



FACULTEIT DER GEESTESWETENSCHAPPEN
Afdeling Kunst-, Religie- en Cultuurwetenschappen

**HISTORY OF HERMETIC PHILOSOPHY
AND RELATED CURRENTS**

REPORT 2008



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1. Introduction

As regards teaching and research, the stability and consistent quality achieved by GHF in previous years has been continued in the year 2008. Most notable about this year is the considerable expansion of the number of Ph.D. students (see under 2).

2. Personnel

The Faculty of Humanities recently reduced standard Ph.D. positions from four years to three, which should now be devoted entirely to research; as a result, Ph.D. students can no longer build up teaching experience. Because the board of the Foundation considers such experience to be essential, it was decided to offer new Ph.D. students the option of a double appointment for a 4-year period: 75% devoted to research, plus a separate 25% appointment as a GHF assistant who can use this time for teaching or other tasks that are considered useful in view of future career perspectives.

As announced in the previous report, as of 16 January 2008 Tessel Bauduin has been appointed for the standard position in the history of Western esotericism 19th-20th century. She has accepted the offer for a double appointment as outlined above.

Tessel M. Bauduin MA (1980) studied Art History (BA), Cultural Studies with a major in History of Hermetic Philosophy (drs./MA), and Art History of the Middle Ages (Research MA) at the University of Amsterdam. Her PhD-researchproject is called "*C'est un Objet Surréaliste*: Reception of Esoteric Sources in the Surrealist Discourse in Paris, 1925-1938, and its Relation to the Surrealist Object". She will research the role of esoteric currents in surrealism, with a specific focus upon the art theoretical discourse. Proceeding from primary sources, the project seeks to investigate in which ways esotericism influenced surrealism in particular and avant-garde art of the early twentieth century in general. As far as teaching is concerned, she has been teaching the "web-classes" for Religious Studies; a course "Onderzoeksvaardigheden"; and an Honours seminar in the context of the Department KRC.



She also supervises a double trainee-ship. Just before the summer, she spent a few weeks studying source materials in Paris.

As of 1 September 2008, Egil Asprem has been appointed as Ph.D. student funded by one of the prestigious “top talent” scholarships of the Dutch Organization for Scientific Research (NWO).

Egil Asprem was born in Oslo, Norway, in 1984. He studied at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) in Trondheim from 2003 to 2006, where he obtained a double BA in Philosophy and Religious Studies, graduating with honors. From 2006 to 2008 Asprem followed the Research MA Religious Studies program at the University of Amsterdam, specialising in the History of Hermetic Philosophy and Related Currents. His thesis focused on the modern occult reception of John Dee’s magical work, and particularly looked at legitimization strategies and internal polemics among modern and contemporary ritual magicians. His research has resulted in several articles on modern occultism and ritual magic published in international peer reviewed journals. His Ph.D. research project is titled “Esotericism and Scientific Naturalism in the 20th Century: Dialogue and Polemics”, and seeks to analyse the complex interfaces between esoteric and scientific discourse, particularly during the first half of the 20th century. As far as teaching is involved, Asprem has been involved in a tutorial “Mesmerism and Parapsychology” together with Hanegraaff

Also on 1 september 2008, Joyce Pijnenburg was appointed by the *Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica* as a temporary staff member for the purpose of writing a Ph.D. dissertation. She is connected to GHF as a “recognized external Ph.D. student”.

Joyce Pijnenburg (1980) received her BA in Cultural Studies (2005) and her MA in Religious Studies (Mysticism and Western Esotericism) (2008). The working title of the dissertation is “Imagery and Philosophy of Science in Giordano Bruno's later works”. The main research question of the project is: what are Giordano Bruno’s ideas with respect to (the status of) imagery and mental perception in works of his ‘German period’; and what do they reveal about the relation of the later (‘Copernican’) Bruno to the development of intellectual and scientific discourses of the late sixteenth century, especially in Northern Europe? Specific focus will lie on *Lampas Triginta Statuarum* (1587-91) and *De imaginum compositione* (1591); the connections between these works and contemporary discussions on science and scientific development; and differences with earlier works with respect to metaphysics and image-theory. She is currently co-teaching Hermetica II with Kocku von Stuckrad



