



FACULTEIT DER GEESTESWETENSCHAPPEN
Afdeling Geschiedenis, Europese Studies & Religiestudies

**HISTORY OF HERMETIC PHILOSOPHY
AND RELATED CURRENTS**

REPORT 2016



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1. Introduction

Fortunately the decline in student numbers mentioned in the previous report has not continued in the academic year 2016-2017. Fifteen students were admitted into the Master program, of which six actually registered in the end (this is actually a problem: in practice, based on the admission numbers it is almost impossible to predict how many students will actually show up). Those six were joined by another student who had already been admitted a year earlier but could not make it at that time, plus various students from other UvA programs who took courses offered by HHP as an elective, resulting in an average attendance of 12-14 students. As for the new introductory module “Western Culture and Counterculture”, due to a problem with the online publicity, students numbers were still relatively modest; but the course was extremely well received and there are good reasons for expecting a considerably larger audience next year. In general, it can be said that the program has essentially returned to normal.

2. Personnel

Marco Pasi applied successfully for a one-year Fellowship at the Max-Weber-Kolleg of the University of Erfurt (Germany). During this one-year period he is being replaced by Dr. Julian Strube (University of Heidelberg), who teaches Pasi’s courses in the 2nd semester.

3. Teaching: Program and Levels of Participation

1st semester 2015-2016, block 3

Master

Western Esotericism and Its Scholars (W.J. Hanegraaff), 3 students

2nd semester 2015-2016, block 1-2

Bachelor

Western Esotericism from the 18th to the 20th Century (M. Pasi). 13 students

Master



Occult Trajectories II: Modern Western esotericism and politics (M. Pasi), 7 students

1st semester 2016-2017, block 1-2

Bachelor

Western Culture and Counterculture (W.J. Hanegraaff). 28 students

Western Esotericism in the Early Modern Period (P.J.Forshaw). 14 students

Master

Contested Knowledge (W.J.Hanegraaff). 12 students.

Renaissance Esotericism I: Medieval and Early Modern Alchemy (P.J.Forshaw). 12 students

Other teaching

Master

Core Module Polemics and Politics of Religious Identity (P.J.Forshaw, J.W. van Henten). 4 students.

4. Research

4.1. Research Program

No new projects were started this year (for the current projects, see description in previous Annual Reports).

4.2. Research Output

Peter J. Forshaw

'Christian Kabbalah', in: Glenn Alexander Magee (ed.), *The Cambridge handbook of Western Mysticism and Esotericism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2016, 143-155.

'Unexpected in the Octagon: Heinrich Khunrath's Presentation Copy to Erasmus Wolfart', in: Hans Thomas Hakl (ed.), *OCTAGON II: The Quest for Wholeness*, Vol. 2, Gaggenau: H. Frietsch Verlag - Scientia nova 2016, 71-89.



J. Christian Greer

“Discordians Stick Apart”: The Institutional Turn within Contemporary Discordianism’, in: Carole Cusack & Pavol Kosnáč (eds.) *Fiction, Invention and Hyper-reality from Popular Culture to Religion*, Routledge 2016, 181-197.

Wouter J. Hanegraaff

Западный эзотеризм: путеводитель для запутавшихся (Western Esotericism: A Guide for the Perplexed, Russian translation by Kateryna Zorya), Moscow: Center of Books Rudomino 2016 (255 pp.).

‘Reconstructing “Religion” from the Bottom Up’, *Numen* 63: 5/6 (2016), 576-605.

‘Alan Moore’s *Promethea*: Counterculturalism and the End of the World’, *Gnosis: Journal of Gnostic Studies* 1 (2016), 234-258.

‘The First Psychonaut? Louis-Alphonse Cahagnet’s Experiments with Narcotics’, *International Journal for the Study of New Religions* 7:2 (2016), 105-123.

‘Gnosis’, in: Glenn Alexander Magee (ed.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Western Mysticism and Esotericism*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 2016, 381-392.

