

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS

ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONALE POUR L'HISTOIRE DES RELIGIONS

IAHR

JAHR BULLETIN 30
NOVEMBER 1994

Letter from the Secretary-general

Dear fellow-members of the IAHR,

I am able to report that the last full meeting of the current Executive Committee was held in August this year. The context was an excellent conference in the city of Brno, organized by the recently affiliated Czech Association for the Study of Religions. Thanks are due to them for their excellent organization.

During the conference at Brno an informal "IAHR Open Forum" was also held for open discussion of matters of interest. This Open Forum was addressed by our President, Prof. Ugo Bianchi, speaking on the subject of academic strategies and the question of the name of the association. Considering the importance of the subject and the definite views put forward by our President, the text of his talk is reproduced in this Bulletin in full. Please send in any further letters or statements on this subject (not more than two pages, cleanly typed) to appear in the Bulletin.

Thus, as we approach the next major Congress of the IAHR to be held at Mexico City in 1995 (August 5-12) the discussion about the proposed change of name continues. Shall it be IAHR or IAASR/IAESR (International Association for the Study of Religions/Association Internationale pour l'Étude Scientifique des Religions)? The question has been discussed at length both here and at the meetings of various national associations. Because of the short time available the number of speakers at the General Assembly in Mexico will have to be limited. It is to be hoped that whatever decision is taken by the General Assembly our academic traditions will be continued and strengthened.

This raises an important point, namely that of procedures to be followed in meetings. In order to avoid any difficulties later, I would be grateful if any views on these matters could be given to the President or to me soon. See also the announcement which follows later in this Bulletin.

All correspondence concerning the arrangements for the Congress itself must be addressed to the Congress organizers:

Av. La Paz 37-A-36, San Angel, C.P. 01000 México, D.F. Mexico

With all best wishes
Michael Pye

IAHR BULLETIN 30
NOVEMBER 1994

Copyright: IAHR 1994
all rights reserved

Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting at Brno, August 1994

1. Membership present, and apologies

Present were Professors Bianchi (presiding), Araki, Gonzalez, Geertz, Pye, Wiebe and Werblowsky (present at the conference and in consultation with other members but leaving shortly before the meeting itself). Apologies were received from Professors Antes, Bäckman, Leclant and Sullivan.

2. Minutes of last meeting (previously circulated)

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as a correct record.

3. Secretary-General's report

The Secretary-General gave a brief oral report stressing the role of conferences in different parts of the world in the development of the academic strategies of the IAHR. The proceedings of the quinquennial congress in Rome had now been published, by l'Erma di Bretschneider, unfortunately at a rather high price. Two ancillary volumes from major symposia at the Congress were being published separately. It was hoped that the proceedings from Beijing and Harare would also appear before too long.

He also reported on the recently signed contract with E.J. Brill (c.f. item 6 below). It was suggested in discussion, and agreed, that a copy of the finely produced Rome proceedings should be made available for consultation by the organizers of the Mexico Congress.

He also reported that he had given considerable thought, and engaged in informal consultations, on the question of a world-wide individual membership for the IAHR, in addition to the present membership via affiliated associations. (C.f. item 7 below.)

4. Treasurer's report

The Treasurer presented his report as appended to these minutes (pages 6-9 below). He noted with regret that not many associations had yet seen fit to contribute to the Endowment Fund, the purpose of which was to enable colleagues from disadvantaged countries to attend conferences and therefore also to participate in meetings of the International Committee, thus maintaining the international cohesion of the IAHR on a broad and fair basis. He expressed his appreciation for those associations

which had so far contributed. There followed a general discussion on various matters concerning the participation of various countries in the IAHR.

5. Numen: contract with E.J. Brill

The Secretary-General reported that after protracted negotiations he had been able to sign a contract with E.J. Brill (ex officio for the IAHR and his successors in office) which regularised existing arrangements and at the same time (in particular) improved the financial contribution of the publishers towards the meetings of the Editorial Committee. It was noted that this would have the practical effect of assisting the meetings of the Executive Committee of the IAHR, since it had largely the same membership. A copy of the contract had been lodged with the President and the Treasurer of the IAHR and sent for information to the current Executive Editors.