2. Teaching: Program and Levels of Participation

2nd semester 2007-2008

Bachelor

Religiestudies: methodieken en thema's (von Stuckrad): **31**

Hermetica II (von Stuckrad): **12**

Hermetica IV (Pasi): **11**

Master

Occult Trajectories II (Pasi): **16**

Other

Tutoraat Visuele Analyse/Kunstgeschiedenis (Bauduin): **18**

Web classes Religious Studies (Bauduin, Vasiček): **11**

1st semester 2008-2009

Bachelor

Religiestudies: methodieken en thema's (von Stuckrad): **23**

Onderzoeksvaardigheden Religiestudies (Bauduin): **28**

Hermetica I (Hanegraaff, Pasi): **61**

Hermetica III (Hanegraaff): **16**

Master

Contested Knowledge I (Hanegraaff): **19**

Renaissance Esotericism I (von Stuckrad): **11**

Religious Pluralism in Europe (von Stuckrad, Pauls): **19**

Jewish and Christian Origins (von Stuckrad, Van der Stichele, Van Henten): **3**

Methods and Theory in the Study of Religion, Core Course 1 (Pasi): **11**



Other

Honoursmodule KRC "Religie Verbeeld/t" (Bauduin): **3**

Double traineeship (Bauduin): **1**



4. Research

4.1. Research Program

The research program *Western Esotericism: Continuities and Discontinuities* has continued as before. For descriptions of the individual research projects see Report 2006.

4.2. Research Output.

Egil Asprem

False, Lying Spirits and Angels of Light: Ambiguous Mediation in Dr Rudd's *Treatise on Angel Magic. Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 3:1, pp. 54-80.

Én vilje, hinsides godt og ondt: Etikk og livssyn for det Nye Aeon. *Døgn: Tidsskrift for religion og kultur* 4, pp. 23-42.

Magic Naturalized? Negotiating Science and Occult Experience in Crowley's 'Scientific Illuminism'. *Aries* 8:2, pp. 139-165.

Heathens Up North: Politics, Polemics, and Contemporary Norse Paganism in Norway. *The Pomegranate* 10:1, pp. 42-69.

Apokalypse 2012: Mayakalenderen, aliens, skjulte brorskap – og verdens snarlige undergang. In: Asbjørn Dyrendal & Arnfinn Pettersen (eds.), *Dommedag! Verdens undergang før og nå*. Oslo: Humanist Forlag, pp. 247-282.

Mørkemakter i tussemørket: Eksorsisme på film og kristendommens revansj. *Humanist* 2, pp. 60-74.

Mumiemani!. *Aftenposten* 23.08.2008, p. 4.

Tessel M. Bauduin



Spiritualiteit in moderne en hedendaagse westerse kunst: een korte receptiegeschiedenis'. In: Schrover, O. (red.) *Innerlijke Spiegels: Wederzijds – Kunst in Context*. [cat.tent.] 's Hertogenbosch: 't Kruithuis / Ansgar Editions, 2008, pp. 65-75.

Wouter J. Hanegraaff

(ed. with Jeffrey J. Kripal), *Hidden Intercourse: Eros and Sexuality in the History of Western Esotericism* (Aries Book Series: Texts and Studies in Western Esotericism), Brill: Leiden / Boston 2008. xxii + 544 pp.

Altered States of Knowledge: The Attainment of Gnosis in the Hermetica. *The International Journal of the Platonic Tradition* 2:2, pp. 128-163.

Leaving the Garden (in Search of Religion): Jeffrey J. Kripal's Vision of a Gnostic Study of Religion (review article of Jeffrey J. Kripal, *The Serpent's Gift*). *Religion* 38:2, pp. 259-276.

(with Jeffrey J. Kripal), Introduction: Things We Do Not Talk About. In: Wouter J. Hanegraaff and Jeffrey J. Kripal (eds.): *Hidden Intercourse: Eros and Sexuality in the History of Western Esotericism*. Leiden - Boston: Brill, pp. ix-xxii.

Under the Mantle of Love: The Mystical Eroticisms of Marsilio Ficino and Giordano Bruno. In: Wouter J. Hanegraaff and Jeffrey J. Kripal (eds.): *Hidden Intercourse: Eros and Sexuality in the History of Western Esotericism*. Leiden - Boston: Brill, pp.175-207.

La nascita dell'esoterismo dallo spirito del Protestantesimo. In: Alessandro Grossato (ed.): *Forme e correnti dell'esoterismo occidentale*. Milano: Medusa, pp. 133-154.

Reason, Faith, and Gnosis: Potentials and Problematics of a Typological Construct. In: Peter Meusburger, Michael Welker & Edgar Wunder (eds.): *Clashes of Knowledge: Orthodoxies and Heterodoxies in Science and Religion*. Dordrecht: Springer Science & Business Media 2008, pp. 133-144.

Introduction: Swedenborg's *Magnum Opus*. In: Emanuel Swedenborg: *Secrets of Heaven* (New Century Edition), vol. I, West Chester: The Swedenborg Foundation 2008, pp. 63-129.