‘Magic’, in: Glenn Alexander Magee (ed.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Western Mysticism and Esotericism*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 2016, 393-404.

‘Esotericism Theorized: Major Trends and Approaches to the Study of Esotericism’, in: April D. DeConick (ed.), *Religion: Secret Religion*, MacMillan 2016, 155-170.

‘*Ad loca secretiora*: Rejected Knowledge and the Future of Libraries’, in: Hans Thomas Hakl (ed.), *OCTAGON*, vol. 2 (English): *The Quest for Wholeness mirrored in a Library dedicated to Religious Studies, Philosophy, and Esotericism in particular*, Gaggenu: Scientia Nova 2016, 25-34.

Marco Pasi

(ed., in collaboration with Simon Grant and Bang Larsen), *Georgiana Houghton: Spirit Drawings*, London: The Courtauld Gallery 2016 (83 pp.).

‘Teses de magia’, *Religare: Periódico do curso de Pós-Graduação em Ciências das Religiões da UFPB* 13.1 (2016), 266-276.

‘L’étude de l’ésotérisme occidental: Développements institutionnels et questions méthodologiques’, in: Jean-Daniel Dubois, Lucie Kaennel, Renée Koch Piettre,



and Valentine Zuber (eds.), *Les Sciences des religions en Europe: État des lieux, 2003-2016*, Paris: Société des Amis des Sciences Religieuses 2016, 245-256.

'Esotericism Emergent: The Beginning of the Study of Esotericism in the Academy', in: April DeConick (ed.), *Religion: Secret Religion*, Farmington Hills: Macmillan Reference USA 2016, 143-154.

(with Simon Grant) "'Works of Art without Parallel in the World": Georgiana Houghton's Spirit Drawings', in: Simon Grant, Lars Bang Larsen, and Marco Pasi (eds.), *Georgiana Houghton: Spirit Drawings*, London: The Courtauld Gallery 2016, 9-23.

(with Lars Bang Larsen) 'Spectres of Art', in: Simon Grant, Lars Bang Larsen, and Marco Pasi (eds.), *Georgiana Houghton: Spirit Drawings*, London: The Courtauld Gallery 2016, 24-33.

'Soigner l'invisible, sauver l'impossible', in: Vidya Gastaldon, *Les Rescapés*, exhibition catalogue, Les Sables d'Olonne: Musée de l'Abbaye Sainte-Croix 2016, 65-67, 73-75 (French and English).

'The Hidden Hand', *Tate Etc.* 37 (Summer 2016), 88-95.

Julian Strube

Sozialismus, Katholizismus und Okkultismus im Frankreich des 19. Jahrhunderts: Die Genealogie der Schriften von Eliphas Lévi, Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter 2016.

'Socialist Religion and the Emergence of Occultism: A Genealogical Approach to "Secularization" in 19th-Century France', *Religion* 46:3 (2016), 359-388.

'Transgressing Boundaries: Social Reform, Theology, and the Demarcations between Science and Religion', *Aries* 16:1 (2016), 1-11.

(ed.) "Transgressing Boundaries", *Aries* Special Issue 16:1 (2016).

5. Public Activities

Peter J. Forshaw

Lectures

'In Oratory and Laboratory: Alchemy, Magic and Cabala in Heinrich Khunrath's *Amphitheatre of Eternal Wisdom* (1609)', Guest Lecture University of Tokyo, Japan, 8 January 2016.

'Mythoalchemy in Michael Maier's *Arcana Arcanissima* and *Atalanta Fugiens*', Project Atalanta Workshop, Brown University, USA, 6 February 2016.



'Hermes Trismegistus and the *Emerald Tablet*', Guest Lecture Brown University, USA, 8 February 2016.

'Hermaphrodite and Androgyne: Lapis Invisibilis and Deific Vision', Conference *Depicting the Invisible: Science and Image in the Early Modern World*, Princeton, USA, 12-13 February 2016.

