

IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement

Tokyo Edition

November 2023



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I. Preface

Dear Colleagues,
Officers of IAHR Member Associations/Societies and Affiliates,

This *IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement, Tokyo Edition, November 2023*, primarily serves as a reference booklet for members of the IAHR International Committee, i.e., the delegates appointed by member and affiliated organizations to represent them at the International Committee Meeting 2023, Tokyo, Japan, Sunday, December 17. All the necessary references for your delegates' use during the International Committee Meeting are included here, eliminating the need for further search or preparation. In contrast to the responsive design (i.e., flexible design for both smartphones and PCs) adopted in previous *e-Bulletin Supplements*, this edition returns to the traditional PDF format, as it needs page numbers that we can reference them during the meeting.

While this *e-Bulletin Supplement* has this specific function for the International Committee Meeting, I kindly request that you also share it with the members of your association or society. Keeping the IAHR membership well-informed about IAHR activities, including the work and business of the IAHR Executive and International Committees, is essential for effective functioning and the prevention of potential issues. In addition, this *e-Bulletin Supplement* contains reports on IAHR Regional/Special Conferences, which would encourage your members to organize or participate in future IAHR events. Its last item, Call for Panels and Papers of our 2025 Quinquennial World Congress in Kraków, is also available on the Congress website, providing more extensive and detailed information.

If you have any questions regarding the International Committee Meeting 2023 in Tokyo or any other matters related to the IAHR, please do not hesitate to contact me:
fujiwara@l.u-tokyo.ac.jp.

Respectfully yours,

Satoko Fujiwara, IAHR Secretary General
Tokyo, November 10, 2023

II. Final Call and Provisional Agenda: IAHR International Committee Meeting, Tokyo, 2023

Final Call: International Committee Meeting 2023, Tokyo, Japan, Sunday, December 17, 15:30-18:00 (Tokyo time=UTC 6:30-9:00)

University of Tokyo, Hongo Campus, Faculty of Letters, Large Lecture Hall 3

According to the IAHR By-Laws, Rule 4b, “The International Committee meets at the location and time of the quinquennial congress. In addition, the session between consecutive quinquennial congresses shall be held at the location and time of an IAHR conference.”

According to the IAHR Constitution, Article 4(b) The International Committee is composed of:

- (i) Two representatives each of the constituent national and regional societies;
- (ii) The Executive Committee (see below);
- (iii) Up to four individual members co-opted by the International Committee on the recommendation of the Executive Committee.

According to Rule 3.d,

[t]he General Secretary shall notify the officers of the constituent societies and/or the members of the Executive Committee concerning the date, place and provisional agenda of each session at the latest one month in advance.

A first call and later a reminder have been sent to the officers of the IAHR member and affiliate associations and societies, and this call therefore serves as the final call.

The IAHR By-Laws, Rule 5.c reads:

The executive committee of each constituent national or regional society and association appoints no more than two representatives to each International Committee meeting. These are normally, but not necessarily, the president and secretary of the constituent society or association. In addition, each affiliated association may appoint no more than one (non-voting) representative to attend each International Committee meeting.

Please remember that the Secretary General of the IAHR shall be notified about the names of the designated representatives (By-Laws, Rule 5e), and also (Rule 5d) that “Members of the Executive Committee of the IAHR ... may not serve as representatives for their constituent societies or associations at the International Committee meetings.”

I have received notifications from some member associations and affiliates as to their appointed representatives, but I still need to hear from quite a few associations and officers.

I, therefore, sincerely ask you to appoint your delegate(s) to the 2018 IAHR International Committee and to fill in [the Google Form here](#) as soon as possible. Please note that delegates who cannot attend in person have the option of attending online.

Provisional Agenda:

1. Adoption of the Agenda
2. Membership:
 - 2.1. Membership Verification
 - 2.2. Affiliation Verification
 - 2.3. Co-option as Recommended by the Executive Committee
3. Deliberation on Granting Voting Rights to Online Delegates
4. Confirmation of the Minutes of the International Committee Meeting, Bern 2018 (5-14)
5. Report by the Secretary General (including a report on the Current Executive Committee's resolution *not* to propose changes in the name and the constitution of the IAHR) (15-26)
6. Report by the Treasurer (27-29)
7. Additional Matters of Report by the Executive Committee
8. Deliberation on the Implementation of Extraordinary Online International Committee Meetings (43-46)
9. The Executive Committee's Statement Issued at the Onset of Russia's Invasion of Ukraine
 - 9.1 Report on the Process Leading up to the Issuance and the Executive Committee's Reflections (50-57)
 - 9.2 Discussion on Issuing Public Statements in the Name of the IAHR
10. Deliberation on the Implementation of an IAHR Code of Conduct (58)
11. Recommendation of New Members and Affiliates (59-61)
12. Recommendation of Honorary Life Members
13. IAHR XXIII World Congress, Kraków 2025 (30-31)
14. Any Other Business

NB: All references in the Provisional Agenda above (as well as in Secretary General's Report) are to the *IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement, Tokyo Edition, November 2023*.

Satoko Fujiwara, IAHR Secretary General
Tokyo, November 10, 2023

III. Minutes from the IAHR International Committee Meeting, Bern, June 19, 2018

[To be adopted at the next International Committee Meeting in Tokyo, December 2023]
[Preliminarily adopted by the IAHR Executive Committee, December 31, 2018]

The President, Prof. Tim Jensen presiding.

Prof. Jensen opened the meeting by welcoming the delegates of the International Committee, with a special greeting to those attending the meeting online via Zoom. He asked the Acting Secretary General, Prof. Satoko Fujiwara, to ascertain that the meeting had been announced and called in accordance with the IAHR Rules of Procedure. Prof. Fujiwara confirmed that the meeting had been announced several times and in accordance with the IAHR Rules of Procedure Rule 3d, by way of the IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement, the IAHR website, and specific emails sent to IAHR officers. These announcements are recorded on p. 32 of the IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement, Bern Edition, June 2018. The first call was published in the IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement, August 2017, on p. 48.

1. Adoption of the Agenda

No amendment to the provisional agenda was requested.

2. Membership

Prof. Fujiwara reminded the assembly of the IAHR Constitution, Article 4b, about the composition of the IAHR International Committee: “(i) Two representatives from each of the constituent national and regional societies; (ii) The Executive Committee [...]; (iii) Up to four individual members co-opted by the International Committee on the recommendation of the Executive Committee.”

She noted that the IAHR has no individual members at the moment. She also pointed out that Rule 6 allows for the International Committee, on the recommendation of the Executive Committee, to adopt observers and/or consultants to participate in its sessions without voting rights. Prof. Giovanni Casadio of the Italian Association has asked to let one of its members, Prof. Alessandro Saggiaro attend the meeting as an observer. The request was unanimously accepted.

Prof. Fujiwara also observed that, according to Rule 5d, “[m]embers of the Executive Committee of the IAHR may not serve as representatives for their constituent societies at the International Committee meetings”, and that no delegate can represent more than one association.