Swedenborg aus der Sicht von Kant und der akademischen Kantforschung. In: Friedemann Stengel (ed.): *Kant und Swedenborg: Zugänge zu einem umstrittenen Verhältnis*, Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, pp. 157-172.

Review of Florian Ebeling, "The Secret History of Hermes Trismegistus: Hermeticism from Ancient to Modern Times". *Numen* 55:5, pp. 614-619.

Marco Pasi

(ed.) *Peintures inconnues d'Aleister Crowley: La collection de Palerme*. Milano: Archè. 69 pp + ill.

The Knight of Spermatophagy: Penetrating the Mysteries of Georges Le Clément de Saint-Marcq. In: Wouter J. Hanegraaff and Jeffrey J. Kripal (eds.): *Hidden Intercourse: Eros and Sexuality in the History of Western Esotericism*. Leiden - Boston: Brill, pp. 369-400.

Aleister Crowley. In: Mark Alizart (ed.): *Traces du sacré: Catalogue publié à l'occasion de l'exposition 'Traces du sacré'*. Paris: Centre Pompidou, pp. 100-101.

Introduction. In: M. Pasi (ed.): *Peintures inconnues d'Aleister Crowley: La collection de Palerme*. Milano: Archè, pp. 5-7.

Aleister Crowley, la peinture et les œuvres de la collection de Palerme. In: M. Pasi (ed.): *Peintures inconnues d'Aleister Crowley: La collection de Palerme*. Milano: Archè, pp. 9-22.

Il problema della definizione dell'esoterismo: analisi critica e proposte per la ricerca futura. In: Alessandro Grossato (ed.): *Forme e correnti dell'esoterismo occidentale*. Milano: Medusa, pp. 205-228.

Theses de magia. *Societas Magica Newsletter* 20, pp. 1-8.

Untitled text on Caspar David Friedrich and esotericism. In: Delphine Bedel (ed.): *All That Is Solid Melts into Air: Notes on Tourism*. Rotterdam: Episode Publishers, no page numbers (2 pp.).

Kocku von Stuckrad



Interreligious Transfers in the Middle Ages: The Case of Astrology. *Journal of Religion in Europe* 1.1, pp. 34-59.

Rewriting the Book of Nature: Kabbalah and the Metaphors of Contemporary Life-Sciences. *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture* 2.4, pp. 419-442.

(with Hans G. Kippenberg) Editorial: Europe and Religion. *Journal of Religion in Europe* 1.1, pp. 1-2.

Die Schekhina vom Sohar bis zu Madonna, oder: Die Weiblichkeit Gottes als Ergebnis gesellschaftlicher Organisation. In: Anna-Katharina Höpflinger, Ann Jeffers & Daria Pezzoli-Olgiati (eds.): *Handbuch Gender und Religion*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, pp. 157-166.

Esoteric Discourse and the European History of Religion: In Search of a New Interpretational Framework. In: Tore Ahlbäck (ed., with the assistance of Björn Dahla): *Western Esotericism. Based on Papers Read at the Symposium on Western Esotericism Held at Åbo, Finland, on 15-17 August 2007* (Scripta Instituti Donneriani Aboensis, vol. 20). Åbo: Donner Institute for Research in Religious and Cultural History, pp. 217-236.

La sapienza oltre la dimostrazione: la conoscenza esperienziale dalla Tarda Antichità al XIII secolo in una prospettiva interreligiosa. Unauthorized translation by Marta Zoppetti. In: Alessandro Grossato (ed.): *Forme e correnti dell'esoterismo occidentale*. Venice: Medusa, pp. 39-54.

S.v. Missionsbericht. In: Friedrich Jaeger (ed.): *Enzyklopädie der Neuzeit*. Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, vol. 8, col. 598-600.

Review of Michael Borgolte, "Christen, Juden, Muselmanen: Die Erben der Antike und der Aufstieg des Abendlandes 300 bis 1400 n. Chr." *Journal of Religion in Europe* 1.1, pp. 119-120.

Review of Elliot R. Wolfson, "Alef, Mem, Tau: Kabbalistic Musings on Time, Truth, and Death." *Numen* 55.1, pp. 115-117.

5. Further Activities



5.1. Conference Organization

Egil Asprem

(with Joyce Pijnenburg) Conference *Emblems, Magic, and Hidden Knowledge*.
University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands. (25-03-2008)

Wouter J. Hanegraaff

(with A.P. Coudert) Panels 'Western Esotericism', 'Mysticism and Western Esotericism', 'Western Esotericism and Islamic Mysticism', for the *Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion*, Chicago, USA.

