as well as the strategies and purposes of guisers. This call for papers is particularly addressed to historians and folklorists: folklorists interested in the traditional and ritual use of disguise, such as Carnival, and historians concerned with the political play of guisers, such as the Molly Maguires and the 'Hosts of Rebecca'. However, we also hope to hear from art historians, anthropologists, indeed anyone interested in the use of masks and disguises, whether in war, religion, medicine or drama.

Proposals for short papers (20 minutes) which explore any aspect of this topic are invited from all quarters, particularly graduate students. Proposals should include: name; contact details; a very brief c.v.; title of paper and a synopsis of not more than 500 words. They should be sent, by 1 April 2002, to Dr. David Hopkin, Department of Economic and Social History, University of Glasgow, 4 University Gardens, Glasgow, G12 8QQ: phone 0141 330 5992: (or emailed to <dmh@arts.gla.ac.uk>).

NORTH AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGION

21-22 November 2003: Atlanta, Georgia
Conference on theoretical issues in the study of religion

Further details and proposals (by 28 March 2003) to William E. Arnal
(NAASR Vice-President) at <william.arnal@uregina.ca>

Alternative Spiritualities and New Age Studies

Friday May 30 to Sunday 1 June 2003

The Open University, Milton Keynes

A major international conference on Alternative Spiritualities and New Age Studies hosted by the Belief Beyond Boundaries Research Group at the Department of Religious Studies, The Open University, co-organised by Marion Bowman, Daren Kemp and James R. Lewis.

The conference will review the emergence of Alternative Spiritualities and New Age Studies as a specialised field, and act as a catalyst for further development of the discipline.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

MICHAEL YORK: "Wanting to have your New Age cake and eat it too"

PAUL HEELAS: "The New Age of Wellbeing (Or: Be Yourself Only Better)"

WOUTER HANEGRAAFF: "Swedenborg and New Age Religion"

CHRISTOPH BOCHINGER: "The invisible inside the visible, the visible inside the invisible: Theoretical and methodical aspects of research on New Age and contemporary Esotericism"

Panels on a wide variety of topics relating to Alternative Spirituality and New Age, including: Esotericism; Roots of Alternative Spirituality and New Age; Paganism; Alternative Spirituality and the Workplace; Astrology; New Age and New Religious Movements; Alternative Spirituality and Indigenous Traditions; Teen Witchcraft; Healing; Sacred Space; Methodological Issues in the Study of Alternative Spirituality and New Age, and examples of Alternative Spirituality and New Age from Europe, China, Japan, Canada, USA, Australia and South Africa.

Further details including registration form, provisional programme, abstracts, maps and other information can be obtained from <www.asanas.org.uk>; any enquiries to <Arts-Rel-Studies-Conferences@open.ac.uk>

ESRC Research Seminar in European Ethnology
University of Wales Swansea
27-28 June 2003

CALL FOR PAPERS

Moving and Mixing:
Migration, Cultural Encounter, and Boundary-Crossing
in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Europe
and European Settlements Overseas

Keynote Speakers:
Prof. Adam Kuper, Brunel University
Prof. Klaus Roth, University of Munich

Over the course of the last two hundred years of European history, there have been enormous movements of people and ideas across cultural boundaries, and the cultural boundaries (and what constitutes them) have also changed greatly and are still changing. This Seminar will consider how cultural boundaries have been, and are, created, conceived and experienced; and how they have been, and are, crossed or defended, especially in places having heterogeneous populations. Among the possible thematic and substantive areas are:

- Language, linguistic pluralism, and dialectical change
- Meetings of musical traditions and the development of new musical forms
- Religious adherence, conversion, syncretism and pluralism
- Affective ties across boundaries through friendship, courtship and intermarriage
- The moral economy of the boundary: constraints and incentives to cultural mixing and crossing-over; cultural purity and pollution
- Representations of we-ness and other-ness through folk music, folklore, and popular literature
- Ideologies and the political practices of ethnicisation and nation-building in boundary-definition
- The effects upon cultural homogeneity or heterogeneity of elite scholarship, demagoguery, moral panics, natural catastrophes, economic transformation, and war.