'Tommaso Campanella's *The City of the Sun* (1623): Model for a Society Governed by Astrology', *Fate, Freedom and Prognostication: Strategies for Coping with the Future in East Asia and Europe*, Lecture Series Summer 2016, Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, Germany, 19 April 2016.

'Campanella's Astrology', Guest Seminar, *Fate, Freedom and Prognostication*, Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, Germany, 20 April 2016.

'Professing Esotericism', Keynote Lecture, *Congress on Western Esotericism*, Universidade Lusófona, Lisbon, Portugal, 7 May 2016.

'Arcana Publicata Vilesunt: Esoteric Communication in Heinrich Khunrath's *Amphitheatre of Eternal Wisdom* (1595/1609)', Masterclass, Palácio Nacional de Mafra, Lisbon, Portugal, 8 May 2016.

'Heinrich Khunrath's *Amphitheatre of Eternal Wisdom*', Symposium *The Greatness of the Human Mind*, London, United Kingdom, 28 May 2016.

'Paracelsus's *De Vita longa* and its Paracelsian Afterlife', Oxford Seminar Program: *Alchemy, Universal Medicine and Prolongation of Life*, Oxford, United Kingdom, 4 July 2016.

Outreach

Infinite Fire Interview - on Jung & Alchemy (with Sonu Shamdasani & Hans van der Hooff) - recorded 29 April 2016; published online 28 June 2016
<http://www.ritmanlibrary.com/2016/06/infinite-fire-interview-on-jung-alchemy-sonu-shamdasani-peter-forshaw-hans-van-den-hooff/>

J. Christian Greer

Lectures

'History of the Psychedelic Church Movement 1950-2000', Melanie Bonajo's Night Soil Exhibition, FOAM Gallery, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 22 November 2016.

Outreach



- 'Total Assault on Culture: Spiritual Brotherhoods, Urban Tribes, and Psychedelic Churches in the mid-1960s', Western Esotericism Film Night, Filmhuis Cavia, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 10 December 2016.
- 'After the Apocalypse: Donald Trump, Joyful Existentialism, and the Mass Psychology of Fascism', Western Esotericism Film Night, Filmhuis Cavia, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 19 November 2016.
- 'A Social History of the Murderous Clown in Vernacular Culture', Western Esotericism Film Night, Filmhuis Cavia, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 27 October 2016.
- 'The Church of the SubGenius and 1980s Amateur Cinema', Western Esotericism Film Night, Filmhuis Cavia, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 10 September 2016.
- 'CHAPPAQUA 1966', Jeffrey's Underground Cinema, Filmhuis Cavia, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 16 July 2016.
- 'American Situationism', Western Esotericism Film Night, Filmhuis Cavia, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 11 May 2016.
- 'Cyberpunk, Body-Horror, and Underground Media in the 1980s', Western Esotericism Film Night, Filmhuis Cavia, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 14 April 2016.
- 'The Spirit of Witchcraft in Popular Cinema', Western Esotericism Film Night, Filmhuis Cavia, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 16 March 2016.

Wouter J. Hanegraaff

Lectures

- 'Georgius Gemistos Plethon en Platonisch Oriëntalisme', Guest Lecture, Department of Philosophy, Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen, the Netherlands, 14 March 2016.
- 'Astral Daguerrotyping: Photography and the Theosophical Imagination', Keynote lecture, *Mysticism and Esotericism in the World of Technologies*, 8th International Conference of the Association for the Study of Esotericism and Mysticism, 24-26 March 2016, St. Petersburg, Russia, 24-26 March 2016,
- 'Esoterie als academisch vakgebied', Invited lecture at Symposium *God is geestig*, Amsterdam, 14 May 2016.
- "What Happens when Historians Imagine the Occult?", Keynote lecture, *Scientiae* conference, St Anne's College, Oxford, United Kingdom, 7 July 2016.
- 'Close to Death in the 19th Century Occult', Invited lecture at Conference *Boundary Work on the Baseline: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Near-Death Experiences*, Universität Greifswald, Germany, 6-8 October 2016.