Marco Pasi

Panel 'Twenty Years of Studies on Aleister Crowley' Conference: *Twenty Years and More: Research into Minority Religions, New Religious Movements and 'The New Spirituality'*. Organised by CESNUR and INFORM in association with ISORECEA. April 16-20, London School of Economics, United Kingdom. (18-04-2008)

Panels 'The Political Temptations of Western Esotericism' and 'Ex Oriente Lux: The Presence of Western Esotericism in Eastern Europe'. Conference: *Time of Decline, Time of Hope: Scientific, Cultural and Political Engagement of the Study of Religions. 8th Conference of the European Association for the Study of Religions*. Brno, Czech Republic. (07-09-2008/11-09-2008)

Curatorship, with the collaboration of Giuseppe Di Liberti and Alessandra Sandrolini, of the exhibition 'La chambre des cauchemars: Peintures inconnues d'Aleister Crowley', Palais de Tokyo, Paris. (05-06-2008/05-07-2008)

Joyce Pijnenburg



(with Egil Asprem) Conference *Emblems, Magic, and Hidden Knowledge*. University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands. (25-03-2008)

5.2. Lectures and Conference Participation

Egil Asprem

The Scientific Aeon: Magic, Science and Psychology in Crowley's Scientific Illuminism. Conference: *Twenty Years and More: Research into Minority Religions, New Religious Movements and 'The New Spirituality'*. Organised by CESNUR and INFORM in association with ISORECEA. April 16-20, London School of Economics, United Kingdom. (18-04-2008)

Critical Approaches in the Study of Western Esotericism. Conference: *Time of Decline, Time of Hope: Scientific, Cultural and Political Engagement of the Study of Religions. 8th Conference of the European Association for the Study of Religions*. Brno, Czech Republic. (09-09-2008)

Ritual Emblems and the Nature of Spirits: The Case of Dr. Rudd's Demonized Angels. *Emblems, Magic, and Hidden Knowledge*, University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands. (25-03-2008)

Apokalypse 2012: Dommedag, nå igjen?. Release of the book *Dommedag! Verdens undergang før og nå*, Dyrendal & Pettersen (eds.). Oslo, Norway. (23-10-2008)

Tessel M. Bauduin

C'est un objet surréaliste: Reception of Esoteric Sources in the Surrealist Discourse in Paris, 1924-1938, and Relation to the Surrealist Object. Conference: Studiedag NGG, Leiden, The Netherlands. (07-06-2008)

Secrets de l'art magique surréaliste: Surrealism and mediumism. *Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion*, Chicago, USA. (01-11-2008)



Wouter J. Hanegraaff

- Swedenborg en de andere Kant: Over de Droom van de Rede en de Geest(en) van de Verlichting. *Koninklijke Nederlandse Academie van Wetenschappen (KNAW)*, Amsterdam, The Netherlands. (14.01.2008)
- Esoterie en "the Grand Polemical Narrative". Mini-Symposium *Filosofie en Spiritualiteit*, University of Leiden, The Netherlands. (15-02-2008)
- After Ficino and Lazzarelli: Hermetic Gnosis and Platonic Frenzies in Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa. *54th Meeting of the Renaissance Society of America*, Chicago, USA (05-04-2008)
- The Unspeakable and the Law: Music as Esoteric Language in Anton Webern. Conference *Music and Esotericism: Art and Science of Sounds facing the Occult Knowledge*, Academia Belgica, Rome, Italy. (17-04-2008)
- Ayahuasca Groups and Networks in the Netherlands: A Challenge to the Study of Contemporary Religion. Conference *The Globalization of Ayahuasca: An Amazonian Psychoactive and its Users*, University of Heidelberg, Germany. (16-05-2008)
- Kabbalah in *Gnosis Magazine* (1985-1999). Conference *Kabbalah and Contemporary Spiritual Revival: Historical, Sociological, and Cultural Perspectives*, Ben Gurion University, Israel. (21-05-2008)
- Will-Erich Peuckert and the Light of Nature. Keynote lecture Biannual Conference *Association for the Study of Esotericism*, Charleston, USA. (01-06-2008)
- Philosophy's Shadow: Jacob Brucker (1696-1770) and the History of Thought. Conference *The Making of the Humanities: First International Conference on the History of the Humanities*, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands. (25-10-2008)
- Western Esotericism and the Grand Polemical Narrative. Conference *Europas vergessene Traditionen*, Villa Vignoni, Italy. (13-11-2008)
- Van particuliere verzameling naar beschermd cultureel erfgoed: De Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica te Amsterdam. Conference *Geheime kennis: De*



bijzondere archieven en bibliotheken van maçonnieke en esoterische organisaties in Nederland, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague, The Netherlands. (25.01.2008)