Paper Proposals

Please send a 100-word abstract of your proposed contribution. This should include:

- A title and brief outline of your proposed paper
- Indication of the relevant theme (please see list of themes above)
- Indication of any need for electronic audio-visual equipment

Proposals should be sent by 1 April 2003 as Word (.doc) or Plain text (.txt) e-mail attachments to <R.Byron@swansea.ac.uk>, or by post to Prof. Reginald Byron, Vivian Tower 304, University of Wales Swansea, Swansea SA2 8PP, Great Britain.

International Sacred Media Conference

10-13 July 2003

Jyväskylä, Finland

The topics of the conference are:

- Religion and terrorism
- Western media facing otherness
- Sacred technology
- Global media ethics

The topics of the sessions are:

- Religion as news
- Visual truth and reality
- Myths, icons and narratives in media contents
- Western media facing otherness
- Religion and technology
- Global media ethics
- Theoretical and methodological challenges of research on media and religion

For further information, please check this site: <www.sacredmedia.jyu.fi>

University of Gloucestershire
'Islam in Britain', a one-day conference in Islamic Studies
November 2003
Call for Papers

The annual conference in Islamic Studies at the Department of Theology and Religious Studies, School of Humanities, in the University of Gloucestershire invites papers on the above theme.

The conference is usually well attended by academics, students and some members of the public including Muslims. One hour is allotted for each of five papers, including some time for questions and discussion.

Intending speakers are requested to send the title and an abstract of about 250 words to Dr Theodore Gabriel, Honorary Research Fellow at the Department of Theology and Religious Studies, Francis Close Campus, University of Gloucestershire, Swindon Road, GL50 4AZ (E-mail: <tgabriel@glos.ac.uk>; Fax: 01242 543314)

‘AFRICAN AND AFRICAN-DERIVED RELIGIONS’

at

Bath Spa University College

8 – 11 SEPTEMBER 2003

Keynote Speakers

Professor Rosalind Hackett

(University of Tennessee)

‘Religious Conflict, with Special Reference to Nigeria’

Professor Gerrie ter Haar

(Institute of Social Studies, The Hague)

‘African Religion and Human Rights’

Dr James Cox

(University of Edinburgh)

‘Issues in the Academic Study of African Religions’

Dr Elom Dovlo

(University of Ghana, Legon)

‘Renewal Movements in African Traditional Religion’

Proposed Panels: African Religions in the History of Religions; Methodology in the Study of African Religions; African Traditional Religion(s); African New Religious Movements; Afro-Latin Religions; Afro-American Religions; African Christianity; African Islam and Islam in Africa; Ritual, Muthi and Sacrifice; African Religions and Gender; African Religions, Ethics and Nature; African Religions in Religious Education; African Religions in the Diaspora; African Religions, Modernism and post-Modernism.

Proposals for papers and registration information should be sent to Dr Richard Hoskins: Conference on African and African-derived Religions, Study of Religions Department, Bath Spa University College, Newton Park, Newton St Loe Bath BA2 9BN

By e-mail: <r.hoskins@bathspa.ac.uk>

III. RELIGIOUS STUDIES IN THE U.K. (Occasional series)

À la Recherche du Temps Perdu: Recollections of Religious Studies in Glasgow

Religious Studies in the University of Glasgow has had a chequered, if interesting history. I was involved in it in a former incarnation (of the discipline, not myself), and can sketch the following details of the period before 1988. Back in the mists of time, in *Illo Tempore*, Archie Craig was head (and sole member of staff) of a small department of Biblical Studies in the Arts Faculty. This is not to be confused with the old Faculty of Divinity, which had chairs in both Old and New Testament Studies, nor this in turn with the Department of Hebrew, also in the Arts Faculty.

From 1960 to 1967, Allan Galloway, freshly returned from Ibadan, took over the one-man department, which in view of its broader remit from this time, was renamed, nor entirely felicitously, Principles of Religion. When he moved over to a chair in Divinity, Eric Pyle, formerly from Accra and latterly principal of Cheshunt College, came to the department from 1967 to 1975. He was joined initially by John Cumpsty, from 1967 to 1970. When he (J.C.) departed for a chair in Cape Town, I was appointed. In 1975 Eric Pyle was asked to set up a new department of Religious Studies in Brisbane, and I ran Principles of Religion for two and a half years, with the help of Joe Houston, who was appointed to the headship of the department, but never assumed it.