6. Numen: reappointment of one editor for period 1993-1998

It was explained that Prof. Kippenberg had first been appointed as an Executive Editor for Numen at the Executive Committee meeting of 1988 (Marburg), and would therefore have been due for reappointment in 1993. Due to an error, the Executive Committee had failed to do this at its meeting in Paris, August 1993. It was necessary to rectify this position. It was also pointed out that the system of five-year periods, renewable for a second term, meant that there would always be an overlap between a remaining editor and a newly appointed editor, and that this was greatly to be desired in the running of the journal. The next appointment would be made in 1995, the one thereafter in 1998, and so on, always coinciding with a meeting of the International Committee. By unanimous decision the Executive Committee decided to reappoint Professor Hans Kippenberg as one of the two Executive Editors for a further period of five years.

7. Proposals for individual subscribing membership of IAHR

On the basis of a previous decision of the Executive Committee the Secretary-General put forward the main elements of a proposal for a system of "add-on" individual membership for the IAHR. the main points are as follows:

(i) The current constitutional position, whereby membership is fundamentally assured through membership of one of the national affiliated associations, would not be affected. No constitutional changes (e.g. rights to representation or votes) are being proposed in this connection.

(ii) The objective of the "add-on" individual membership is to create a wide supporting network of people throughout the

world who are prepared to pay an additional, personal subscription in exchange for regular information (such as a redesigned bulletin, which would however continue to be made available to the officers of national associations). It is also understood that there are some individuals who would simply wish to support the work of the IAHR as individuals, without necessarily counting what they receive in return.

(iii) the main categories of membership might be as follows:

sponsoring membership: subscription of \$350,- or above (to include subscriptions to Numen, Science of Religion and IAHR Bulletin;

supporting membership: subscription of minimum \$150,- maximum \$300,- (to include subscriptions to Science of Religion and IAHR Bulletin;

communicating membership: subscription of \$25,- (to include subscription to IAHR Bulletin, with add-on concessionary rates for Numen and Science of Religion).

honorary life membership: a limited number of appointments by the International Committee in consideration of long-term services to the IAHR (to include the IAHR Bulletin free, but with the option of supporting or sponsoring membership in addition).

(iv) All the above categories of membership would be open only to those who are bona fide members of their own national associations. All paid-up members would qualify also for any reduced rates offered by the journals of any national affiliated associations.

(v) All receipts by the IAHR in excess of costs would be credited to the Endowment Fund. It may be recalled that contributions to the Endowment Fund will only be used to develop the capital of the fund. Income from the fund is intended to ensure the full future functioning of the IAHR, in particular by ensuring the participation of members from a wide range of countries with economic difficulties. A choice to participate via individual "add-on" membership will therefore be a choice to ensure the future of the IAHR in generations to come.

These proposals were agreed in principle by the Committee, with details still subject to planning. It was further agreed that they should be worked into a final form which could be put before the International Committee at Mexico City. If approved, the system would be a matter for report at the General Assembly. (No constitutional changes are required.) The various kinds of individual membership (all optional) would therefore come into operation after agreement by the International Committee.

9. Review of arrangements for Mexico Congress 1995

Prof. Elio Masferrer Kan was invited to join the Executive Committee for this item. A report was given by Dr. Gonzalez on the current situation which appeared to be largely satisfactory.

It was thought that the various political troubles affecting Mexico would not cause difficulties for the Congress. An office had been established in the Escuela de Antropologia (Mexico City) which was staffed by Fernando Barrios, a specially funded Congress Officer. The second circular, with a long list of symposia and workshops, had recently been made available, and some difficulties of circulation were discussed.

10. Any other business

There was no other business. The Executive Committee then convened in its capacity as the Editorial Board of Numen.

(Minutes by MP)

Meeting of the Editorial Board of Numen (Brno, August 1994)

The meeting of the Editorial Board of Numen was convened with the same membership as that of the Executive Committee. Unfortunately Prof. Hans Kippenberg and Prof. Thomas Lawson were not able to be present on this occasion, and both sent their apologies.

Detailed minutes of the Editorial Board of Numen are not recorded for general circulation; however the following topics were discussed.