2.1. Ascertainment of Membership

The following members of the Executive Committee of the IAHR were present: President Tim Jensen; Vice-president Mar Marcos; Acting General Secretary Satoko Fujiwara; Treasurer Philippe Borne; Deputy Treasurer Marion Maddox; Members without portfolio: Milda Ališauskienė, Veikko Anttonen, Amarjiva Lochan, David Thurfjell, Katja Triplett.

Apologies from: Ann Taves

Prof. S. Fujiwara noted that associations and societies which are not paid up to the latest completed financial year (2017) are not entitled to vote at this IC meeting. These are: Quebec, Nigeria, Poland and Slovakia. She added that among these four associations, only a delegate from the Slovakian Association is attending this meeting, via Zoom. In addition, one of the IAHR regional associations, the EAASR (Eastern African Association for the Study of Religions), is still on the IAHR website under the list of member associations and societies, but its membership has been declared lapsed during the most recent EC meeting.

The following representatives of the IAHR national and regional member societies and associations were present: Africa (AASR): Elias Bongmba; Australia (AASR): Daniel Peterson; Austria (ÖGRW): Franz Winter; Belgium (BABEL): Bert Broeckert; Brazil (ABHR/BAHR): Eduardo Meinberg Maranhão* and

Márcia Eneas; Canada (CSSR/ SCÉR) [one vote only]: Morny Joy; Canada (Québec) (SQÉR) [one vote only]: none; China (CARS): none; Czech Republic (CASR): none; Denmark (DASR): Laura Feldt; Europe (EASR): Einar Thomassen & Marco Pasi; Estonia (EAUS/ESSR): Madis Arukask; Finland (SUS): Tiina Mahlamäki & Terhi Utriainen; France: none; Germany (DVRW): Gritt Klinkhammer & Anna Neumaier; Greece (GSSCR): Panayotis Pachis; Hungary (MVT): none; India (IASR): none; Ireland (ISASR): Jenny Butler; Italy (SISR): Giovanni Casadio & Chiara Tommasi; Japan (JASR): Takeshi Kimura* & Yoshitsugu Sawai*; Latin America (ALER): none; Latvia (LRPB): none; Lithuania (LSSR): Rasa Pranskeviciute; Mercosur/South America (ACSRM): none; Mexico (SMER): none; Netherlands (NGG): William Arfman; New Zealand (NZASR): Will Sweetman; North America (NAASR): Gregory Alles & Adrian Hermann; Norway (NRF): Sissel Undheim; Philippines (PASCHR): Esmeralda Sanchez; Poland (PTR): none; Romania (RAHR): Eugen Ciurtin ; Russia: Marianna Shakhnovich & Ekaterina Terioukova; Slovakia (SSŠN/SASR): Roman Kečka*; South Korea (KAHR): Woncheol Yun; Southern Africa (ASRSA): Maria Frahm-Arp; South and Southeast Asia (SSEASR): Simona Chaudhuri; Spain (SECR): Silvia Alfayé & Juana Torres; Sweden (SSRF): none; Switzerland (SGR/SSSR): Jens Schlieter & Martin Baumann; Turkey (TAHR): none; Ukraine (UARR): Yevgeniy Kharkovshchenko; United Kingdom (BASR): Steven Sutcliffe & Christopher Cotter; United States (AAR): none.

* : *Delegates attending the meeting online (Zoom)*

With reference to Article 6 and Rule 10, according to which “A meeting of the International Committee requires a minimum attendance of ten members from a minimum of seven national associations”, Prof. Satoko Fujiwara observed that a quorum had been reached.

2.2. Ascertainment of Affiliation

Prof. Fujiwara reminded the assembly that according to the Rules of Procedure, Rule 5c, “each affiliated association may appoint no more than one (non-voting) representative to attend each International Committee meeting.” She noted that two affiliated associations had one delegate present, with no voting right: the European Society for the Study of Western Esotericism (ESSWE), represented by Egil Asprem, and the International Association for the Cognitive Science of Religion (IACSR), represented by Armin Geertz.

The SBL, Society of Biblical Literature is now an applicant society. Its affiliation (as an 'affiliate') has been recommended by the IAHR Executive Committee. If also recommended by the present assembly (item 8), it will be provisionally affiliated, awaiting full affiliation during the next IAHR General Assembly in New Zealand, 2020.

2.3 Co-option as Recommended by the Executive Committee

Prof. Fujiwara observed that according to the Rules of Procedure (5f), “[o]n the recommendation of the Executive Committee, up to four individuals may be co-opted as voting members by the International Committee at the beginning of the session.” For the present meeting, Prof. Fujiwara had no one to recommend under this category.

3. Adoption of the Minutes of the International Committee Meeting Erfurt 2015

Prof. Fujiwara noted that the Minutes of the last International Committee have been published in the IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement, August 2017, p. 4–29 and then circulated to the members of the IAHR International Committee in accordance with the relevant rules. They have been preliminarily adopted by the Executive Committee on January 30, 2016. The assembly unanimously adopted the Minutes.

4. Report by the Acting Secretary General

The Acting Secretary General, Prof. Fujiwara began by honoring the memory of Prof. Jonathan Z. Smith, who passed away in December 2017. An obituary, written by Prof. Russell McCutcheon, will be published in *NVMEN*. Since a full report has been published in the *IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement, Bern Edition*, p. 31–40, Prof. Fujiwara focused on the few following matters, especially those that have had some developments from the recent IAHR EC meeting.

4.1 Executive Committee and International Committee: Meetings and Meeting Locations

Prof. Fujiwara extended thanks to all the hosting member associations – which are the Finnish association, the SSEASR, and the Swiss association, and their various local partners and university departments – for facilitating the meetings of the Executive and the International Committee since 2016. She noted that the efforts to enhance and extend the IAHR as a global association have been continued, by moving the Executive as well as the International Committee meetings around the world.

4.2 Communications

Prof. Fujiwara stated that the IAHR Bulletin and the IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement, together with the IAHR website and occasional email letters with important pieces of information have been sent to the officers of the IAHR member associations and affiliates. They are the main means of communication from and about the IAHR. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance to the well-functioning of the IAHR that the officers of the IAHR member associations and affiliated societies forward the digital version of the IAHR Bulletin and the digital IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement to their membership. Prof. Fujiwara kindly asked all the delegates to do everything they could to share these and other news items from the IAHR with the membership at large. The IAHR Executive Committee and its Acting Secretary General have no other means to contact each individual IAHR member.

She added that she would be very grateful if the officers of the member associations systematically communicate whenever new officers, president, secretary and treasurer are elected. On the IAHR website, there is a page of all the member organizations and societies, including affiliates, with the names and contact information for all the officers, and it needs to remain updated. She also noted the efficient and pleasant collaboration with Mr. Jeremy Hughes, a skillful webmaster who works on a daily basis, and extended thanks to him. She also thanked Prof. Jenny Berglund and Prof. David Thurfjell for their hard and careful work as administrators of the IAHR Facebook site. Noting the recent scandals over Facebook, Prof. Fujiwara stated that the IAHR EC is very much aware of the issues at stake. The EC will examine further the possibility to use other Social Network Services as communication platforms, in parallel with Facebook (see below, under item 6.2).