Marco Pasi

Roman traditionalism and the specific features of Italian neopaganism. 4th international congress of LISOR: *Religion, Public or Private?*, University of Leiden, The Netherlands. (28-03-2008)

Painting Dead Souls: New Discoveries on Aleister Crowley and Art. Conference: *Twenty Years and More: Research into Minority Religions, New Religious Movements and 'The New Spirituality'*. Organised by CESNUR and INFORM in association with ISORECEA. April 16-20, London School of Economics, United Kingdom. (18-04-2008)

Ernesto De Martino, Antimagical Polemics, and the Doubtful Pleasures of Critical Ethnocentrism. 1st Societas Magica conference: *Magic: Frontiers and Boundaries*, University of Waterloo, USA. (15-05-2008)

Participation in round table for the launch of the book by Delphine Bedel, *All That Is Solid Melts into Air*, Stedelijk Museum Bureau Amsterdam, The Netherlands. (15-05-2008)

Participation in round table for the opening of the exhibition 'La Chambre des cauchemars', curated by M. Pasi, Giuseppe Di Liberti and Alessandra Sandrolini, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France. (05-06-2008)

Joyce Pijnenburg

Imagery in Giordano Bruno's later works. Conference *Emblems, Magic, and Hidden Knowledge*, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands. (25-03-2008)

The role of (mental) imagery in Giordano Bruno's later works. Symposium *Giordano Bruno's images, their background and influence*, Radboud University, Nijmegen, The Netherlands. (26-05-2008)



Images in Giordano Bruno's German period works', *Annual Conference of the American Academy of Religion*, Chicago, USA. (01-11-2008)

Kocku von Stuckrad

Enchanted Science: Esoteric Semantics of Contemporary Biology. Keynote lecture
2nd international conference of the *International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture*, Morelia, Mexico. (19-01-2008)

Esoterische Diskurse in der europäischen Religionsgeschichte. Academic workshop
Aufklärung und Esoterik, Halle, Germany. (05-03-2008)

Dekonstruktion einer Meistererzählung: Das "christliche Abendland". Academic
workshop on *Europäische Geschichte des Mittelalters: Frühere und neuere
Meistererzählungen*, Trento, Italy. (27-03-2008)

Rewriting the Book of Nature: Kabbalistic Structures in Contemporary Life Sciences.
Biannual Conference Association for the Study of Esotericism, Charleston, USA.
(31-05-2008)

Blinde vlekken: de ambivalente concepten "geschiedenis" en "ervaring" in
religieantropologie en religiewetenschap'. Najaarsconferentie van het
Nederlands Genootschap voor Godsdienstwetenschap: *Godsdienstantropologie
en godsdienstwetenschap: van impulsen naar onderzoeksagenda's*, Soesterberg, The
Netherlands. (25-10-2008)

5.3. Editorial Activities

Wouter J. Hanegraaff

(editor) *Aries: Journal for the Study of Western Esotericism*. Leiden / Boston: Brill.

(editor) *Aries Book Series: Texts and Studies in Western Esotericism*. Leiden / Boston: Brill.

(editorial board) *Religion*. Elsevier.

(editorial board) *Numen*. Leiden / Boston: Brill.



(editorial board) *Religion Compass*, Section "New Religions".

<http://www.blackwell-compass.com/subject/religion/>

(advisory board) *Esoterica* <http://www.esoteric.msu.edu>

(advisory board) *Journal of Contemporary Religion*. Carfax

(advisory board) *Nova Religio*, University of California Press.

(advisory board) (2008). *Gnostica Series*. London: Equinox Publ.

Marco Pasi

(book review editor) *Aries: Journal for the Study of Western Esotericism*.

(editorial board) *Politica Hermetica*.

(editorial board) *The Pomegranate: The International Journal of Pagan Studies*.

Kocku von Stuckrad

(editor) *Journal of Religion in Europe*. Leiden and Boston: Brill.

(editor) *Numen Book Series (Studies in the History of Religions)*. Leiden and Boston: Brill.

(editor) *Texts and Sources in the History of Religions*. Leiden and Boston: Brill.

(editor) *Religion and Society*. Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter.

(editor) *Gnostica Series*. London: Equinox Publ.

(editorial board) *The Pomegranate: The International Journal of Pagan Studies*. London:
Equinox.

(editorial board) *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture*. London: Equinox.