1. Report on contract with E.J. Brill (c.f. minutes of Executive Committee, 5).
2. Report on reappointment of one Executive Editor, Prof. Hans Kippenberg, by the Executive Committee (c.f. minutes of Executive Committee, 6).
3. Executive Editors' report. A report by the Executive Editors had been received by fax and was discussed in some detail.
4. General editorial matters. A call was made for reports on books appearing in lesser known languages and also for survey articles on particular fields which are not satisfactorily covered. Offers for contributions in this regard should be sent to one of the two Executive Editors.

(report by MP)

Treasurer's report for 1994
(Appendix to minutes of Executive Committee, above)

Balance: \$41,627.37

This balance is an improvement by \$5,629.07 over the 1993 balance. However \$1,000 is a CIPSH grant to pay travel costs for Professor Elio Masferrer. Furthermore other costs might be applicable in connection with this conference or this executive meeting. I expect further costs in the near future such as new letterpaper, but I also expect to receive the rest of the subscriptions which should amount to \$1,755.00.

Considering the high level of activity that the Executive Committee has supported financially during the past 4 years, including investments in the Mexico Congress and in the Latin American Bibliography, we have only suffered a minor decrease in funds of a little under \$1,200.00 below the 1991 balance of \$42,823.13. This should be cause for some relief.

CIPSH

We normally receive annual grants from CIPSH for Science of Religion Abstracts, small triannual travel grants for securing one or two key people from nations with weaker currencies to a regional conference, and the quinquennial travel grant of approximately \$10,000 for key people from said nations to the IAHR congress. This year, we have received word that CIPSH's budget has been reduced by half with the result that SOR now receives only half of its grant. At the moment, I do not know how much money we will receive for the travel grants to the Mexico Congress.

Endowment Fund

As agreed by the International Committee during the Paris meeting last September, I was asked to contact the national societies in order to establish an ad hoc Endowment Fund committee with the purpose of working out proposals for a more effective fund-raising campaign. As is well-known, only three associations have contributed to the Endowment Fund: the British Association for the Study of Religion (\$1,000), the North American Association for the Study of Religion (\$500, with a pledge up to \$1,000), and the Danish Association for the History of Religions (\$1,000). Thus there is a definite need to work out campaign strategies. [Since this report was written, the IAHR has received a contribution of \$1,000 from the Société Suisse pour la Science des Religions.]

On March 30, 1994, I sent inquiries to the member associations of the IAHR, sending copies to the President, Secretary, and Treasurer of each association. In the letter I asked the following four questions:

- 1) Has your society begun a fund-raising campaign and/or pledged a contribution to the Endowment Fund?
- 2) If so, what deadlines are you working with?
- 3) Does your society have recommendations for improving our fund-raising activities?
- 4) Do you have a resource person who would be willing to carry on correspondence and meet, if possible, within the framework of the IAHR ad hoc Endowment Fund Committee?

I sent the letter out to all associations, including those financially underprivileged. The latter was in the hope that despite the fact that they cannot contribute to the fund they would appoint representatives to help decide how the Endowment Fund could best be put to use. I did not, however, specify this, and this is probably why, only one society replied in that vein, namely, the newly established African Association for the Study of Religion.

I have received responses from the African, Australian, Canadian, Chinese, Dutch, French, Israeli, Korean, and Quebecian associations. I am grateful that these associations have taken the time to reply. The responses have, however, generally been negative. Most have replied that their own financial situation does not allow them to contribute to the fund-raising campaign. Canada and Quebec have promised to take the question up during the next fiscal year. The Dutch Association has decided to start a fund-raising campaign and to reserve DFL 10 per year per member as a contribution. They will also investigate possible subsidy sources from the European Community. The Dutch contribution carries the condition that the money should be spent for specific purposes relating to projects in the Third World and not for subsidizing the travelling costs of members of the Executive Committee or the like. The African Association suggests contacting American funding organizations. Three societies have appointed and/or suggested resource persons: Canada appointed Jordan Paper, the African Association suggested Gerrie ter Haar, and the Dutch Association appointed Jan Platvoet.

I look forward to consulting with these resource persons, and I hope that other associations will join in on our fund raising campaign.