'Esoteric Tradition as Poetic Invention', Keynote lecture, Conference *Imaginatio et Actio*, Krakow, Poland, 20-21 October 2016.

'The Secret of Secrets: Entheogenic Practice in 19th-century Occultism', lecture at Conference *Public Religions and their Secrets, Secret Religions and their Publics*, Dutch Association for the Study of Religion, Amsterdam, the Netherlands, 27-28 October 2016.

'Elementals, Dr Watson! From *Gabalais* to *Zanoni* and *Ghost Land*', Invited lecture, Workshop *The Occult in Popular Fiction and Entertainments*, University College Dublin, 25 November 2016.

Marco Pasi

Lectures

'Western Esotericism, Theosophy and the Modern Complex', Invited lecture for the Theosophy and modernism event organized by Santiago Borja at Huis Sonneveld for Het Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam, the Netherlands, 11 February 2016.

'Believe Not Every Spirit: Georgiana Houghton's Art', Invited lecture for the event "Now is forever lasting constant in the mind" organized by Pádraic Moore at the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, the Netherlands, 17 March 2016.

'Piccoli mondi antichi e visioni del futuro: Cultura italiana e teosofia tra fine dell'Ottocento e primi del Novecento'. Keynote lecture conference *Bramosia dell'ignoto: Esoterismo, occultismo e fantastico nella letteratura italiana tra fin de siècle e avanguardia*, organized by the Italian Institute of Culture and the department of Italian Studies at the Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic, 15 April 2016.

'And Never the Twain Shall Meet: The Study of Western Esotericism and the Problem of "Orientalism"', Invited lecture for the Institute for Religious Studies at the University of Bern, Switzerland, 26 May 2016.

'Mediumistic Art and the Problems of Interpretation: The Case of Georgiana Houghton (1814-1884)', Invited lecture for the "History of the Psychological Disciplines Seminar Series" coordinated by Sonu Shamdasani at University College London, United Kingdom, 14 June 2016.

'Religious Individualisation and Nationalism in Modern Europe through the Lens of Alternative Spirituality and Western Esotericism (1823-1939)', Paper presented at the annual conference of the European Association for the Study of Religions (EASR), University of Helsinki, Finland, 29 June 2016.



Participation in the session “Curators of the exhibition in conversation” for the *Georgiana Houghton: Spirit Drawings* study day at the Courtauld Institute of Art, London, United Kingdom, 7 September 2016.

‘The Transitional Scholar: A Personal Take on the Study of Esotericism, Art, and Creativity’, Keynote lecture for the conference *Trans-States: The Art of Crossing Over*, University of Northampton, United Kingdom, 10 September 2016.

Participation as a speaker in discussion panel “Black Mirror: Journal & Research Network”, conference *Trans-States: The Art of Crossing Over*, University of Northampton, United Kingdom, 10 September 2016.

‘Political Dimensions of Esotericism: Nationalism between Imagination and Action’, lecture at conference *Imaginatio et actio: Wyobrażenia w tradycjach ezoterycznych - Imagination in esoteric traditions*, Jagiellonian University, Cracow, Poland, 20 October 2016.

‘The Problem of Secrecy in Western Esotericism’, Conference *Public Religions and their Secrets, Secret Religions and their Publics*, Dutch Association for the Study of Religion, Amsterdam, the Netherlands, 27-28 October 2016.

Conference organization

(in collaboration with Gerard Wiegers) *Public Religions and Their Secrets, Secret Religions and Their Publics*, Annual conference of the Dutch National Association for the Study of Religion (NGG), University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 27-28 October 2016.