Prof. Jenny Berglund has also been devoted to developing the Women Scholars Network (WSN), together with Prof. Jay Johnston. Prof. Fujiwara extended thanks to both and further to other steering committee members of the Network. The network has its own Facebook page, which now has 524 members. Right now, the steering committee is looking for at least 2 scholars who can coordinate the WSN mentoring network. The task of the coordinators is to introduce senior scholars to young scholars who are trying to find position at universities or trying to publish their books. Prof. Fujiwara invited people who might know someone interested to take up this task to contact Prof. Berglund. Lastly, Prof. Fujiwara thanked all the scholars actively participating in the WSN for their work toward gender equality and empowerment of women scholars in a global context.

4.3 IAHR Congresses and Conferences

In her written report, Prof. Fujiwara listed the IAHR Special and Regional Conferences that took place between 2015 and 2018. She also reported on the bids for and decision regarding the hosting of the 2020 World Congress. She extended thanks to all the colleagues whose engagement and hard work made all these IAHR conferences and the World Congresses in Erfurt and in Dunedin possible, in particular the Congress Directors of the Erfurt World Congress, Prof. Dr. Christoph Bochsinger and Prof. Dr. Jörg Rüpke, and Congress Coordinator, Dr. Elisabeth Begemann for their publication of the Congress proceedings, which came out about one year after the Congress.

Since Prof. Fujiwara was appointed Acting Secretary General in July last year, she has been in continuous communication with Prof. Will Sweetman, Congress Director of the 2020 World Congress. The President, Prof. Jensen, as a member of the Advisory Committee of the World Congress, visited the conference site during the winter of 2017 and had very fruitful meetings with local representatives. In addition,

the IAHR Deputy Secretary General, Prof. Ann Taves, as a co-chair of the Academic Programme Committee, has been discussing with Prof. John Shaver and Prof. Ben Schonthal, the two other co-chairs of Academic Program Committee (APC), over the members of the APC and also over keynote speakers and other important matters for the program. They also discussed with other EC members of the IAHR over these matters whenever possible and appropriate, including during the last EC business meeting in Bern.

One of the important things that was decided during that meeting was the change of the naming of the location. So far, it had been announced as “World Congress, Dunedin, 2010.” However, as the name of Otago is better known than the name of Dunedin, we came to think it will be easier for people to remember the Congress by the name of Otago. Therefore, from now on, Congress will be referred to as the 2020 Otago Congress. Prof. Fujiwara kindly requested that the officers of the IAHR members and affiliates make sure that their own conference planning and activities are not conflicting with the IAHR World Congress in Otago, August 23–29, 2020. She also notified that the IAHR and the local host would do their best to accommodate any member societies and association that would like time and space to hold a business meeting within the framework of the IAHR World Congress. In addition, the affiliates of the IAHR will have chances to hold their academic meetings right before or after the World Congress. Interested parties are welcome to contact Prof. Fujiwara about this matter.

4.4 Membership Development

Prof. Fujiwara briefly mentioned that after the WC in Erfurt, the IAHR received one application for affiliation from a very large international society, the Society of Biblical Literature, SBL. The President, Prof. Jensen and herself could meet with the SBL Executive Director, Prof. John Kutsko during the SBL-AAR annual meeting in Boston, 2017.

She added that during the same annual meeting, the President, Prof. Jensen, the Deputy Secretary General, Prof. Ann Taves and herself had a meeting with the AAR leadership. Several possibilities to enhance the IAHR-AAR collaboration were discussed. Prof. Fujiwara mentioned the grant program called AAR’s Collaborative International Research Grants (CIRG), that has been specifically established for the benefit of individual members of IAHR member associations and societies. Each individual member of the IAHR member associations and societies can apply, as long as there is more than one AAR member in his/her research group. It started in 2013, but not many people have noticed the program. Prof. Fujiwara added that the IAHR is also thinking of creating a new Program Unit for the AAR annual meeting, which would organize a panel for CIRG recipients.

Prof. Fujiwara ended this item by emphasizing that if she had been referring to the AAR in particular, among the IAHR’s 40 member associations, it was not implying that the IAHR privileges the AAR in any way. However, as AAR has a large international membership, it is important for the IAHR to have constructive relationships with it.

4.5 Finances

Prof. Fujiwara noted that according to the Treasurer’s report (see below), the financial situation of the IAHR remains healthy. However, the location of the next world congress in 2020 might engender important travel costs, especially if the IAHR wants to enable scholars from weak currency countries to attend the congress. To help the IAHR to support more scholars and to ensure the continuous development of the academic study of religion, any donation would be more than appreciated.

4.6 CIPSH (International Council for Philosophy and Human Sciences)

In her written report, Prof. Fujiwara gave extensive details concerning the most recent developments about the CIPSH. She commented briefly on the following points: CIPSH has lately resumed its activities and launched 3 new projects. The first is called CIPSH’s own Global Humanities Chair program. The second is a Global History of Humankind project, and the third is the Global Humanities Report project. In addition, Prof. Rosalind Hackett, the IAHR’s ex-President, now Vice-President of CIPSH, has proposed a school outreach project.

Prof. Fujiwara reported that during the last IAHR EC meeting, it was discussed how the IAHR could increase its presence within the CIPSH under such new circumstances. It was decided to launch two working groups, in connection with the CIPSH's new projects. One of the working groups is about religious education (RE) based on the impartial and non-confessional, academic study of religion. Prof. Fujiwara added that prior to this decision, two proposals from two international scholars, one from Prof. Wanda Alberts of the German association and the other from Prof. Chae Young Kim of the South Korean association had been received. Both of them encouraged the IAHR to initiate working groups or networks for the study-of-religion based religious education. The IAHR EC has thus observed an increased international interest in the development of an alternative to confessional and traditional RE, and would like to encourage it.

Prof. Fujiwara noted that in many countries, the development of such a RE within public education is not considered. In such countries, religion is usually taught about in history classes. This is one reason for creating a second working group focusing on history. Designed to update and internationalize collaboratively second-order discourses on the history of religions in the world, it would have the purpose, *inter alia*, to improve school and college education. This working group is directly related to the CIPSH's project on a "Global History of Humankind". If the CIPSH moves on with its "Global History of Humankind" project, it is likely that the IAHR will be assigned to the part of the history of religions. The working group will start by sending a survey to its member societies / associations to check if there have recently been such attempts.

Prof. Fujiwara added that the two working groups will not receive any financial support from the IAHR. Further announcements will be given on the IAHR website as well as in the IAHR e-Bulletin Supplements.