Armin W. Geertz

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ENDOWMENT FUND OF THE IAHR
October 21, 1994

<i>COUNTRY</i>	<i>1992</i>	<i>1993</i>	<i>1994</i>
Denmark		1000	
North America		500	
Switzerland			1000
United Kingdom	1000		

BALANCE OF IAHR ACCOUNTS
August 20, 1994

Account	Balance	Balance USD 94	Balance USD 93
USD	USD 2,610.56	\$2,610.56	\$2,318.00
DKK Main	DKK 224,032.54	\$36,251.22	\$31,611.69
DKK Fund	DKK 17,091.34	\$2,765.59	\$1,953.42
	TOTAL:	\$41,627.37	\$35,883.11

The balance for 1993 also included £76.87 on the GBP account which was closed last year. Thus the full balance for last year was \$35,998.30.

MEMBERSHIP DUES FOR THE IAHR
October 21, 1994

<i>COUNTRY</i>	<i>1991</i>	<i>1992</i>	<i>1993</i>	<i>1994</i>	<i>1995</i>
Australia	200	300	300	100	
Belgium				100	
Canada	342	342	348	344	
China	a.c.	a.c.	a.c.	a.c.	a.c.
Czech Republic	100	100	100	100	
Denmark	100	100	100	100	
Finland	118	118	175		
France	200	100	100		
Germany	170	180	185		
Hungary	100	100	100	100	100
Indonesia	100	100			
Israel			100	100	
Italy	102	102	102		
Japan	400	400	400		
Mexico	100	100	100	100	
Netherlands	150	140	130	130	
Nigeria	a.c.	100	100	100	
North America	100	100	100	100	
Norway	100	100	100	100	
Poland	100	100	100	100	
Quebec	100	100	153	155	
Southern Africa	100	100			
South Korea	100				
Sweden	289	289	189		
Switzerland	208	207	206	205	
United Kingdom	145	152	150	154	
USA	100	100	100		
Russia	a.c.	a.c.	a.c.	a.c.	a.c.

Note: "a.c." refers to alternative contributions in agreement with the Honorary Treasurer as stipulated by the Executive Committee at the 1991 regional conference in Burlington

Elections to the Executive Committee (1995-2000)

In accordance with the Constitution of the IAHR (Article 4C) a Nominating Committee appointed by the current Executive Committee and consisting of Professors Lauri Honko (Finland), Thomas Lawson (USA) and Noriyoshi Tamaru (Japan) has been consulting about nominations for the future Executive Committee. The purpose of the Nominating Committee is to prepare a balanced overall proposal for the officers and members of the Executive Committee which will hold office from 1995 until 2000. The report of the committee, in a letter from Professor Thomas Lawson, is reproduced on the page opposite. In this way it is being made known to the International Committee not less than nine months before the Congress, as required by the constitution.

The members of the International Committee may now propose alternative nominations if they wish (see Constitution C4). Such nominations, if any, must be sent to the Secretary-General not less than one month before the Congress in Mexico City. Nominations will then be closed. The closing date for nominations is therefore July 4th 1995. According to the constitution it is not possible for further nominations to be made thereafter, for example, at the time of the Congress. The Executive Committee will be elected by the International Committee, at its meeting held during the Congress. The results will be reported to the General Assembly and the incoming officers will then assume their responsibilities.

It is the duty of the secretaries of all national associations to explain these procedures to their own members. In this way appropriate participation will be possible and misunderstandings will be avoided at the time of the Congress. Every care will be taken to ensure correct procedures.

Membership of the International Committee of the IAHR

Unless otherwise decided by its members, an affiliated association is represented on the International Committee by its president and secretary in office. The International Committee, though it does not meet frequently, is an important decision-taking body within the IAHR (see constitution). Indeed, the International Committee is the decisive, representative body of the IAHR. If an association does not have officers called "president" and "secretary" it will be necessary to decide, in advance, who will be the representatives at the meeting of the International Committee in September 1990. A list of the designated representatives forming the International Committee will be made available at the time of the meeting or shortly before. In theory, more than 60 persons are members of the International Committee at any one time. Therefore, please communicate any changes of representation in good time.

