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 legitimation 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, Vasiek): **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*


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


*Tessel M. Bauduin*

Wouter J. Hanegraaff


Marco Pasi


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


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
5.2. Lectures and Conference Participation

Egil Asprem


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)


Tessel M. Bauduin


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)


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)


Van particuliere verzameling naar beschermd cultureel erfgoed: De Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica te Amsterdam. Conference Geheime kennis: De
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)


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


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


5.3. Editorial Activities

Wouter J. Hanegraaff


(editorial board) Religion. Elsevier.

(editorial board) Numen. Leiden / Boston: Brill.
Marco Pasi

Kocku von Stuckrad

(ADVISORY 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.


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

(editorial board) Politica Hermetica.