

The Newsletter of the
European Society for
the Study of Western
Esotericism

ESSWE Newsletter

Spring 2014
Volume 5, number 1

Words from the editor

—Per Faxneld



Welcome to the Spring 2014 Newsletter. This issue starts with sad news concerning the closing of the Exeter centre for Esotericism studies. However, it is my firm conviction that we should not let this setback dampen our spirits, but take it as a challenge: one centre closes – let us create two new centres elsewhere. The time is right to push our field forward. Never before have so many people been working

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professionally with the subject, and in disciplines like History of Religions, Art History and Comparative Literature esotericism has finally achieved (in most quarters) acceptance as a dimension of Western culture well worth studying. Some skepticism certainly remains to be overcome, but the situation is very different from ten years ago. While approaching esotericism as part of projects in established institutional structures is important, not in the least in terms of spreading our results widely and bolstering the legitimacy of the field, there are definite advantages to clusters of specialists as well. A whole score of enterprising young scholars have recently defended their dissertations, or are about to do so. Let us combine our abilities, and draw on the experience and sagacity of our senior colleagues, in order to make things happen. ♦

Exeter MA in Western esotericism and EXESES0 close

—Mark Sedgwick

Exeter University has announced the closure of the Exeter MA in Western Esotericism and of the Exeter Centre for the Study of Esotericism (EXESES0). Both were started in 2005 by Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, whose early death in 2012 triggered the closure of the program and of EXESES0.

The program and EXESES0 opened in 2005, with Goodrick-Clarke as professor and a number of part-time lecturers, including Peter Forshaw (who now teaches in the Amsterdam MA program), Hereward Tilton, Clare Goodrick-Clarke, and Christopher A. McIntosh. It was the third European program of the kind, joining Paris and Amsterdam, from which it differed in that it was a part-time distance-learning program, taken over two years. It was supported financially by the Blavatsky Trust, a British charity set up in 1974 “to advance education in and promote or further the study of or research into religion, philosophy and science” in cooperation with the Theosophical Society in England.

The program started with eight students, and within five years had admitted more than ninety MA students and several PhD students. By 2012, five PhD dissertations had been completed (one on Theosophy), and eight were in process (two on Theosophy). A small cloud over the program’s success was cast by occasional rumors of lack of rigor and of some students failing to distinguish clearly enough between academic study and their own personal practice, however, and according to a senior researcher who preferred to remain anonymous,

Exeter was not entirely happy with the program. It consisted of a number of optional modules and two required modules before the thesis, one on “The Western Esoteric Traditions: Historical Survey and Research Methods” and one on “Theosophy and the Globalisation of Esotericism.” This perhaps gave Theosophy a slightly more prominent position than some would see as appropriate, but only slightly, as the role that Theosophy has played in the development of modern Western Esotericism has certainly been major.

Goodrick-Clarke’s early death in 2012 marked the beginning of the end. According to Exeter’s press office, the decision to close the center and program followed “an internal review and discussions with the [Blavatsky] Trust,” and Goodrick-Clarke’s death “sat alongside consideration for the programme as a whole.” Exeter’s press office was unable to comment on the conclusions of the internal review, but there were suggestions that it was not entirely positive.

Exeter has made arrangements for the centre’s remaining PhD students to complete their projects in the history department, where there are still scholars working on related subjects, such as Richard Noakes, whose research interests include Victorian psychical research, and Catherine Rider, who recently published *Magic and Religion in Medieval England*. But Europe now once more has only two MA programs in Western esotericism, not three, which is an unfortunate setback for the development of the study of Western Esotericism in Europe. ♦

On 1 July 2014 Mark Sedgwick sent the following email to recipients of the *Newsletter*:

In my note on the closure of EXESES0 (*Newsletter* 5.1, Spring 2014) I said that a small cloud was cast over the Exeter program’s success by occasional rumors of lack of academic rigor. I should have made clear that I myself have no reason to believe these rumors to be true, and that the graduates of the Exeter program who I know all meet the highest academic standards, and many are notable scholars in the field. In the same note, I also said that the closure meant that Europe had only two MA programs in Western esotericism. In fact, there are now three programs: Amsterdam, Groningen, and Paris. I apologize to all concerned.