Proposals of the Nominating Committee

College of Arts and Sciences
Department of Comparative Religion



Kalamazoo, Michigan 49008-5013
616 387-4391
FAX: 616 387-3999
E-mail: Gwen.west@wmich.edu

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

September 30, 1994

Professor Michael Pye
Secretary General
IAHR

Dear Professor Pye:

The nominating committee respectfully submits the following names for the Executive Committee of the International Association for the History of Religions:

President:	Michael Pye
Vice-Presidents:	Peter Antes and Yolotl Gonzalez Torres
Secretary General:	Armin Geertz
Deputy Secretary General:	Rosalind Hackett
Honorary Treasurer:	Donald Wiebe
Members of the Board:	M. Araki, Giulia Gasparro, Gerri ter Haar, Helena Helve, Jordan Paper, Abdulkader I. Tayob

The committee took into consideration number of terms already served, the need for new faces, gender balance, geographical distribution, dedication to the organization, and contribution to scholarship.

Very truly yours and on behalf of the nominating committee,
I remain

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "E. Thomas Lawson".

E. Thomas Lawson
Professor of Comparative Religion
Department of Comparative Religion
Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan, 49008 USA

Procedural conventions for business meetings of the IAHR

The time available for the official meetings at the Congress is very limited. Many matters require not only discussion but also formal decision, so that the work of the association may continue in the years to come. Each matter must therefore be dealt with briefly. There will not be time for additional discussions about which procedures or rules should be followed. Nor can the rules which are well known in one particular country or region take priority over others. Because of this difficulty, quite a lot of time was lost at the meeting of the International Committee in Paris 1993. What is the solution to this problem?

Needless to say, the immediate point of reference for our procedures is the constitution of the IAHR itself. The decision-taking process and the electoral process is structured in accordance with the constitution. But beyond that, in the event of a procedural difficulty, where should we look? One suggestion is as follows. The IAHR is affiliated to CIPSH (Conseil International pour la Philosophie et les Sciences Humaines) which in turn is affiliated to UNESCO. The rules governing the meetings of these bodies may therefore function as a reference point of last resort. A proposal to this effect will therefore be placed before the International Committee near the beginning of the agenda.

In practice, the interpretation and application of any rules is the responsibility of the chairperson of the meeting in question, that is, the President of the IAHR, or his/her appropriate representative (e.g. a Vice-President). The authority of the elected president to rule on procedure, if necessary, and thus to ensure the smooth running of the meetings, is an essential part of our arrangements.

As of now, there is still plenty of time to discuss these matters with the President (or other officers) before the meetings in Mexico City take place. It would therefore be greatly appreciated if any representations on these matters could be made at an early date.

Please write, either to the undersigned (Secretary-General) or to Professor Bianchi as president, with a copy for information to the other. The addresses are, as usual, on the back inside cover of this Bulletin.

MP

Position paper by the President of the IAHR

Ugo Bianchi (Rome)

On the Cultural and Epistemological/Methodological Policy of the IAHR

The following considerations on "the cultural and epistemological/methodological policy" of our Association concentrate on the notion of the autonomy of the History of religions with its practical, 'political' corollaries, - a question crucial to both Western European and North American scholars, though frequently with different implications. In Continental Europe, the focus of the autonomy of the discipline concentrates traditionally on its comparative-historical character. Instead, according to a number of American anthropologists and generalists, the historical setting of the discipline, considered as chiefly descriptive, could allow space for a so called "theologization" of "religious studies". These scholars amply favour the categories of reduction and explanation; correspondingly they are skeptical concerning religion (and History of religions) as *sui generis* and autonomous. Before I proceed, I point out to a possible source of equivocation in the use of the terms 'reduction' and 'reductionism'. These terms are misleading if we do not distinguish between a) reduction as a conclusion of a scientific reasoning concerning a particular point, and b) a

priori reduction, that is programmatic reduction, not taking into consideration, from the beginning, all the aspects of the relevant issues.

The following considerations are in favour of a History of religions which, in order to be objective and unbiased, and also impartial, must be independent from systematic *aprioris*, that is, autonomous, - not just relatively autonomous as every type of study in an academic program should be, but radically autonomous from the very beginning of its scientific procedure.

For one, it should be clear that philological, archaeological, ethnological and other techniques are included in the scope of the History of religions as appropriate tools for historical research, so that there is no question of dependence or independence of the History of religions in relation to them. Secondly, the History of religions does not delegitimize Sociology and Psychology of religion as specific disciplines which, supported by organizations *ad hoc* and by specialized periodical publications, may also play a role in comparative-historical studies when the question is posited of the setting in life of religious individuals or of organized bodies.