In 1976 Alistair Kee came from Hull. Under his tutelage, the department was renamed Religious Studies, and we continued as a two-man team until 1988. In the thick of the Thatcherite policies of the day (has anything improved since?) the University of Glasgow decreed that two-person departments were non-viable. This was despite the fact that on a pro-rata basis our publishing record was the best in the Arts Faculty, and better than that of the assessors (a lawyer and a chemist) who declared us non-viable. We were given the option of merging with Divinity, or with Philosophy (in Arts). Neither option seemed attractive to us, and we approached Stirling, to see whether they would be interested in our joining them. While they dithered, New College, Edinburgh, under the deanship of James Mackey, invited us to move to Edinburgh, which we did.

The discipline was always a Cinderella subject during this early history. At one point the Saudi Embassy were prepared to fund a lectureship in Islam, but the Principal of the day turned the offer down because the Saudis were not prepared to commit themselves to a minimum of five years' funding. Our student numbers grew to the point where under old rules we would have merited additional staff, but by then the shrinkage which has

skewed university life from the mid-seventies was well into its stride, and we merely gained in 'efficiency' as student numbers increased. Younger colleagues reading this may be amazed to know that the pressures which beset higher education today had already begun in 1973-74.

I cannot at this remove recall all the subject matter taught. Eric Pyle taught various aspects of Christianity and a course in phenomenology. The students seemed to recall chiefly his narratives about Antipodean witchetty grubs. In his day we taught only first and second year courses. With the arrival of Alistair Kee we developed a number of joint honours programmes with such departments as Psychology, Philosophy, History, and English Literature. He taught various aspects of Christianity, and Theology, Ideology and Culture, which covered various Social Science aspects, including Marx, Feuerbach and Freud as theorists about religion. My initial appointment required me to teach some Hinduism and Israelite religion. I broadened the former to include Jainism, tinkered briefly with Islam and Buddhism, and in the Near Eastern area also gave courses at honours level in Canaanite Religion and Egyptian Religion.

Although the UGC (precursor of HEFCE and SHEFCE) made it a condition of funding our departure to Edinburgh that Religious Studies should no longer be taught at Glasgow, memories are short in government, and by 1990, Religious Studies redivivus was being developed again at Glasgow, this time within the Divinity Faculty, where there are now a number of appointments. Scholarship has thus finally been vindicated against the bureaucrats and ideologues, though for my part the subsequent years at Edinburgh have been by far the happiest of my academic career.

Nick Wyatt
New College, Edinburgh

IV. RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

Congratulations to Mathew Guest for gaining his Ph.D. from Lancaster University last year. His thesis was entitled 'Negotiating Community: An Ethnographic Study of an Evangelical Church'.

V: BOOK REVIEWS

Karen Jolly, Catharina Raudvere & Edward Peters *The Athlone History of Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: Volume 3 The Middle Ages* (The Athlone History of Witchcraft and Magic in Europe 6 vols. General editors Bengt Ankarloo & Stuart Clark) London: Athlone Press, 2002. ISBN 048589103-4 (pbk) 0 485 89003-8 (hbk) pp. xiv + 280.

This book, part of a six-volume series, does not provide a conventional history of witchcraft and magic but offers instead three studies of European witchcraft and magic during the Middle Ages with different approaches and subject matter. The resulting volume is full of interest but cannot serve as the narrative introduction or general survey which the title might have led one to expect. In the first section Karen Jolly discusses 'Medieval Magic: Definitions, Beliefs and Practices'. She begins with the assertion that 'Magic is more a concept than a reality' (p.3) and explains how this relative term has been constructed and altered in the historiographical tradition. She identifies three paradigm shifts within the medieval period during which the term 'magic' was redefined. The first happened in the 'conversion' period (c.300 – c.1100 C.E.) when, through the process of acculturation between the incoming religion of Christianity and older beliefs and practices, a synthesis of biblical and classical concepts of magic intersected with those of the Germanic, Celtic, Slavic and Scandinavian cultures. The second was prompted by the twelfth century renaissance when a more complex model of magic was formulated within a scholastic setting. By the fifteenth century a third shift had taken place which introduced the view of magic as an organized demonic cult. In the concluding chapter magic as practised within popular and courtly traditions is discussed under thematic headings, such as healing or divination.