On 27 August 2014, in response to a request from members associated with the former EXESES0 center at Exeter, the Board and President issued the following statement:

The Board and the President of the ESSWE join with Mark Sedgwick in regretting the publication of the note on the closure of EXESES0 published in the last ESSWE *Newsletter*. We were glad to see Professor Sedgwick issue a correction to that article in which he made clear that he himself had no basis for believing rumors of lack of rigor at EXESES0 to be true, and that the EXESES0 scholars and students he himself knew all met the highest standards. We, too, hold the EXESES0 scholars and students in the highest regard. The MA in Western Esotericism run at EXESES0 was highly regarded as a properly examined course at one of the UK’s top universities. Like Professor Sedgwick, we regret the distress caused by the original note, which we all agree should not have been published in that form. The closure of EXESES0 was a great loss to the field of the study of Western Esotericism. We hope that all concerned can now join together in working for the future of the field.

On 18 October 2014, in response to a further request from members associated with the former EXESES0 center at Exeter, the Board agreed that the above statements should be appended to the original *Newsletter* as held in the ESSWE’s online archive.

Scholar interviews

–Per Faxneld

In every issue of the Newsletter one junior and one senior scholar of Western esotericism are interviewed. They are both asked the same questions.

Boaz Huss, Professor of Jewish Thought at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Israel



How did you come to be interested in Western esotericism? This is a complicated question, as it depends on how you define Western esotericism... I first became interested in Jewish Kabbalah. I am not sure though if it should be regarded as Western esotericism (at least, I never thought of it as such when I began studying it). My interest in Kabbalah

began after reading Scholem's great monograph on Shabtai Zvi, when I was doing my army service. I thought wow... this is extremely interesting, and this is what I want to study at University. I started studying Jewish Thought at the Hebrew University in 1982, and became infatuated with the Zohar since the first class I took with Yehuda Liebes. So, I decided to write my PhD on a topic related to the Zohar, and wrote it, under Moshe Idel's supervision, on one of the first commentaries to the Zohar, Ketem Paz, which was written in North Africa in the 16th century. This led me to be interested in the reception history of the Zohar, a topic I worked on for many years after finishing my graduate studies. It was through my work on the reception of the Zohar that I became interested in "proper" Western esotericism, especially Christian Kabbalah and Kabbalah in 19th and 20th century esoteric circles. It became clear to me not only that one cannot understand later developments of Kabbalah without understanding its reception amongst Christians in the early modern and modern era, but also, that contrary to Scholem's disparaging attitude, non-Jewish adaptations of Kabbalah were highly interesting and significant.

I became especially interested in the Theosophical understanding of Kabbalah, following my discovery that a partial translation of the Zohar into Jewish Arabic, which was published in 1887 in Pune, India, was done by a Jewish member of the Theosophical Society. It soon became clear to me that many Jews joined the Theosophical Society (and later the Anthroposophical Society), and that many of them studied and wrote about Kabbalah (which was defined by one Jewish Theosophist as "the secret doctrine of the Jews"). My research into the history of Jewish Theosophists and their Theosophical understanding of Kabbalah resulted in a monograph which I am in the last stages of writing. This research also brought me back home in a sense – one of the minor protagonists in my forthcoming book is my grandmother, Raja Kern, the founder of the first branch of the Anthroposophical Society in Israel. My next research project will also be dedicated to Jewish members of a Western esoteric movement, and their understanding of Kabbalah – the cosmic movement, which was founded by the Jewish occultist Max Theon in the early 20th century.

What do you feel are the major challenges for our field at present and in the future? I think the major challenge is to continue to establish and advance the field in the academic world. There are still only very

few academic centers for the study of Western Esotericism and there is still not enough research done in many areas pertaining to Western esotericism. Furthermore, I believe that there is still a disparaging attitude, in some academic circles, to Western esotericism and its study. When I begun studying contemporary Kabbalah, for instance, I was advised by some of my colleagues to turn to a more serious area of study.