4.7. IAHR Related Publications

4.7.1 *NVMEN*, the IAHR's flagship journal

Prof. Fujiwara reported about the recent *NVMEN* editorial board meeting, held in the context of the last EC meeting. She observed that according to Brill's acquisition editor, Ms Laura Morris, *NVMEN* has been doing very well. The number of full text downloads has increased from 10,500 in 2014 to 17,500 in 2017. This means an increase of 70% of the number of downloads from 2014 to 2017. The number of citations is also increasing. Prof. Fujiwara extended thanks to *NVMEN*'s Managing Editors, Profs. Gregory D. Alles and Laura Feldt and Review Editors, Prof. Carole Cusack and Dr. Rose Mary Amenga-Etego, for their almost daily hard work for the journal. She also extended thanks to the assembly, for the increased readership of *NVMEN*.

4.7.2. IAHR Book Series Equinox

Prof. Fujiwara referred to the report of the IAHR Book Series' Managing Editor, Prof. Katja Triplett, under the item 6 on the agenda.

4.7.3 Other publications

Prof. Fujiwara mentioned the publication of the Proceedings of the XXI World Congress of the IAHR in Open Access, freely downloadable from De Gruyter's website¹. She asked the delegates to send this information to the individual members, if this was not already done. She also asked the assembly to send her information regarding publications and spin-offs that have developed from the Erfurt Congress.

She also mentioned the publication of the *NVMEN* 60th anniversary publication in 2015, edited by Profs. Armin W. Geertz & Tim Jensen on behalf of the IAHR Executive Committee. Entitled *NVMEN, the Academic Study of Religion, and the IAHR – Past, Present and Prospects*, it contains new contributions that offer both retrospective and prospective perspectives, and reprints of past key contributions to *NVMEN* as well as to the IAHR.

She further reminded the organizers of former IAHR Special and Regional Congresses to send her web-links to their proceedings or any other outcome documents. Information about IAHR related conferences after Brno 2008 is largely missing on the IAHR website.

¹ <https://www.degruyter.com/view/product/465404>

4.8. An Extended Executive Committee Meeting to Discuss the Future of the IAHR

Upon the initiative of the President, Prof. Tim Jensen, there will be a special, extended EC meeting in 2018, in order to discuss the future of the IAHR in a concerted and strategic manner. The meeting will be the occasion to reflect about what kind of new challenges the IAHR is now facing, and how it will handle them. To contribute to the discussion, ex-Presidents, ex-Secretary Generals and World Conference organizers have been invited to this extended EC meeting. The outcome of the meeting will be presented at the IC meeting and the GA of the next World Conference in 2020.

4.9. IAHR website: new URL

Prof. Fujiwara indicated that the IAHR website's URL has now a regionally neutral URL: www.iahrweb.org. The old URL is still functional and redirects to the new one automatically. She added that the IAHR logo has been refreshed: it is now in a better quality and meets printing purposes. It is available on the IAHR website or upon demand.

5. Report by the Treasurer

With reference to his full report published in the IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement, Bern Edition, p. 31–40, the Treasurer, Prof. Ph. Bornet, pointed out the following elements as to the period of 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2017. He observed that this is a midterm report in anticipation of the full report for the years 2015 to 2019 which will be presented at the next IAHR General Assembly in 2020. Referring to the table at the end of the report (see below), the Treasurer noted with satisfaction that the IAHR's finances are in a healthy state, with a balance of approximately \$126'000 as per 31 December 2017, up from \$105'000 at the beginning of the term (1 January 2015).

Income

Total income for the whole period has been approximately \$72'000 with an average of \$24'000 / year. There are two main streams of regular income: amounts paid by Brill for *NVMEN* (€10'295 / year = about \$12'000, depending on the exchange rate), and dues from national and affiliate associations (about \$11'000 / year, also depending on the exchange rate, since dues are now published and paid in euros exclusively).

Expenditure

Average expenditure for non-congress years (2016, 2017) has been approximately \$14'000 / year. The major item of expenditure has been the subsidy given for the Erfurt congress in 2015 (\$24'000). Thanks to the very efficient organization of the Erfurt congress, a substantial part of that subsidy (\$9'800) could be returned to the IAHR in 2016. Apart from this, the IAHR has spent amounts for enabling members of the EC committee to attend work meetings: \$8'000 / year, a very modest sum considering the EC's 12 members and the representation of the IAHR through its President or Secretary General at multiple events in addition to the yearly EC meeting (see below for more details). In addition, the IAHR has supported the organization of several IAHR labelled (IAHR Regional and Special) conferences with smaller amounts.

Further remarks

The major change at the beginning of the term has been the move of the account from Ireland to Switzerland, a complex process that was successfully completed thanks to the precious help of the previous IAHR Treasurer, Prof. B. Bocking. The IAHR was formerly maintaining two accounts: one in euros, the other in US dollars. Due to technical reasons related to the new bank, the IAHR holds now its finances in euros exclusively. While having a limited impact on the operations, since most of the transactions were already executed in currencies other than the US dollar, the move also facilitates the Treasurer's work. The transfer from the former US dollar account to the new euro account was done in early 2016, when the US dollar was relatively high against the euro (\$1 = €0.92). To keep up with previous reports, however, the accounts are reported in USD. Consequently, the recent rise of the euro (\$1 = €0.83 by the end of 2017) created an artificial income of about \$15'000 in 2017.

Since interest rates in Switzerland are either extremely low or even negative, the present Treasurer did not find it worth to pursue any initiative to officially register the IAHR as a charity, enabling it to have interest-bearing accounts. According to art. 3a of the Constitution, amended in Erfurt, the IAHR's "primary location" is the official address of the IAHR Treasurer. Officially registering the IAHR as a charity in the current location of the Treasurer, Switzerland, might prove an additional challenge for future Treasurers, when they likely will have to move the IAHR account to their own country.

The Treasurer reminded the assembly about the possibility to make a donation, in order to enable more scholars from weak currency countries to attend the next World Congress. Persons interested can directly contact him, to explore the different possible ways to make a donation tax deductible (*inter alia*, through Transnational Giving Europe). He also added that the recent EC meeting decided to slightly amend the yearly dues for Affiliate Associations, which so far had not well reflected the Affiliate Associations' size. The new rates are as follows: For Affiliate Associations up to 50 members: € 80 euros; from 51 to 100 members: € 1.60/member; larger than 100 members: € 160.

In conclusion, the Treasurer would like to thank warmly the former IAHR treasurer, Prof. Brian Bocking, for not only introducing him to the intricacies of the IAHR accounting in Erfurt, but also for continuing to work "behind the scenes" until the setting up of a new account, and for still providing him with extremely helpful advice whenever needed. He thanked Dr. Elisabeth Begemann from Erfurt, who has been extremely helpful in the process to get the money refunded on the IAHR account in 2016. He finally extended thanks to the colleagues treasurers and officers of all member associations, who – for the large majority of them – have been collaborating in a very efficient way, taking due notice of the new bank information.