The middle section of the book is a specific case study of *trolldómur* in Iceland during the transition phase of its 'conversion' to Christianity. Using evidence from the Old Norse sagas, mythological and legal texts, Catharina Raudvere examines the concept of witchcraft and the particular incidents in which the special capabilities and extraordinary knowledge of certain persons were labelled magical. She emphasises the importance of locating specific accounts of magical deeds within their cultural and social context.

The final essay analyses the conceptual world of the medieval church, in particular investigating the thinking of theologians and lawyers about magic and witchcraft. Peter Edwards surveys intellectual changes from the time of Augustine of Hippo to the sixteenth century and demonstrates how attitudes concerning sorcery and witchcraft sharpened markedly in the later medieval period, paving the way for the witchcraze which swept through early modern

Europe. However, although magic achieved greater prominence in medieval discourse, it only formed one small element within the vast devotional, theological and legal literature produced within Christendom.

This volume offers much to anyone who studies religion because the essays engage with some of the general problems and pitfalls of the definition and conceptualisation of beliefs and practices. In addition, the Scandinavian case study places witchcraft firmly within the broad area of ‘religion as a lived experience acted out in physical motion’ based upon the Old Norse term *siðr* which ‘comprised the wide field of religion, faith, moral, custom and tradition’ (p.109). The book sets out to demonstrate ‘how a common European concept of magic emerged in the Middle Ages’ (p.ix) but it achieves its aim through illuminating snapshots rather than an overview.

Jane E. A. Dawson
University of Edinburgh

Seth D. Kunin (ed.) *Themes and Issues in Judaism*. London and New York, Cassell, 2000. ISBN 0-304-33757-9 (pbk) 0-304-33758-7 (hbk).

Themes and Issues in Judaism is not quite the usual rehearsal of the phenomenological basics an undergraduate student needs to know about Judaism. While its contributors cover the indispensable topics — rites of passage, sacred texts, God-talk, worship, ethics — other themes such as Sybil Sheridan’s two contributions ‘Human Nature and Destiny’ and ‘Myth and History’ mark out this collection as something more challenging than is customary in books of an introductory nature. So too, the book is distinctive in its authors whose insights bridge the qualities of both scholar and participant. To her chapter on women in Judaism, for example, Alexandra Wright brings both her scholarship and her experience as a woman rabbi.

But perhaps what is most distinctive about *Themes and Issues in Judaism* is the analytical position of its editor. In his Introduction, Seth Kunin argues that Judaism orders the world through a series of structural oppositions in relations between, say, men and women, humans and nature, sacred and profane time, all of which are characterised by the pattern of ‘A not B’. At first glance one wonders whether undergraduate students would find this structuralist interpretive frame helpful or necessary. But the reader should not be deterred by the terminology. The structuralist principle is in fact a useful and relatively straightforward interpretive grid and has not been imposed by the editor on his contributors whose essays stand on their own to form a well-rounded collection.

What I find most encouraging about *Themes and Issues in Judaism* is its emphasis upon religious tradition as in a state of continuous transformation. Undergraduate students are prone to the view that Orthodoxy is the authentic and original norm from which all other (liberal) Jewish belief and practice is more or less a deviation. As a (non-Orthodox) teacher I often find myself adopting this kind of default position. In this classically phenomenological collection, however, change is presented as neither a deterioration or a progression: each Jewish tradition is ‘an authentic response to the world and an attempt to find a meaningful way of living within it’ (p.19).

Although the essays in this collection have been previously published in earlier versions in other books in the *Themes in Religious Studies* series, I would recommend this book as an essential student purchase, being of assistance not only in the study of Judaism itself, but also in that of religious ethics, historiography, theology, and gender studies in religion.

Melissa Raphael
University of Gloucestershire

VI: TURNING POINT

Doctrine and Argument in Indian Philosophy by Ninian Smart
George Allen and Unwin, 1964
2nd revised ed. E. J. Brill, 1992