What is your most fun memory so far from your time in the field? Well.... There are lots of such memories. One of the highlights was a field trip with a group of scholars to the traditional annual celebration (Hilula) of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, the alleged author of the Zohar, at his grave in the Upper Galilee, and to the celebrations of the Kabbalah Center which were held nearby (we were received very warmly by the Berg family). My research trip to India, searching for the traces of Jewish Theosophists in the Theosophical headquarters in Adyar, and in Ramanashram in Tiruvannamalai (one of the founders of the Association of Hebrew Theosophists became a very close disciple of Sri Ramana) was also very exciting. The search for documents of the Cosmic Movement was great fun – first, visiting Sri Aurobindo's Ashram in Pondichery (Mirra Alfasa, known as the Mother, Aurobindo's

partner, was a follower of the movement), and finally, finding some of the lost archives of Max Theon in Jerusalem. I also have a lot of fun memories from the ESSWE bi-annual conferences – finding so many people who are interested and excited by the things I am interested in.

What are your interests aside from Western esotericism? I am very much interested in questions of method and theory, and in critical examination of the field of Kabbalah research. I have just concluded a monograph about the genealogies of the category “Jewish Mysticism” and the development of its academic study. I am also interested in the study of New Age and New Religious Movements in Israel, and I am involved in several projects related to these topics, including the establishment of an information and research center (on the lines of INFORM and CESNUR), on Israeli NRMs.

What are the worst things about having this as your specialty? Well..... I am trying hard... but I can't think of any ...

What are the best things about having this as your specialty? Spending most of my time studying things I am interested in. What else can one ask for?

Victoria Ferentinou, Lecturer in Art History, University of Ioannina, Greece.



How did you come to be interested in Western esotericism? Since my undergraduate studies in History, Archaeology and Art History I have developed an interest in topics related to ritual and religion in the material culture of ancient civilizations. My participation in excavations in a prehistoric cemetery and an 8th-century BC sanctuary in Greece made me fascinated with the religious aspects of ancient Greek culture and art. As a postgraduate student I pursued this interest further by choosing Eleusinian Mysteries and the cult of Demeter as my dissertation topic. When I shifted my focus from archaeology and classical art to history of art and modernist studies I was captivated by the Florentine Renaissance's preoccupation with Neoplatonism and Hermeticism and by modern art movements with an interest in depicting immaterial, oneiric, spiritual or invisible realities and their complicated relationship to science, metaphysics and politics. My doctoral thesis, for example, was concerned with surrealism and occultism and most specifically the appropriation of Hermetic motifs by women artists associated with the surrealist movement. It was within this framework that I became more acquainted with the field of Western esotericism and its diverse currents as well as the ways esoteric themes were redeployed by authors, poets and visual artists in the modern era. So, although I cannot give you a clearer answer, when I think of my research in retrospect, it seems that the intersections between

religion, and especially heterodox currents, and art or culture always intrigued me, both because of the challenges these topics pose to researchers in terms of methodology and interpretation and of the rich, multifaceted material available for intellectual pursuit and in-depth analysis.

What do you feel are the major challenges for our field at present and in the future? The major challenge is to make the field more accessible and widely embraced within academia and explain to sceptics what Western esotericism is and why it should be integrated in University undergraduate and graduate programs. Although there is an increasing interest in the field in the last decade, and this is very impressive, many actions should be taken in order to open the domain to other disciplines. I think methodologies informed not only by religious studies or history of religions but also by history of ideas, cultural studies, history of art, literature and text studies, sociology, gender studies, post-colonial studies and so on should be more systematically developed in order for scholars and students to have a more solid framework within which to work and conduct their research.

What is your most fun memory so far from your time in the field? I could recollect many fun memories. Most of them include stimulating conversations with colleagues from all over the world or discovering usually ignored manuscripts or artworks of esoteric significance in some archive or private collection.