It is known that a recommendation has been adopted by the International Committee of our Association during the Paris session 1993, in favour of the change

of the name of the Association. The new name (or rather names) should be "International Association for the academic study of religions" (French version: "... pour l'étude scientifique des religions"). I think the parallelism of the two adjectives (academic, *scientifique*) is incomplete. Anyway, coming to more substantial questions, I propose to motivate in the following some of the difficulties the question of the name arose, in different occasions, among a number of national groups.

This, all the more so because the oral discussions in Rome (1990) and Paris (1993) on the name concerned mainly questions of procedure.

As already hinted at, the autonomy of the History of religions does not diminish the legitimacy of those fields of study interested in the study of religion but not sharing the same cognitive process as the History of religions and its theory formation. Incidentally, the new name will be a cause of concern for our Association, when this will feel obliged to systematically embark categories of scholars seriously engaged in scientific research, but not specifically assimilable to the scope of our Association. Of course, this was a lesser danger as long as the Association kept up with its traditional name, so that the accession of new members did not mean a massive confluence of one discipline into another. Moreover, more frequently than not

the History of religions has been able to assimilate and validate conclusions reached by scholars mainly engaged in other fields but interested also in religio-historical issues, and the reciprocal is also true.

We raise a question here: are we perhaps to admit in our methodology the existence of a dialectic which could include deduction and induction, that is philosophical, theoretical pre-supposition and positive "verification"?

In our opinion, there is certainly a dialectic implicit in historical research on religion and religions, but it is of a quite different kind.

Clearly, a science is not only identified by its object, but also, and contextually, by its method; in fact, it would be no use to discuss about methodology in a void of actual research and viceversa. This is the first aspect of the dialectic I want to illustrate, that is, a dialectic between the increase of methodological consciousness of the scholar and the objective progress of research.

The difficulty is classical here. "While a definition [of religion] cannot take the place of inquiry, in the absence of definitions there can be no inquiry [on religion] - for it is definition, either ostensive or nominal, which designates the phenomenon to be investi-

gated"(1).

In other words, without a definition whatsoever of religion no selection (=identification) of the (religious) phenomena to be investigated will be possible.

On the other hand, without selection, how to arrive to a definition based on positive-inductive research, whose task is not to presuppose, but to establish categories?

The dialectic we consider adequate to our task should be able to unite two requirements, over and above any theoretical impasse: namely the requirement to possess already a certain idea of "religion", when starting idiographic and comparative historical research - an idea, at this level, inevitably partial and ethnocentric -, and the requirement to be able to enlarge, to articulate, that notion, qua extensible to a series of phenomena problematically linked together by typological or factual-historical ties. We are hinting at a dialectic not having resort to ideological option, but a dialectic interior to the cognitive process itself, within the limits of authorized, historical methodology; that is, a dialectic between already consolidated religio-historical skillfulness of the

(1) The impasse is denounced by M. Spiro, in M. Banton (ed.), *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion*, London 1966, p. 90.

researcher - relative to those cultural-historical milieus more akin to his basic cultural experience (e.g. Roman, Greek, Germanic, Christian, Indian), - and those new entries which consist of always new materials and new problematics gradually taken into consideration by the same scholar on the basis of idiographic study open to comparison, that is, sensible to typological affinities and to historical connections. To give an example: no preliminary definition or phenomenological generalization about "religion" will account satisfactorily for a common "religious" character of Christianity or Islam on one hand and Theravada Buddhism on the other; but the task will be less desperate if only we consider Buddhism within the wider historical context, taking into account the continuities and the discontinuities in relation, say, to the Upanishadic speculation (*karman* and *samsara*). (Incidentally, there are also other possibilities for comparative-historical research, which prescind from phenomena such as "diffusion", "stimulus diffusion", "influence", "reaction", "acculturation" and so on. We are hinting here at what is called, in a more strict sense, "historical typology", not on evolutionistic presuppositions, but on properly historical grounds, of analogous *genomena* (historical formations) taking place in different and historically unconnected geographical settings, on the

basis of analogous cultural answers to (more or less) analogous (not identical!) demands, pulsions and circumstances. The classical examples for this are "feudalism" in Western Europe and in Japan, "polytheism" and polytheistic systems (when historically unrelated) in the high cultures of the ancient world as well as, in Southern and Eastern Asia, Western Africa, Polynesia, and central America in Pre-Columbian times. Now, this typological-historical problematic is not less historical than that concerned with diffusion, acculturation etc.).