My ignorance in coming to this book as an M.A. student in Lancaster was ‘normal’ for the time. One of the many stories told about Ninian Smart is that as a young scholar he enquired of an editor of a journal in the philosophy of religion why he did not publish articles on Indian philosophy in his journal. The editor remarked that he was not aware that anything significant philosophically had ever come from India. In response to this, the ever quick-witted but gentle Ninian Smart responded that this editor must know a great deal about Indian philosophy to have come to that conclusion. In response to the challenge put in such a way, the editor asked him to write an article. Another illustration of the gaps can be seen in the list of the 45 titles in the Muirhead Library of Philosophy, edited by H. D. Lewis which precedes Smart’s volume. This list contains only three books on extra-Western material. These three are all by Sarvapelli Radhakrishnan and are his *Contemporary Indian Philosophy* (with Muirhead), his two volume *Indian Philosophy* and his *Principal Upanishads*. These I had not yet read, nor the earlier Smart *Reasons and Faiths* (RKP, 1958), which deals with the

nature of religious discourse across a variety of traditions, so the impact of *Doctrine and Argument* was considerable.

We are now a great deal further on, a point which illustrates the continuing significance of my 'turning point' book. The philosophy of religion is currently one of the most popular options in the A level Religious Studies papers, but a visit to a philosophy of religion section of any major bookshop will show the gaps in materials that could enable this philosophy of religion to be wider than the preoccupations and agendas of Christianity and 'the West'. An exception is a book which Ninian Smart added to the work he had begun earlier in his career, the more general *World Philosophies* (Routledge, 1999) and David Cooper (professor of philosophy not religious studies at Durham, so an interdisciplinary contribution), has also published across this spectrum. In April 2003 the Shap Working Party on World religions in Education is organising a conference for those teachers and students who wish to extend their understanding of world philosophies. It is a conference at which Ninian (one of the founders of Shap) would have starred and Shap is fortunate that Professor Cooper has agreed to give a keynote address and that there are sessions by experts on Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish and Islamic philosophies.

I had gaps not only in Indian philosophy and religions before reading *Doctrine and Argument*, but had done little philosophy or philosophy of religion at all. What became obvious in my reading, and one of Smart's stated intentions, is that I needed to understand the philosophical matters under discussion and the style of the discussion in order to understand the *religions* of India. It was helpful (again Smart's intention) that the text did not continually 'break out' into Sanskrit and Pali, but that the academic rigor of using others' rich terms in translation was maintained by a creative system of asterisking. The book also communicated a strong sense of variety in Indian philosophy within as well as between traditions, although Smart admits in the Preface that he has succumbed to the tendency to take a wholistic view by talking about Indian Philosophy in the singular at all. He also knows that his exposition of the various schools in the first part of the book might be challenged as false — but he wants them to be *interestingly* false. And his discussion is written, as always, with clarity and also gives a sense of listening to him expounding and arguing, which certainly engaged my interest. The two ways of doing things, by schools and then by themes was particularly helpful for a beginner. Here I learned for the first time that contrasting ideas could all count as orthodox (astika) and that orthodoxy could include several different and in some cases contradictory viewpoints. I was intrigued by the Buddha's undetermined questions and whether the formula indicated that a question was meaningless or inapplicable within the Buddha's philosophical system, was a repudiation of the eel-wrigglers of the time, or that questions about the world were not conducive to salvation or that silence about Ultimate Reality is the only possible course. The Jain theory of seven possible perspectives from which an object can be considered and the seven relative 'could be' positions for judging authority

were equally interesting and stimulatingly fresh. Retrospectively one might see them as a good foundation for efforts to understand post-modernity!

I did not have my own copy at the time, but I made copious notes and went back to them often. The excellent glossary and brief histories of the schools mentioned in the book show a desire to make complex and sophisticated investigations accessible to those new to the subject, indicating something of Smart's instincts as a communicator. His emphasis in the end is that dissimilarities are more suggestive than similarities. They certainly broaden the mind and the academic landscape, now as then.

Peggy Morgan
Hon. President, British Association for the Study of Religions

VII: TRIBUTE

Tribute to Professor John Wansbrough (1928-2002)

Professor John Wansbrough died on 10 June 2002. As the last of his many PhD students, I believe it appropriate to mention his work in the *BASR Bulletin*, because, in addition to the fact that his main interests were the ancient and Islamic Near east and the literary expressions of its monotheistic religions, particularly of Islam, his enquiry and methodological challenge extend to the core issues of the study of religion as a whole, as well as other disciplines.

John Wansbrough was born in 1928 in Illinois, U.S.A. He gained a degree in languages from Harvard, came to the U.K. in 1957 and spent his whole academic career at SOAS. There he was Lecturer in the History of the Near and Middle East, Reader in Arabic, finally becoming Professor of Semitic Studies in 1984 as well as Pro-Director of SOAS until his retirement in 1992.