What are your interests aside from Western esotericism? My primary interest is history in general and most specifically art history and cultural history. I am also interested in comparative literature and literary studies, philosophy, psychoanalysis, anthropology, feminist theory and gender studies. When I have free time I enjoy going to the theatre, cinema or to a concert. I also love travelling, visiting archaeological sites, historical monuments, museums and galleries (combining work with pleasure), and exploring nature through excursions or hiking.

What are the worst things about having this as your specialty? The worst thing I can think of is the prejudice some scholars still have against the field of Western esotericism and their total rejection of all things pertaining to issues of religion and spirituality. It is still considered controversial to discuss Western esotericism, heterodox religious currents and alternative spiritualities within certain contexts and institutions which is both unfortunate and biased in my opinion.

What are the best things about having this as your specialty? It is an extremely interesting, wide-ranging and, in several aspects, underexplored field which makes research an intriguing and very promising enterprise. Since my involvement in the study of

Western esotericism I have encountered several scholars, both junior and senior, who are very knowledgeable – it is an interdisciplinary field which

requires a lot of reading on diverse subjects – and open-minded in their methodologies and research interests which I find fascinating and inspiring. ♦

Ph.D. projects of ESSWE members

“The reception of the category of the East by Polish esoteric environments at the turn of the 20th century and its cultural and religious consequences”



Karolina Maria Hess¹

Jagellonian University, Kraków, Poland.

My project aims to explore the cultural consequences of the collision of Eastern and Western thought in the Polish context (which at the turn of the 20th century must be understood together with the Eastern and Central European context),

through the prism of sources related to the esoteric environment. The greatest turning point in the reception of elements of Eastern philosophy, as well as Eastern ritual and practice, in modern Western societies took place in the second half of the 19th century and – if one takes into account the historical and cultural context – was mostly mediated by groups related to the Theosophical Society. My hypothesis is that Western esotericism, which became the medium of this reception, contributed importantly to the interpretation of exotic elements.

The main goal of the project is to analyze the specific distortions of Eastern philosophy and practice that were brought in by the mediating esoteric discourses and to explicate the extrapolation of meanings produced (by intellectual elites) as a result of those distortions unto various areas of Polish culture in the first half of the 20th century, including their later consequences, reaching as far as the beginning of the 21st century.

To serve this goal, the project includes analyses of previously unpublished documents of the Theosophical Society and other organizations, as well as source material and manifestos of the ideologues of this and related intellectual trends, literary works, paintings and other works inspired by Eastern traditions and by Western esotericism.

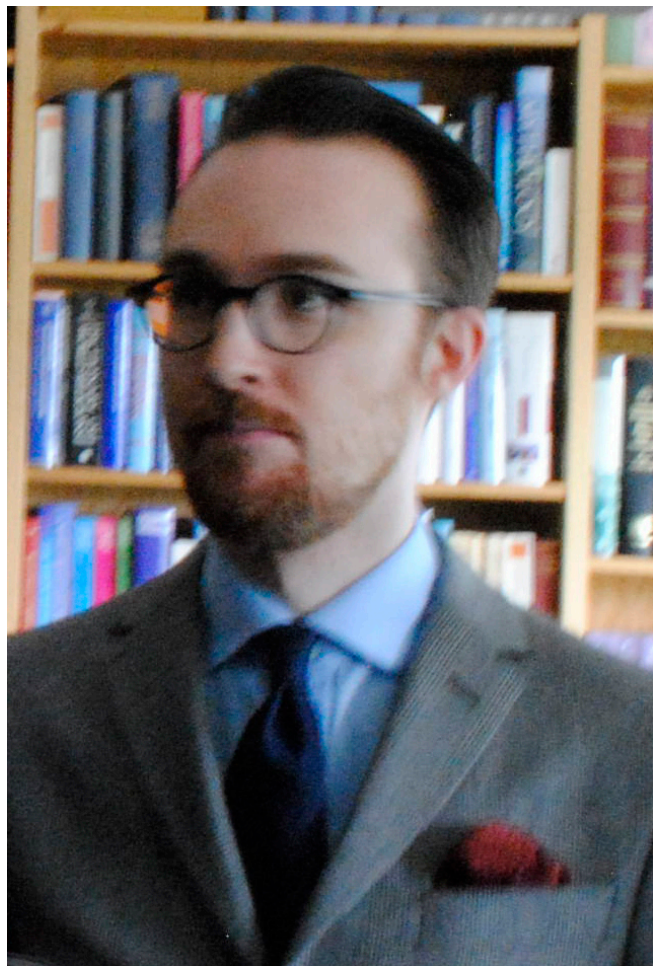
The purpose of the planned research is to systematize the source material, which has not been studied until now, as well as to analyze existing texts with great significance for understanding the reception of Eastern traditions at a time where they were unknown to a broader audience. A secondary purpose is to investigate the mechanisms of evolution of philosophical-religious syncretisms and their expression, which will undoubtedly fill a gap in the still underdeveloped field of Polish studies of Western esotericism.