Summary of IAHR Finances: Years 2015-2017

All figures in USD

	2015	2016	2017
INCOME			
200 Dues national assoc.	11 230,67	10 962,15	10 719,34
210 Dues affiliates	270,50	743,06	471,67
220 NV/MIEN	7 549,74	14 482,31	12 557,52
240 Other (e.g. legacies and donations)	2 890,00	21,00	0,00
Total Income	21 940,91	26 208,53	23 748,53
EXPENDITURE			
110 African Trust Fund awards	3 049,56	0,00	0,00
120 Bank charges + audit	312,46	136,27	476,54
130 CIPSH subscription	660,00	1 260,00	720,00
140 2015 & 2020 Congress support	23 787,93	-9 838,30	0,00
141 Conference support	0,00	0,00	5 853,41
160 Website/publications	0,00	1 682,78	2 253,52
170 EC Travel and Expenses	7 933,59	7 975,58	7 475,16
191 To Gary Lease Lecture Fund	0,00	0,00	0,00
Total Expenditure	35 743,54	1 216,33	16 778,63
Surplus(+) / Deficit (-)	-13 802,64	24 992,20	6 969,90
Opening balance	105 302,00	84 506,72	105 371,03
Foreign Exchange gain (+) /loss (-) on opening balance	-6 992,64	-2 615,65	15 053,00
Foreign Exchange gain (+) /loss (-) on transfers	0,00	-1 512,24	-1 277,96
Surplus (+) / Deficit (-)	-13 802,64	24 992,20	6 969,90
Closing balance	84 506,72	105 371,03	126 115,97
US\$ account	26 962,27	0,00	0,00
€ accounts	52 313,14	100 351,69	96 159,94
€ accounts in US\$	57 544,45	105 371,03	115 391,93
CHF accounts Special Fund			10 513,76
CHF accounts Special Fund in US\$			10 724,04
	84 506,72	105 371,03	126 115,97

6. Additional Matters of Report by the Executive Committee

6.1 Report by Prof. K. Triplett, Managing Editor of the IAHR Book Series

Prof. Triplett reported on the IAHR book series by Equinox, “The Study of Religion in a Global Context”. The first volume was launched in Erfurt, 2015, and the next followed in Helsinki, 2016. The third volume will be published soon, and early subscribers receive a 25% conference discount. She encouraged the audience to contact the series’ General Editor (Prof. Morny Joy) and herself as the Managing Editor about proposals for a publication in the series, in particular for monographs:

<https://www.equinoxpub.com/home/the-study-of-religion-in-a-global-context/>.

6.2 Report by Prof. D. Thurfjell, co-Manager of the IAHR Facebook page

Prof. Thurfjell reported about the IAHR Facebook page, noting that anyone can be a member, but that posts are moderated, by himself, Prof. Berglund and Prof. Fujiwara. The minimal requirement for a post to be accepted is that it should be connected with the academic study of religions. It is an important medium for communicating IAHR-related information: it has now 1538 members, and 765 have been active. This number is growing steadily. Statistics show that people use the page often on Fridays: so that might be a good time to post new information. Prof. Sweetman asked if the page was targeting a specific audience. Prof. Thurfjell answered that it is not really the case, since the page is public. It contributes therefore to give to the IAHR a presence in the public space. Prof. Geertz asked whether people could use pseudonyms and hide their real identity. Prof. Thurfjell answered that moderation makes it mostly a non-issue. Prof. Pasi asked whether the IAHR had considered using academia.edu. Prof. Thurfjell answered it was a possibility to be considered in the future. Prof. Triplett added that the IAHR WSN is already using academia.edu.

7. Recommendation of changes to the Nomination and Election Process of the IAHR Executive Committee

Prof. Fujiwara explained that shortly after the 2015 election of the IAHR Executive Committee in Erfurt, Prof. Brian Bocking, who was its Election Manager, sent the Executive Committee his suggestions regarding the formalization of the withdrawal process (see e-Bulletin Supplement, Bern edition, p. 51–52). As his suggestions are purely practical – mainly about formalizing the question of withdrawal of nominees – and will not harm the interest of any member of the IAHR, Prof. Fujiwara recommended that the assembly accepts them. They were accepted by a show of hands.

8. Recommendation of New Members and Affiliates

Prof. Fujiwara informed the assembly that in early 2016, the President, Prof. Jensen, received an application for affiliation from the Society of Biblical Literature (SBL). The IAHR Executive Committee at its meeting in Helsinki July 2016 unanimously decided to recommend to this IAHR International Committee the adoption of the SBL as an affiliate to the IAHR. Prof. Fujiwara asked whether the assembly was in favour of recommending SBL as a new IAHR Affiliate Association. The proposal was accepted by a show of hands and it will be then recommended to the GA in Otago 2020.

9. Recommendation of Honorary Life Members

Prof. Fujiwara referred to the IAHR rules stating that “recommendations for honorary life membership should be presented to the International Committee at its meetings during quinquennial congresses and in between two consecutive congresses.”

In November 2016 the IAHR Executive Committee appointed the Honorary Life Membership

Advisory Committee 2016-2020, with the IAHR Honorary Life Members Professor Jan Platvoet, Professor Susumu Shimazono, and Professor Yolótl Gonzales Torres as its members. The Advisory Committee then elected Prof. Platvoet as its chair. Prof. Fujiwara then requested the IAHR constituent member societies and associations to suggest one or two names in the e-Bulletin Supplement, August 2017. When the deadline for call for suggestions passed on Dec 31, 2017, she sent all suggestions to Prof. Platvoet. On March 25, 2018, Prof. Platvoet sent her a letter of recommendation of 3 honorary life members (see Appendix 1). The three names are: Prof. B. Bocking, Prof. I. Gilhus and Prof. Gerrie ter Haar.

Prof. Fujiwara asked the assembly whether it was approving the proposal of these three names, as new IAHR Honorary Life Members. The proposal was unanimously accepted, with thanks to the Advisory Committee. She also reminded the assembly to remember their right and possibility to suggest one or two names for the next time.

10. IAHR XXII World Congress, Otago 2020

Prof. Will Sweetman was invited to report about the World Congress. He thanked the EC for the trust in organizing the congress in the last week of August 2020. He announced the upcoming launch of the Congress' website, iahr2020.kiwi / iahr2020.org and informed that the congress organizers will be present at the coming AAR conference in Denver. Prof. Sweetman noted with satisfaction that the IABS (International Association of Buddhist Studies) would be meeting in South Korea a week before the IAHR congress. Other associations are very much welcome to organize meetings in Otago the week preceding the Congress. He invited interested delegates to contact him about this. He also invited the assembly to already begin to think about putting panels together for the Congress.

He kindly requested that the officers of the IAHR member associations/societies and affiliates make sure that all individual members receive information about the Congress now and in the coming years leading up to the event.

11. Any Other Business

Prof. M. Joy passed a request Canadian Association about whether it would be possible to pay the yearly dues in the local currency. The Treasurer answered that it is logistically not possible to publish the IAHR dues in all local currencies. However, the level of the current dues in Euros is still lower than the equivalent in USD that was offered as an alternative rate up to 2015. In addition, it is possible to minimize bank transfer fees by using a third-party system. Officers of the Canadian Association are very welcome to contact him about it.