Panel “Western Esotericism and Nationalism: Strange Bedfellows or Happy Allies?” for the annual conference of the European Association for the Study of Religions (EASR), University of Helsinki, 29 June 2016.

(in collaboration with Sarah Turner and Barnaby Wright) Study day *Georgiana Houghton: Spirit Drawings* study day, 7 September, Courtauld Institute of Art, London, United Kingdom, 7 September 2016.

Julian Strube

Lectures

‘Socialism and Religion in Nineteenth-Century France,’ Presidency University Calcutta, 24 February 2016.

‘French Socialist Movements and Religion’, Utrecht University, 17 May 2016.



'Alternative Konzepte von "Religion" im Kontext von Sozialismus, Katholizismus und Okkultismus: Die Bedeutung des Fortschrittsdiskurses für die Schriften von Eliphaz Lévi', Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies, 23-24 June 2016.

'Early French Socialism and its Influence on the European History of Religions', Universiteit van Amsterdam, 26 September 2016.

'Die Entstehung alternativer Katholizismen im Frankreich des 19. Jahrhunderts und die Globalisierung der universalen Religion', Conference *Weltreligion im Umbruch: Transnationale Perspektiven auf das Christentum in der Globalisierung des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Excellence Cluster "Religion and Politics", Münster, Germany, 7-9 October 2016.

Interviews

Interview with *National Geographic TV* for a documentary "World War Weird", about the relationship between National Socialism and Esotericism.

Mike A. Zuber

'Böhmes Wiedergeburtstheorie als geistliche Alchemie', paper presented at *Alles in Allem: Jacob Böhme Workshop*, Kunstsammlung Dresden, 16–18 November 2016.

'Dionysius Andreas Freher and the Visual Language of Rebirth', presented at *Current Issues* (lecture series), Universiteit van Amsterdam, 17 October 2016.

'Alchemical Manuscripts, Patronage and Correspondence, 1684/85: Duke Frederick I of Saxe-Gotha, Johann Heinrich Vierordt and the *Speculum Sapientiae*', presented at *Scientiae 2016: Disciplines of Knowing in the Early Modern World*, University of Oxford, 5–7 July 2016.

Conference organization.

"Colouring and Making in Alchemy and Chemistry (7th SHAC Postgraduate Workshop), Universiteit Utrecht, 26 October 2016 (in collaboration with Thijs Hagendijk).

6. Editorial Activities

Peter J. Forshaw

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

(editorial board) *Ambix: Journal of the Society for the History of Alchemy and Chemistry*.

London: Maney

(editorial board) *Universal Reform: Studies in Intellectual History, 1550-1700*,

Aldershot: Ashgate



(editorial board) *Apocalypticism: Cross-Disciplinary Explorations*, Bern: Peter Lang
(editorial board) *Oxford Studies in Western Esotericism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press
(editorial board) *Correspondences: Online Journal for the Academic Study of Western Esotericism*
(editorial board) *História Revista*
(advisory board) *Magic, Ritual, & Witchcraft*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press

Wouter J. Hanegraaff

(editorial board) *Religion*. Elsevier.
(editorial board) *Aries: Journal for the Study of Western Esotericism*. Leiden / Boston: Brill.
(editorial board) *Aries Book Series: Texts and Studies in Western Esotericism*. 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) (2008). *Gnostica Series*. London: Equinox Publ.

Marco Pasi

(editor) *Aries Book Series: Texts and Studies in Western Esotericism*. Leiden / Boston: Brill.
(editorial board) *Aries: Journal for the Study of Western Esotericism*.
(editorial board) *Politica Hermetica*.
(editorial board) *The Pomegranate: The International Journal of Pagan Studies*.
(editorial board) *International Journal for the Study of New Religions*.
(editorial board) *Pessoa Plural. An International Journal of Pessoa Studies*.
(editorial board) *Annali di Storia dell'Esegesi*.

Julian Strube

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