The project has recently received a two-year grant from the National Science Centre in Poland. I hold two M.A. degrees, and accordingly I am leading two Ph.D. projects at the moment. The other one (which was the first I commenced) is in Philosophy and it is in the Silesia University in Katowice. It focuses on the impact of contemporary research on ancient Gnosticism on gnosis as a hermeneutical category in Philosophy and examines the changes of the idea of Godmanhood. ♦

¹ Maiden name: Karolina Maria Kotkowska.

Recently finished Ph.D. projects of ESSWE members

“Satanic Feminism: Lucifer as the Liberator of Woman in Nineteenth-Century Culture”



Per Faxneld, Department of the History of Religions, Stockholm University, Sweden.

On Friday June 13 (appropriately enough), I defended my doctoral thesis – *Satanic Feminism: Lucifer as the Liberator of Woman in Nineteenth-Century Culture* (Molin & Sorgenfrei, 724 pp.) at the Department of the History of Religions, Stockholm University. It is a historical study of how feminists have subverted patriarchal Christian myths using Satanism as their discursive strategy. According to the Bible, Eve was the first to heed Satan's advice to eat of the forbidden fruit. The notion of woman as the Devil's accomplice is prominent throughout the history of Christianity. During the nineteenth century, rebellious females performed counter-readings of this misogynist tradition. Hereby, Lucifer was reconceptualised as a feminist liberator of womankind, and Eve became a heroine. In these reimaginings, Satan is an ally in the struggle against a patriarchy supported by God the Father and his male priests.

My monograph delineates how such Satanic feminism is expressed in a number of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century esoteric works, literary texts, autobiographies, pamphlets and journals, newspaper articles, paintings, sculptures and even artifacts of consumer culture such as jewellery. In the material, four motifs in particular are prominent: 1) interpretations of Eve's role in the fall of man as something positive, 2) the witch as a proto-feminist figure, 3) the demon lover as an emancipator, 4) a feminised Satan contrasted with an oppressive male God. A fifth and less central motif is conceptions of Lilith, according to Jewish lore the unruly first wife of Adam, as the first feminist.

The analysis focuses on interfaces between esotericism and the political realm, as well as the interdependence of literature and the occult. New light is thus shed on neglected aspects of the intellectual history of feminism, Satanism and revisionary mythmaking. The study is informed by theories concerning counter-readings, counter-discourses and counter-myths, and in particular highlights the complex interplay of such phenomena and the hegemonic discourses that demonised feminism. A key theme in this context is the limits and paradoxes of inversion as a subversive tactic.

Chapters include “Theosophical Luciferianism and Feminist Celebrations of Eve”, “Satan as the Emancipator of Woman in Gothic literature”, “Witches as Rebels Against Patriarchy”, and “Lucifer and the Lesbians: Sapphic Satanism”. The book is published in a limited edition by Molin & Sorgenfrei (www.molinsorgenfrei.se). ♦



Second issue of *Correspondences* released

—Jimmy Elwing and Aren Roukema

We are happy to inform you that issue 2 of *Correspondences* is now available. This issue features a balance between theory and application that we'd like to see in every issue, with articles by Egil Asprem, Kristoffer Noheden, and Mike A. Zuber. Egil Asprem is introduced as Book Review Editor, and we also feature two unsolicited reviews by J. Christian Greer and Ethan Doyle White.