Prof. Jensen thanked all delegates for coming to Bern. He thanked warmly Prof. S. Fujiwara for all her work as Acting Secretary General since last year as well as Prof. A. Adogame for the great services he rendered to the IAHR until his resignation.

IV. IAHR Secretary General's Report, 2020-2023

I begin this report with the somber news of the passing of Prof. Louise Bäckman, an esteemed IAHR Honorary Life Member and Professor Emeritus of Religious History at Stockholm University, in November 2021.

1. Executive Committee and International Committee: Meetings, Plans for Meetings, and Communications

1.1. Meetings

Per the IAHR Constitution (Article 5), the IAHR Executive Committee is mandated to meet at least once annually. Following the online Incoming Executive Committee Meeting on August 30, 2020, the Executive convened through both virtual and in-person means on the following dates:

- Online, August 30, 2020
- Online, September 29, 2020
- In-person (hybrid), Pisa, August 31, 2021, (adjacent to the IAHR Regional Conference)
- Online, February 27, 2022
- In-person (hybrid), Cork, June 26-27, 2022 (adjacent to the IAHR Regional Conference)
- Online, September 5, 2022

The Executive Committee is slated to reconvene in Tokyo in connection with the IAHR Special Conference, December 2023.

Apart from the annual gatherings, the Executive also conducted multiple smaller online meetings. These subcommittees delved into various matters, including:

- Online outreach initiatives including IAHR webinars and research design workshops.
- Ideas for IAHR awards and travel grants.
- Activities related to the working group on the study-of-religion-based religious education.

1.2. Meeting Locations

Following the August 2020 online Outgoing Executive Committee Meeting, the current Executive Committee hosted its sessions exclusively online in 2020. Given the global dispersion of its members, time zone discrepancies posed challenges, limiting sessions to two hours instead of the customary full-day or sometimes day-and-a-half durations. To address this, the abovementioned subcommittees were formed, facilitating more frequent online discussions throughout 2020-2022.

Beginning in September 2021, annual in-person meetings were resumed. In light of two consecutive Executive Committee meetings in Europe (in addition to the 2018 International Committee Meeting in Bern), the Executive Committee sought venues outside Europe for 2023. The Japanese Association for Religious Studies extended an invitation to host our next gathering in Tokyo. This allows the continuation of our pre-pandemic principle of rotating the meeting venues globally.

At the same time, the Executive recognizes environmental concerns tied to long-haul flights. Coupled with the financial impacts of the pandemic and the Russo-Ukrainian war on institutional funding, many members face constraints in attending international sessions. The introduction of a hybrid meeting format has been well-received by those unable or unwilling to travel.

On behalf of the Executive Committee, I extend our gratitude to the Pisa and Cork

organizing committees for their support. We are also appreciative of the JARS for their forthcoming hosting of the 2023 IAHR Special Conference to accommodate the Executive/International Committee meetings. Such events require significant planning, and we acknowledge the effort invested.

1.3. Communications: Newsletters, Informational Emails, and IAHR e-Bulletin Supplements

Upon the electronic election of the Executive Committee 2020-2025, informational emails and the IAHR e-Bulletin Supplements were disseminated to officers of IAHR member associations/societies and affiliates. Correspondence was addressed to all officers and IAHR Honorary Life Members.

- August 26, 2020: Email announcement of the Executive Committee (EC) election results for 2020-2025.
- August 27, 2020: Email introduction of the new IAHR website and virtual book exhibition.
- September 7, 2020: Email unveiling of the inaugural IAHR webinar and the IAHR-WSN webinar.
- October 20, 2020: Email call-to-action for IAHR webinars.
- December 30, 2020: [The IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement, December 2020](#) was dispatched via email and featured on the IAHR website. This edition contained:
 - Notification of the IAHR Honorary Life Membership Advisory Committee 2020-2025
 - Request to share member association awards, webinars, and conference plenary videos.
 - Report on the IAHR Women Scholars Network Webinar Series
 - Report on the General Assembly of the CIPSH (International Council for Philosophy and Humanistic Studies)
 - Updates on IAHR publications
- September 15, 2021: [The IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement, September 2021](#) was circulated via email and posted on the IAHR website. Highlights included:
 - Solicitation for bids to host the IAHR 23rd World Congress 2025
 - Information on the documentation of the canceled Otago World Congress
 - Updates on IAHR conferences and events
 - Announcement of the fifth Women Scholars Network webinar
 - Information on open access options for the IAHR Book Series
 - Report on Annemarie Schimmel Exhibition
- January 6, 2022: Email notification about the deadline extension for the 2025 IAHR World Congress bid.
- February 28, 2022: Email release of “The IAHR Executive Committee Statement concerning Russian War against Ukraine.”
- March 10, 2022: Email stating the plan to discuss matters resulting from the aforementioned statement in the upcoming Executive Committee Meeting in June 2022 and then at the International Committee Meeting in 2023.
- June 29, 2022: Email announcement that the IAHR 23rd World Congress would convene in Kraków, Poland, in 2025, hosted by Jagiellonian University and the Polish Society for the Study of Religion.
- September 19, 2022, [The IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement, September 2022](#) was disseminated by email and uploaded at the IAHR website. It included:
 - Announcement regarding the resignation of Deputy Secretary General, Prof. Anna Halafoff, and the subsequent appointment of Vice-President, Prof. Ann Taves, to the role of Acting Deputy Secretary General
 - Details on the 23rd World Congress of the IAHR, Kraków, Poland, August 24–30, 2025

- Call for the 2023 International Committee Meeting, December, Tokyo, Japan
- Call for suggestions for new IAHR Honorary Life Members
- Report on the IAHR Regional Conference in Pisa, 2021
- Report on the IAHR Special Conference in Edinburgh, 2021
- Announcement on a new IAHR Book Series Grant
- Updates on the SBL-IAHR collaboration
- March 7, 2023: First circular of the International Committee Meeting and call for papers for the IAHR Special Conference, Tokyo, December 2023 was sent by email.
- March 22, 2023: Reminder email to inform the Secretary General of delegates for the International Committee Meeting.

Apart from the emails listed, the IAHR website was regularly updated with announcements such as Women Scholars Network webinars, recordings, and IAHR Regional/Special conference details.

Additionally, IAHR Treasurer, Prof. Andrea Rota, diligently dispatched annual notifications concerning membership fees to the pertinent officers of member associations and affiliates.

2. IAHR Congresses and Conferences

2.1. Documentation of the Canceled Otago World Congress

As noted in the [IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement, September 2021](#), records of the canceled Otago World Congress 2020 are now accessible on the IAHR website under the title, [“Records of Papers and Panels Accepted for Presentation at the XXIIInd World Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions.”](#)

We extend our deepest gratitude to Prof. Will Sweetman, the Congress Director, for documenting these records and to the Local Organizing Committee for their diligent preparation for the Congress.

