HISTORY OF HERMETIC PHILOSOPHY
AND RELATED CURRENTS

REPORT 2013
TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. Personnel
3. Teaching and Levels of Participation
4. Research
   4.1. Research Program
   4.2. Research Output
5. Public Activities
6. Editorial Activities
1. Introduction

An important event for the GHF (HHP) program this year was Egil Asprem’s PhD dissertation defense on February 5, which was awarded a *cum laude* (the highest possibility in the Dutch system). His dissertation, *The Problem of Enchantment*, was accepted for publication by Brill Academic Publishers and is expected to appear in print in 2014. Asprem was exceptionally successful in his applications for Postdoctoral funding by the Dutch Organization for Scientific Research (NOW): he was awarded a *Veni* as well as a *Rubicon* scholarship. After due consideration he decided to accept the *Rubicon*, which allows him to spend two years of postdoc research at the University of Santa Barbara, USA, where he is now working in a research group focused on religion and consciousness studies headed by Prof. Ann Taves. Between the end of his PhD appointment and the beginning of his postdoc position on September 1, short-term financing by the Foundation HHP and the Faculty of Humanities of the UvA made it possible for Asprem to take responsibility for building the Center’s new website. The website makes optimal use of state-of-the-art technology for modern design and connecting with social media, and should significantly enhance HHP’s online visibility and attractiveness for prospective students.

The previous Report mentioned some worries about the decline in student numbers over the past few years, particularly international students. Fortunately, this trend would seem to have been temporary: starting with the academic year 2013-2014, the student numbers have increased considerably, and the number of applications for 2014-2015 looks very good as well. Most plausibly this change may be attributed to a combination of increasing optimism regarding the international economy and the impact of the new website.

2. Personnel

As of January 2013, the position of Secretary has been taken over by Ms. Nadine Faber.

2. Teaching: Program and Levels of Participation
2nd semester 2012-2013

Bachelor

Hermetica II: Westerse Esoterie in de Oudheid en de Middeleeuwen (D. Waarsenburg). 10 students

Hermetica IV: Westerse Esoterie sinds de Verlichting (M. Pasi). 13 students

Master

Occult Trajectories II: Secret Societies and Conspiracy Theories (M. Pasi), 4 students

1st semester 2013-2014

Bachelor

Westerse Esoterie en Religieus Pluralisme (W.J. Hanegraaff). 32 students
Westerse esoterie in de vroeg-moderne periode (P.J. Forshaw & M.A. Zuber). 12 students

Master

Contested Knowledge II: Cosmotheism and Disenchantment (W.J. Hanegraaff). 13 students
Renaissance Esotericism II: Occult Philosophies (P.J. Forshaw). 16 students

Other teaching

Bachelor


Master

rMA Core Module Methods and Theory in the Study of Religion (M. Pasi, coord.). 6 students
4. Research

4.1. Research Program

No new projects.

4.2. Research Output.

Egil Asprem

*The Problem of Disenchantment: Scientific Naturalism and Esoteric Discourse, 1900-1939.* Ph.D. dissertation, Faculty of Humanities, University of Amsterdam.


Peter J. Forshaw


J. Christian Greer

Wouter J. Hanegraaff

“Textbooks and Introductions to Western Esotericism,” Religion 43:2, 178-200.

Marco Pasi

“The Problems of Rejected Knowledge: Thoughts on Wouter Hanegraaff’s Esotericism and the Academy,” Religion 43:2, 201-212.
“Theosophy and Anthroposophy in Italy during the First Half of the Twentieth Century,” Theosophical History 16:2, 81-119.
“Окультизм и современность: Некоторые ключевые моменты,” Государство Религия Церковь в России и за Рубежом 31:4, 276-296.
“Aleister Crowley, Painting, and the Works from the Palermo Collection,” Abraxas 3, 65-77.
(with L. Porsager), “Ablaze with the Fires of Matter: A Symbolically Authentic Non-Euclidean Conversation between Marco Pasi and Lea Porsager about her Two Weirdly Related Works: Anatta Experiment (2012) and How to Program and Use T-F
“Een allesomvattendende ervaring van de wereld,” Het Parool, 4 May, 34.