Returning to our problem of the definition of religion: we do not favour the possibility of a strict definition of religion not taking into consideration the dialectic we hinted at. We can be sure that striving after a "concept" of religion in the religio-historical study is not a matter of a merely "horizontal" problem, a problem of boundaries, but one of penetration. Only this dialectic between an always more extended, immediate contact with the objects of the research and the progress of conceptual articulation allows the researcher to go beyond that contradiction of a definition (or selection of facts) being at the same time a pre-supposition and a goal of religio-historical research.

On the other hand, there will be no danger that

this progressive extension and articulation of the notion of religion on the basis of historical comparison extended to always new materials and cultural-historical milieus will result practically in the annihilation of a notion destined to be articulated and qualified *ad infinitum*. In logic terms: no danger that this tension between *comprehensio* and *extensio* of the very concept of religion will cause the same to "explode" or, on the contrary, be watered down in the long run. In fact, historical comparison is not meant to confuse, but to distinguish, not merely summing up arithmetically its objects, but taking into consideration the typological and historical "distances" that separate them or form them into groups or constellations, so to say, in a universe in expansion. Having recourse to another image, the historian of religions is committed to draw a map of a more or less identifiable system of mountain chains - that is, the "religious" manifestations of mankind, taken as complexes and processes, *phainomena* and *genomena*. These can be more or less ancient, and, to insist on the image, primary or secondary orographic emersions, in a complex system where no unique ridge-line and no unique central peak is to be identified until this day.

Clearly, we are hinting here at a notion of religion which is not univocal nor equivocal, but, to

express it with the logicians, "analogical". Of course, this analogy is not understood as something concerning the abstract formality of a concept. On the contrary, it is to be considered constantly as in touch with that vast, articulated and possibly not in all senses definable "concrete (i.e. historical) universal" we call religion. On the other hand, the "analogical" character of the notion of religion does not only mean a partial affinity and a partial divergence in the ways these combine elements that are apparently common to them; but it means a diversity in form, in shape, in quality. Thus, religions are not all religions in the same meaning of the word; they are no species of a *genus* that would be precisely "religion". Contrary to what happens for the *genera* and the *species* e.g. in zoology or botanics, we cannot say that, in the different religions, a *genus*, a general kind of religion is present in its entirety, taken in a univocal meaning, as e.g. the *genus* "animal" or the *genus* "vertebrate" are univocally present in their zoological subordinate groups determined by the respective *differentiae specificae*. We need not evoke here all the difficulties implied in attempts to identify a "lowest common denominator" of all religions and to explain thereby, evolutionistically, the historical and "conceptual" origins of religion. For the same reason religion need

not be unitary in order to be specific or *sui generis*, if "unitary" means as much as "univocal". As for its autonomy, it will be no postulate, but a scientific problem to be posited by a history of religions which is autonomous from doctrinal or systematic *aprioris* (and perhaps this will eliminate all misunderstandings concerning reductionism: see above).

In conclusion, the true basis for a historical (and a comparative-historical) inquiry on religion and religions cannot lie in systematical pre-suppositions. The methodology of this discipline should be positive and inductive, historical and holistic, and its approach should be capable to really take into consideration *all* the materials and *all* the aspects the idiographic and the comparative research will afford for the historian, in the sense that nothing accessible to religio-historical inquiry should be programmatically neglected or *a priori* reduced on the basis of systematical and doctrinal pre-suppositions or motivations. Normative or deductive procedures will better fit other disciplines, which are outside the scope of this presentation, given their doctrinal structure.