2.2. IAHR XXIII Quinquennial World Congress, Kraków, Poland, August 24–30, 2025

The cancelation of the Otago World Congress due to the COVID-19 pandemic posed a significant challenge for the IAHR Executive Committee in securing a host for the 2025 World Congress. Typically, we solicit bids for hosting the upcoming IAHR Quinquennial World Congress before the previous one is convened. However, the pervasive threat of COVID-19 in 2020 made it challenging to issue such a call. President Tim Jensen and I proactively approached several member associations about potentially hosting the 2025 World Congress. While three associations expressed interest by summer 2021, the proposals we received by the end of August were not detailed enough for an informed decision. This prompted us to reopen the invitation to all IAHR member societies, extending the proposal submission deadline to March 25, 2022.

Then three associations filed bids for hosting the 2025 World Congress:

- Lithuanian Society for the Study of Religions, in collaboration with Vilnius University and Vytautas Magnus University, proposed Vilnius, Lithuania, with Prof. Rasa Pranskevičiūtė-Amoson, President of the Lithuanian Society leading the effort.

- Polish Society for the Study of Religions, together with the Jagiellonian University Kraków proposed Kraków, Poland, with the bid submitted by Prof. Agata Świerzowska of the Centre of Comparative Studies of Civilizations at the Jagiellonian University.
- South and Southeast Asian Association for the Study of Culture, alongside the University of Delhi proposed New Delhi, India, led by Prof. Amarjiva Lochan, President of the SSEASR

Following an in-depth discussion at our Cork meeting in June 2022, and in accordance with the IAHR's established framework for Congress organization ("[Basic Framework for Running an IAHR World Congress](#)"), the Executive Committee unanimously selected the bid from the Polish Society for the Study of Religions in partnership with Jagiellonian University. We duly communicated our decision to all bidding parties, expressing our gratitude for their willingness to host this esteemed event.

This decision was officially shared with the member associations/societies and affiliates via my email to their officers on June 29, 2022, and subsequently in [the IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement, September 2022](#).

After several email communications, on August 8, IAHR President Jensen, Treasurer Andrea Rota and I had the first online meeting with the local host: Prof. Michał Wierzchoń (Vice-Dean, Faculty of Philosophy, Jagiellonian University), Prof. Jerzy Kojkoł (President of the Polish Society for the Study of Religions), Prof. Paweł Kusiak (International Relations Secretary of the Polish Society), Prof. Elżbieta Przybył-Sadowska (Head of the Institute of Religious Studies, Jagiellonian University), Prof. Agata Świerzowska (Center for Comparative Studies of Civilizations, Jagiellonian University), Prof. Lech Trzcionkowski (Institute of Religious Studies, Jagiellonian University). Following the meeting, the Organizing Committee, the Academic Program Committee and the Advisory Committee and the Congress Directorate were established in preparation for the event. While it has been the case that the Deputy Secretary General serves as a co-chair of the Academic Program Committee, the IAHR Executive Committee appointed Prof. Rota, the Treasurer, and Prof. Taves, the Vice-President, as co-chairs due to the resignation of the former Deputy Secretary General, Prof. Anna Halahoff. I serve as the co-chair of the Organizing Committee, following the committee structures of past Congresses.

On October 11-14, the IAHR President and Treasurer visited Kraków in order to meet the local host at Jagiellonian University and finalize a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA). The MoA, which was implemented to ensure a smooth execution of the Congress, was signed by the President and Dean Michał Wierzchoń.

Since then, the IAHR President, Treasurer, and I have maintained consistent communication with the Kraków host, scheduling monthly online meetings with co-chairs of the Organizing and the Academic Program Committees since the summer of 2023 to oversee preparations. The President, furthermore, visited Krakow in late June 2023 to have talks with the key Kraków colleagues about various important matters.

Having visited Kraków to see the site in late August 2023, I can vouch for the suitability of Jagiellonian University as an excellent venue for the IAHR World Congress. Furthermore, the historic charm and vibrant atmosphere of Kraków, especially in late August, will undoubtedly enhance the Congress experience in 2025.

The [official Congress website](#) was introduced on October 4, promptly followed by my notification to IAHR member associations and affiliates. A first circular will be included in this e-Bulletin Supplement. Our Kraków hosts have made, and will continue to make, appearances at major member association conferences, like the EASR and AAR annual meetings, to directly

promote the Congress to potential participants.

2.3. IAHR Regional and Special Conferences 2020-2023

Upon application, the IAHR Executive Committee has granted the status of an IAHR Special or Regional Conference to the following conferences:

IAHR Special Conferences

- British Association for the Study of Religions (BASR annual conference) and the University of Edinburgh: “From Religious Studies to the Study of Religion/s: Disciplinary Futures for the 21st century,” online, September 6–7, 2021. Conference website: <https://basr.ac.uk/2021/08/13/2021-basr-annual-conference/>

IAHR President Tim Jensen gave an online opening speech.

- Study of Religions Department at University College Cork and European Society for the Study of Western Esotericism (8th ESSWE Conference): “Esotericism, Art and Creativity,” Cork, Ireland, July 5–7, 2022. Conference website: <https://esswe8.com/>

The conference was hosted by the IAHR Executive Committee member, Prof. James Kapalo and the Review Editor of *NVMEN*, Prof. Jenny Butler. IAHR President Jensen gave an opening speech.

IAHR Regional Conferences

- Italian Society for the History of religions/Società Italiana di Storia delle Religioni (SISR), the University of Pisa and European Association for the Study of Religions (18th EASR Conference): “Resilient Religion,” Pisa, Italy, August 30–September 3, 2021. Conference report: <https://sway.office.com/FpUZzMoAWR6xZb7b?ref=Link>

The IAHR Executive Committee held its annual business meeting in the context of the conference. IAHR President Jensen gave an opening speech.

- Study of Religions Department at University College Cork and European Association for the Study of Religions (19th EASR Conference): “Religions and States of Freedom,” Cork, Ireland, June 27–July 1, 2022. Conference website: <https://www.easr2022.org/>

The IAHR Executive Committee held its annual business meeting in the context of the conference. IAHR President and Secretary General addressed the participants at various occasions, and the Kraków Academic Program Chair, Prof. Lech Trzcionkowski addressed the participants informing about the upcoming 2025 World Congress in Kraków.

- Central Department of Nepalese History, Culture, and Archaeology, Tribhuvan University and the South and Southeast Asian Association for the Study of Culture and Religion (9th SSEASR Conference): “Sacredness, Symbolism, and Society: Practices in South and Southeast Asia,” Kathmandu, Nepal, April 2–4, 2023. Conference website: https://sseasr.org/images/pdf/9th_SSEASR_Kathmandu_Nepal_2023_Third_Announcement.pdf

IAHR President Jensen attended the conference and gave an opening as well as a closing speech. Before the conference, IAHR Vice-President Ann Taves and I conducted an online seminar on research design and academic writing for local students and young scholars.