For those of you who are unfamiliar with *Correspondences*, the idea of the journal arose in Autumn 2012 when we were both working with a student magazine devoted to Western esotericism at the University of Amsterdam. Although we both enjoyed the experience, we felt a need for a platform in which scholars of all levels (non-affiliated, BA, MA, PhD student, PhD) could submit their research to a peer-review process and have it read not only within academia but also by the broader public. We shared this idea with a few scholars in the field, most notably Egil Asprem and Peter Forshaw, and our initiative was pushed forward with enthusiasm.

After months of hard work on the part of ourselves, the peer reviewers, and all who submitted, the first issue was released in June 2013. The inaugural issue contained articles by Kennet Granholm, Matthew Twigg, Ethan Doyle White and Johan Nilsson, together with a review by Dave Vliegthart. We were extremely pleased with the finished product as we felt that it reflected the wide range of issues and subject matter in our field of study, and would be attractive to a broad readership.

Correspondences is committed to open-access publishing and user-friendliness, and is a non-static journal that we'd like to improve and develop as time goes by. Because of this, we are always interested in feedback from our readers and authors, and encourage anyone to contact us if there is anything you would like us to improve, or if you have any other suggestions. You can find the journal at <http://correspondencesjournal.com>. If you would like to submit an article for issue 4, please do so before November 1

to submissions@correspondencesjournal.com. ♦

Report from the ESSWE board meeting

—Mark Sedgwick, Secretary

The Board of ESSWE meets every year. In 2014, it met in Amsterdam in May, immediately before the MA thesis workshop. The report below gives details of decisions taken at that meeting, and of related decisions made at the Meeting of Members that was also held in Amsterdam.

Future events and new initiatives

The Board reviewed arrangements for the next ESSWE conference, which will be held in Riga, Latvia, on 16-18 April 2015. This conference—ESSWE5—will be on the theme of “Western Esotericism and the East” and will be organized by Anita Stašulāne of Daugavpils University, assisted by Wouter J. Hanegraaff and Marco Pasi as the ESSWE Board delegates for the reviewing team. It was also decided that Hanegraaff will organize an ESSWE panel for the 2015 meeting of the American Academy of Religion, which will be held in Atlanta, Georgia, on 21–24 November 2015. A new regional network, the Central and Eastern European Network for the Academic Study of Western Esotericism (CEENASWE), was approved. This will be

run by György E. Szönyi and will work to increase academic interest in Western Esotericism among scholars in Central and Eastern Europe and to show the close and often overlooked connections between esoteric currents in this part of Europe and elsewhere.

It was decided that the Homan Essay Prize would in future become a Homan MA Thesis Prize, and Sophie Page was appointed to chair the Prize Committee. Birgit Menzel will chair the ESSWE PhD Thesis Prize Committee for 2014-15.

As previously announced, the Board decided in 2013 that the current website is outdated and needs to be replaced. Proposals for a replacement were discussed; one was rejected as too expensive; an alternative model was identified and will be pursued.

People

The Board welcomed two new members, Sophie Page of University College, London, who was elected at the Gothenburg meeting of members in 2014, and Anita Stašulāne, who joined the board *ex officio* as conference supervisor. There was some continuity in Board offices—Mark Sedgwick was reappointed Secretary until 2016 and Helmut Zander was re-

elected to the Board until 2018—and some change, with Page agreeing to accept appointment as Treasurer from 2015, at which point the current Treasurer, Egil Asprem, will become Vice Treasurer, and Henrik Bogdan agreeing to accept appointment as Secretary from 2016.