The policy of the I.A.H.R. concerning the particular nature of the discipline called the 'History of religions' can be deduced from some writings of our

Secretary-General, that is, his presentation at the inauguration of the Rome Congress of 1990 as well as his introductory paper to the meeting of Harare, Zimbabwe, 1992 and his inaugural speech at Lancaster University (1993). May I remind us of a crucial point of the Lancaster presentation: the agenda of the IAHR is not to be considered a religious nor an irreligious or antireligious undertaking. This depends on the nature of the discipline 'History of religions' and its basic methodology and autonomy. Another, connected remark. I would prefer to avoid the term 'neutral' as a characteristic of the I.A.H.R. and of the History of religions, and to substitute 'autonomy' for 'neutrality'. It seems to me that 'neutrality' implies a sort of defensive attitude, a conceptual weakness or timidity, very different from the energy and initiative with which our discipline operates in the field of its autonomy and legitimacy. Moreover, 'neutrality' expresses a theoretical/systematic possibility of choice within a triadic system: we had an example of this in the precarious political/military, mondial equilibrium valid until yesterday. An other term we would like to avoid is 'agnosticism', because of its strict connection with philosophical, positivistic motivations, something very different from neutrality. (END)

Updating of the list of national officers

A small number of address changes have been reported. These will be incorporated into the list of associations and officers to be printed in the January Bulletin. Please send in any further changes in the officers of national associations before December 22nd 1994, in time for inclusion. Please indicate appropriate titles: Prof., Dr., Ms., Mr., etc..

l'Association Belgo-luxembourgeoise d'Histoire des Religions

President: Julien Ries (Université de Louvain-la-Neuve)

Centre d'Histoire des Religions (A.S.B.L.)

Rue de Dorlodot 13

B 5020 Namur-Suarlee, Belgium

Vice-President: Charles Marie Ternes (Centre Universitaire de Luxembourg)

Secretary: André Motte (Université de Liège)

Treasurer: Vinciane Pirenne-Delforge (Université de Liège)

Czech Society for the Study of Religion

President: Dr. Bretislav Horyna

Dept. of Philosophy, Palacký University

Křížkovského 12

771 80 Olomouc, Czech Republic

Korean Association for the History of Religion

President: Hee-Sung Keel

Sogang University, Seoul, Korea

Norwegian Association for the History of Religions

President: Prof. Einar Thomassen

Department of the History of Religions

University of Bergen

Sydnesplass 9

N-5007 Bergen, Norway

Secretary: Dr. Jens Braarvig

School of Social and Cultural Studies

University of Oslo

PO Box 1010 Blindern

N-0315 Oslo, Norway

Treasurer: Ms. Anne Wik

Department of the History of Religions

University of Bergen

Sydnesplass 9

N-5007 Bergen, Norway

Sociedad Española de Ciencias de las Religiones

(awaiting affiliation)

Secretary: Dr. Montserrat Abumalham

Facultad de Filología

Despacho 204, Universidad Complutense

E-28040 Madrid, Spain

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE JAHR 1990-1995

Prof. R. D. Abubakre,
Dept. of Religions, University of Ilorin,
Ilorin, Nigeria

Prof. P. Antes,
Seminar für Religionswissenschaft,
Wilhelm-Busch-Str. 22
30167 Hannover, Germany

Prof. M. Araki,
Institute of Philosophy, Tsukuba University,
Tsukuba-shi, Ibaragi-Ken,
305 Japan

Prof. L. Bäckman,
Institute of Comparative Religion,
Stockholm University,
S-10691 Stockholm, Sweden

Prof. U. Bianchi, (President)
Viale Libia 5,
00199 Rome, Italy

Prof. A. Geertz, (Treasurer)
Institut for Religionsvidenskab,
Hovedbygningen, Aarhus University,
DK-8000 Aarhus C, Denmark

Dr. Y. González Torres,
Museo del Carmen, I.N.A.H.,
Av. Revolución Nos. 4 y 6,
San Angel CP 01000,
México, D.F. México

Prof. J. Leclant, (Vice-President)
Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres,
Institut de France,
23, Quai de Conti (VIe),
Paris, France

Prof. M. Pye, (Secretary-General)
Philipps-Universität
Institut für Religionswissenschaft
Liebigstraße 37
35032 Marburg, Germany

Prof. L. Sullivan, (Deputy Secretary-General)
Harvard-University,
Center for the Study of World Religions,
42 Francis Avenue,
Cambridge, MA 02138, U.S.A.

Prof. Z. Werblowsky, (Vice-President)
Dept. of Comparative Religion,
The Hebrew University, Mount Scopus,
Jerusalem 91905, Israel

Prof. D. Wiebe,
Trinity College, Toronto,
Ontario, Canada M5S 1H8