His main monographic books are *Qur'anic studies: Sources and methods of scriptural interpretation* (O.U.P., 1977) and its sequel *The Sectarian Milieu: Content and Composition of Islamic Salvation History* (O.U.P., 1978). It is on these two books that his notoriety rests, and, despite their controversial content, they remain to this day substantially unchallenged. His last academic book, *Lingua Franca in the Mediterranean* (Curzon, 1996), dealt with ancient Semitic languages and their political and commercial literary styles and uses. An entire issue (vol. 9, 1, 1997) of *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* (journal of the North American Association for the Study of Religion) was devoted to Wansbrough's methodology.

In his two books *Qur'anic Studies* and *The Sectarian Milieu* he re-read the very sources which constitute the foundation of the traditional account of Islam's early history: the Qur'an and the exegetical literature (*sira*, *hadith* and later *tafsir*). Careful study of the texts resulted in the realisation that the sources on which early Islamic history is based, including the account of Muhammad's life and the occasions of the Qur'anic revelation, are not historical records as such but rather an expression of the developing Islamic community's self-identity and its view of salvation history. He analysed the Qur'an and the exegetical works as literary texts applying methods similar to those used in the literary criticism of the Bible. This analysis led him to formulate hypotheses, the implications of which are that: (1) the Qur'an as a literary text is the result of a long process of literary formation emerging from the sectarian milieu of Judaeo-Christian monotheistic groups active in the near-Eastern regions, especially Iraq and Syria; and (2) that its composition and status as sacred scripture was accomplished towards the end of the eighth century C.E.

Even for somebody with very little knowledge of Islam, it is not difficult to see that the above theories and their implications are contrary to the established and traditional Islamic, as well as Western, scholarship's understanding of the origins of Islam and of its scripture. Wansbrough was fully aware that his hypotheses were at variance with the traditional accounts of the origins of Islam. He himself stated that his work was experimental, thereby inviting and opening up an academic challenge. He clearly pointed out that the purpose of his work was source analysis and not historical reconstruction.

Putting the specific theories aside, what is at stake here is the way in which sources are read, interpreted and set in context. The most significant contribution of Wansbrough's work is to prompt scholars dealing with the origins of Islam and the Qur'an as text to ask 'old-fashioned' questions such as: How do we know? What kind of sources are being used to back historical, and of course theological, statements?

The publication of *The Sectarian Milieu* coincided with that of a much more popular and influential work: *Orientalism*, by E. Said. Muslim and Western scholars' negative response or lack of reaction to Wansbrough's work call up the whole debate about the insider-outsider approach to the study of religion, political correctness, and ultimately the validity of Islamic studies as a western discipline. Some Muslim scholars called for a limit to the field of study outsiders could investigate, and the origins of Islam, or indeed of any religion, were deemed to be too sensitive a field to be approached by outsiders to the faith.

As the late modernist Muslim scholar Fazlur Rahman put it: can an outsider understand at least adequately if not fully the meaning of a given

religion? In his *Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies*, Rahman conceded 'Intellectual understanding and appreciation of Islam is quite possible for a non-Muslim who is unprejudiced, sensitive and knowledgeable.' (1985, p.197) This is a sensible but indeed a general statement: who decides what is unprejudiced and sensitive? Are not these categories time and space-bound? And does knowledge need to be defined or circumscribed to established parameters?

As for Wansbrough and his methodology for the study of early Islam, his work and analysis were informed by extensive knowledge, not only of Semitic, classical and modern languages, but of scriptures, history, literary methods and styles. He approached Islam as a religion with the same respect he held for the other two near-eastern traditions of Judaism and Christianity. His academic integrity was such that he did not allow his textual and literary theories to be used as a tool to reconstruct from literary sources historical events which, as far as the origins of Islam are concerned, are possibly un-reconstructable.

Professor Wansbrough was a rounded and generous person, not only a sharp academic but also an excellent teacher, a caring and supportive supervisor and a devoted family man full of interests ranging across literature, art and films. During his retirement he wrote two novels and worked on film scripts.

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VIII RECENT PUBLICATIONS BY BASR MEMBERS

(Please send in your details by e-mail where possible.)

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