Administration

ESSWE operates under Dutch law and under the terms of a Constitution which it is difficult and expensive to change. It was decided to make future changes easier by moving as much as possible from the Constitution to bye-laws, and to submit the necessary resolutions to the next Meeting of Members. At the same time, certain improvements will be

proposed. One relates to the position of Student Representative, which is currently a non-voting observer position. It will be proposed that this should become a regular, voting Board position with a PhD student elected for two years, during which he/she will run a student network and take a leading role in organizing the thesis workshop. Another proposed change will relate to voting in elections for Board positions: it will be proposed that this moves from the Meeting of Members to electronic voting in order to make possible wider participation and more democracy. ♦

Conference report: Traditions of Western Esotericism in Polish Research, Kraków, May 30–31, 2014.

—Karolina Maria Hess

Almost 50 speakers from 11 universities, 9 sessions over 2 days – that is the short summary of the conference *Traditions of Western Esotericism in Polish Research*, which took place on May, 30–31 in Kraków. Paper topics ranged from antiquity to contemporary issues.

The great interest in the conference is a proof of the rising significance of studies on Western esotericism in Poland in the recent time. The conference was organized by the Center for the Comparative Studies of Civilizations (Faculty of Philosophy, Jagiellonian University) and the Center for the Study of Modern Forms of Spirituality (Faculty of Humanities, University of Science and Technology), under the sponsorship of the newly-established Polish Society for the Study of Western Esotericism, among other organizations. All members of ESSWE working in Poland took part in the conference. Dr. Rafał Prinke together with Dr. Kamila Follprecht presented a paper under the title

“John Dee and Edward Kelly in Kraków: Places and People along the Route of a Magical Peregrination”, in which, among other things, they revealed hitherto unknown details and locations of the stay of Dee and Kelly in Kraków. Paweł Bakalarz spoke of “Contemporary Approaches to Practice of Magic, Based on the Example of the Activities of Alan Chapman and Duncan Barford”, Małgorzata Alicja Dulcka investigated elements of soteriology in the esoteric milieu of Wisła and Cieszyn Silesia in the years 1918–1939, and Karolina Maria Kotkowska presented a paper on the distinctions of concepts related to esotericism in the Polish language and on the methodology of research on esotericism. A detailed report from the conference, in English, will be made available soon on the webpage www.badania-nad-ezoteryzmem.org.pl. ♦

Upcoming conferences

The Esoteric Crossroads III: Art, Eros, and Esotericism

Villa San Michele, Capri, October 30th, 2014.

Organizers: Dioscuri Institute in cooperation with Thomas Karlsson, Stockholm University, and Alberto Brandi, University of Naples “L’Orientale”.

Art and esotericism have always been linked, both in forms of magical sigils and as esoteric motifs in art works. Another central theme in esoteric traditions is eroticism as key to higher forms of reality. At this

conference we explore art, eros, and esotericism from different angles.

The focus is in line with the ambition of the Dioscuri Institute to encourage cross-cultural exchanges of philosophical, scientific, religious and esoteric ideas between Sweden and Italy in particular, and northern and southern Europe in general. The presentations will be around 30 minutes each between 12:00 and 17:00, with a lunch break.

The conference will be held at the legendary Villa San Michele, built by the Swedish physician Axel

Munthe. San Michele is a Swedish cultural institution on the beautiful island of Capri in Italy.

This is a collegial, informal conference without sponsors. The recommended contribution is €65 for speakers and audience alike. Coffee and typical Capri cake will be served during the break and we will have spumante after the conference on the terrace of Villa San Michele.

For more information write to Dr. Thomas Karlsson at quintessens@swipnet.se

7th International Conference Mystical and Esoteric Movements in Theory and Practice: Mystical and Esoteric Aspects of Contemporary Religions

Yekaterinburg, Russia, November 5–8, 2014.

Organizers: Association for the Study of Esotericism and Mysticism (ASEM) together with Ural Federal University (Yekaterinburg), Institute of Social and Political Sciences, Department of Philosophy, Subdepartment of Religious Studies, The Ural Division of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

The organizing committee invites all interested humanities scholars, including but not limited to experts in religious studies, philosophy, cultural studies, and history, for a detailed examination of these and many other problems.