Mike A. Zuber


5. Public Activities

Egil Asprem

Lectures

“Scientific Rationalism, Occult Empiricism? Representations of the microphysical world, c. 1900”. Invited Lecture, Conference Looking Through the Occult: Instrumentation, Esoterism, and Epistemology in the 19th Century, Humboldt University Berlin, November 14-16.
“2045: Rapture of the Nerds! Om den transhumanistiske apokalypsen og det nye New Age”. Invited Public Lecture, Forum Nidarosiae, Trondheim, Norway, September 12.

Peter J. Forshaw

Lectures

“From Occult Ekphrasis to Magical Art: Transforming Text into Talismanic Image in the Picatrix”. Invited Lecture at Conference Methodical Reflexions about the Relationship
between Magical Texts and Images, Heidelberg, 9 July.


“Man as a Spiritual Being from a ‘Hermetic’ Perspective”, Bilthoven, 7 December.

**Webinar**

“Infinite Fire Webinar III: John Dee’s Monas Hieroglyphica”. Hermetically Open, in collaboration with the Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica, Amsterdam, 7 February.

**J. Christian Greer**

**Lectures**

“‘The Only Law We Live by is Fuck’um if They Can't Take a Joke’: The Church of the SubGenius’ Mailbomb to Bob Black”. Conference Lived Religion, Nederlands Genootschap voor Godsdienswetenschap (NGG), University of Leiden, Leiden, The Netherlands, Oct. 24-25.

**Wouter J. Hanegraaff**

**Lectures**

“The Role of Gnosis in Western Esotericism”, Opening Keynote Lecture, Internation Academic Symposium Ways of Gnosis: Mystical and Esoteric Traditions from Antiquity to the Present Time, Margarita Rudomino All-Russia State Library for Foreign Literature / Association for the Study of Esotericism and Mysticism (ASEM), Moscow, 10 April.

“Western Esotericism: The Next Generation”, Public Lecture, Gothenburg University, Sweden, 17 April.

“Gnosis en The Matrix”, Lecture Dag van de Geesteswetenschappen, Universiteit van Amsterdam, 24 April.


“Presidential Address”, Western Esotericism and Health, 4th International Conference of the European Society for the Study of Western Esotericism, Gothenburg, Sweden, 26-28 June.


Marco Pasi

Lectures


Participation in the ContERN panel discussion Problems and Potentials in the Study of Contemporary Esotericism, University of Gothenburg, 4th biannual conference of the European Society for the Study of Western Esotericism (ESSWE), 28 June,

Participation in the round table discussion on “Esotericism and the Occult in the University”, Utah State University, Logan, USA,


“The Theosophical Movement and the Construction of Esoteric Ethnic Identities in Italy (1890-1915)”, Conference Theosophical Appropriations: Kabbalah, Western Esotericism and the Transformation of Traditions, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Beer Sheva 17 December.


“Western Esotericism and the problem of modern artistic creativity”. Symposium Hilma Af Klint: A Pioneer of Abstraction, Museo Picasso Málaga, 22 October.


Conference Organization

Enchanted modernities. Esotericism, modernity and the arts, Study Evening Spui25, Amsterdam, 12 September.
6. Editorial Activities

Peter J. Forshaw

(editor in chief) *Aries: Journal for the Study of Western Esotericism*. Leiden/Boston: Brill
(editorial board) Correspondences: Online Journal for the Academic Study of Western Esotericism
(editorial board) *História Revista*

Wouter J. Hanegraaff

(editorial board) *Religion Compass*, Section "New Religions".
(consultative board) *Esoterica* [http://www.esoteric.msu.edu](http://www.esoteric.msu.edu)
(consultative board) *Journal of Contemporary Religion*. Carfax

Marco Pasi

(editorial board) *Politica Hermetica.*
(advisory board) *Secretum: Scienze, saperi, forme di cultura.*