Topics of discussion:

1. Having faith outside of religion: defining and classifying the phenomenon.
2. Theoretical and practical concerns in studying new mystical and esoteric movements: from secularism to post-secularism.
3. Interfaith relations and contemporary mystical and esoteric movements.
4. "Patchwork beliefs": analyzing changing convictions and their models.
5. Eastern mystical and esoteric traditions in Russia and Western countries.
6. Mysticism and esotericism in the Soviet Union.
7. Portrayal of esoteric religiosity in popular culture.
8. Constructing tradition in contemporary mystical and esoteric currents
9. Mystical and esoteric currents in the media and online.

Working languages: Russian and English. Applications must be sent to the following E-mail: conference.mystic@yandex.ru before September 15, 2014 (we'll send you a form to fill in). If a Russian visa is required, the application must be sent in by July 10, 2014. The fee for participants requiring aid in acquiring a Russian visa will be 40 Euro. The fee for participants organizing their own arrival is 30 Euro. Selected papers will be published in the conference proceedings after the conference.

Telephone for inquiries (Subdepartment of Religious Studies, call Wednesdays and Fridays): 8 (343) 358-94-28

ASEM website: <http://aiem-asem.org>

Conference E-mail: conference.mystic@yandex.ru

Colloque international] Astrologie, divination et magie dans les cours (XIIe-XVIIe siècle) Organisé par Agostino Paravicini Bagliani (Lausanne), Jean-Patrice Boudet (POLEN-CESFiMA) et Martine Ostorero (Lausanne), Lausanne (UNIL)

Date: Du 9 Octobre 2014 au 11 Octobre 2014

Lieu: Lausanne, Suisse

Depuis le XIIe siècle au moins, les cours ont été des centres de production (mécénat scientifique), de conservation (bibliothèques princières, collections, etc.) et de diffusion (interne et externe) des textes concernant les sciences de la nature. En rapport direct avec cet extraordinaire intérêt, des savoirs situés à la frontière entre le licite et l'illicite voire au delà de cette limite, tels que l'astrologie, la divination et la magie, ont occupé une place centrale. Les raisons de ce phénomène sont multiples, et leur étude constitue justement l'un des objectifs de ce colloque.

Organisé par Agostino Paravicini Bagliani (Lausanne), Jean-Patrice Boudet (POLEN-CESFiMA) et Martine Ostorero (Lausanne), Lausanne (UNIL).

For more information, see: <http://msh.univ-tours.fr/article/colloque-international-astrologie-divination-et-magie-dans-les-cours-xiie-xviie-siecle>

The XXI World Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions Erfurt, Germany

August 23–29, 2015

The organizers of the XXI IAHR World Congress, Congress presidents Prof. Dr. Jörg Rüpke (Erfurt) and Prof. Dr. Christoph Bochinger (Bayreuth) and Congress coordinator Dr. Elisabeth Begemann (Erfurt), invite contributions from all disciplines of religious studies and related fields of research to allow for broad, interdisciplinary discussion of the Congress topic. Papers should address one of the areas outlined below.

Papers should be limited to 20 minutes. Individual papers on related topics will be joint into a panel of 120 minutes. Panel chairs will have to make sure that a minimum of 30 minutes is reserved for discussion. We strongly suggest to further academic exchange by forming trans-national and trans-continental panels. All paper proposals will be evaluated by the Academic Program Committee to ensure a high academic standard of the Congress program. Proposals of papers should not exceed 150 words, as indicated on the proposal form.

The deadline for submission of proposals is Monday, December 15, 2014. All proposals must be submitted electronically via the IAHR 2015 website

(<http://www.iahr2015.org/iahr-registration/paper-registration.php>). As part of the submission process, you will be asked to indicate the area in which you would like your proposal considered. Your proposal will then be forwarded to the appropriate member of the Academic Program Committee.

You will receive notice concerning the status of your proposal as soon as possible and certainly before March 1, 2015. If your paper has been accepted by the Academic Program Committee, please note that you will have to register as Congress participant before May 15, 2015 to be included in the Congress program. Grants-in-aid for participants to the Congress will also be provided. For more information, visit <http://www.iahr2015.org/iahr-registration/1698.html>.