- University of Nairobi and the African Association for the Study of Religions (9th AASR Conference): “Creativity, Innovation, and Imagination in African Religions,” Nairobi, Kenya,

August 2–4, 2023. Conference website: <https://www.a-asr.org/9th-aasr-conference-university-of-nairobi-kenya-2-4-august-2023/>

In my capacity as the IAHR Secretary General, I had planned to attend the conference, which was the first in-person event since the onset of the pandemic. Regrettably, I had to cancel my trip. Instead, I sent written greetings to the AASR participants, congratulating them on resuming in-person meetings and wishing for the further advancement of the study of religions in the region.

- Vilnius University and the Lithuanian Society for the Study of Religions (20th EASR Conference): “Religions and Technologies,” Vilnius, Lithuania, September 4–8, 2023. Conference website: <https://www.easr2023.org/>

IAHR President Jensen gave an opening speech. The President, IAHR Treasurer Rota, several other IAHR Executive Committee members met with the Kraków host of the next IAHR World Congress as well as EASR General Secretary Jenny Berglund during this conference to discuss the planning of the Congress.

2.4. Future IAHR Special and Regional Conferences

At the moment, the IAHR Executive Committee has awarded the status of IAHR Special/Regional Conferences to the conferences of the following associations.

Special Conference

- Japanese Association for Religious Studies: “Can the IAHR be engaged and relevant without being political or confessional? The position of ‘science (*Wissenschaft*)’ in 2023,” Tokyo, Japan, December 16–17, 2023.

Regional Conferences

- Association of Social Sciences of Religion of Latin America (ACSRAL) (XXI Conference on Religious Alternatives in Latin America): “Religion in the Global South. Contributions and challenges from Latin America,” Montevideo, Uruguay, July 23–26, 2024. Conference website: <https://www.acsral.org/en-us/jornadas-acsral/>
- Romanian Association for the History of Religions, the Institute for the History of Religions in Bucharest and European Association for the Study of Religions (22nd EASR Conference), Bucharest, Romania, 2026.

The IAHR Executive Committee continues to follow the strategy set by previous Executive Committees, emphasizing the global character of the IAHR. We encourage national or regional member societies and associations that have not recently hosted IAHR Special or Regional Conferences to explore this opportunity. As demonstrated by ESSWE, IAHR affiliates are also eligible to apply for the status of an IAHR Special Conference.

2.5. IAHR Special and Regional Conferences in 2025, and the World Congress in Kraków in 2025

National and regional member societies and associations considering hosting an IAHR Special or Regional Conference in the coming years are thus encouraged to approach the IAHR Secretary General at the earliest stages of consideration and planning. However, specifically for 2025, I earnestly ask members and affiliates to ensure – as much as possible – that their conference planning and activities do not overlap with the IAHR XXIII Quinquennial World Congress in Kraków, scheduled for August 24–30, 2025. Not only are members and affiliates

requested to refrain from scheduling their Annual or Bi-Annual meetings and conferences during the IAHR World Congress, but they are also encouraged to adopt a practice similar to the European Association for the Study of Religions. This association chooses not to hold its Annual Conference in the year of an IAHR World Congress, ensuring individual members do not face the challenge of allocating time and resources to attend two major conferences within the same year. Concerning the IAHR World Congress 2025, both the IAHR and the local host will make every effort to accommodate member societies and associations wishing to conduct a business meeting within the framework of the IAHR World Congress.

2.5. IAHR Webinars

IAHR Webinars

In 2020, the IAHR hosted its inaugural webinar titled “[Reflections on the Study of Religion in Aotearoa/New Zealand: Past, Present, and Prospect.](#)” This event, held on September 16, featured insights from the Local Organizing Committee of the Otago World Congress: Profs. Paul Morris, Will Sweetman, John Shaver, and Ben Schonthal. IAHR Vice-President Ann Taves chaired the session.

Following this, the IAHR encouraged its member associations and societies to emulate the Otago format. They could either organize an IAHR webinar with a thematic panel discussion or record plenary lectures from their events (whether held physically or online) and then share these recordings with the IAHR community via the official website.

During 2020-2021, four associations responded positively:

1. **Australian Association for the Study of Religion:** They provided a link to panels from their 2020 annual meeting, which was subsequently [made available on the IAHR website.](#)
2. **British Association for the Study of Religions:** They shared links to two prominent panels from their 2020 annual event, which were then [uploaded to the IAHR website.](#)
3. **Japanese Association for Religious Studies:** Collaborating with the **Korean Association for Religious Studies**, they hosted a roundtable discussing the current status of religious studies in their respective countries. This took place during the JARS 2021 annual meeting, and the [recording was uploaded](#) to the IAHR’s YouTube channel.

IAHR WSN Webinars

The IAHR Women Scholars Network orchestrated a series of webinars between 2020 and 2022. Coordinators Profs. Amy Allocco and Milda Ališauskienė moderated these sessions. Recordings of [all eight webinars](#) from this series are available on the IAHR YouTube channel.

3. Membership Developments

3.1. Admission of Members and Affiliates, and Applications and Recommendations for Membership 2018–2023

The International Committee in Bern, 2018, decided to recommend that the General Assembly admit the Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) as an affiliate of the IAHR at the Otago World Congress. However, due to the cancellation of the Congress, the SBL remains a provisional affiliate of the IAHR until the next Quinquennial World Congress.

Subsequently, the IAHR Executive Committee received applications from the following associations and societies:

In July 2019, the Bangladesh Society for the Study of Culture and Religion (BSSCR) applied for membership to the IAHR. The IAHR Executive Committee, during its meeting in

Delphi September 2019, unanimously decided to recommend the adoption of the BSSCR as an IAHR member to the next IAHR International Committee (whose meeting has been postponed to 2023). See [the IAHR e-Bulletin, 41, 2020](#), for their application.

In June 2023, the Slovenian Association for the Study of Religions (SASR) applied for membership to the IAHR. The IAHR Executive Committee, through email communications, unanimously decided to recommend the adoption of the SASR as an IAHR member to the IAHR International Committee (Tokyo, 2023).

In July 2023, the Israeli Association for the Study of Religions (IASR) applied for membership in the IAHR. Its predecessor, the Israeli Society for the Study of Religions, led by the late Prof. R.J. Zwi Werblowsky, was a member of the IAHR. After a hiatus, the organization was rejuvenated and has reapplied for IAHR membership. The IAHR Executive Committee, via email communications, unanimously decided to recommend the IASR's adoption as an IAHR member to the IAHR International Committee (Tokyo, 2023).

Consequently, the International Committee Meeting in Tokyo, 2023, will have the opportunity to recommend three members (BSSCR, SASR, IASR) and one affiliate (SBL) to the next General Assembly at the Quinquennial World Congress in Krakow, 2025. Until then, these four associations will remain as provisional members/affiliate.

Additionally, IAHR Executive Committee members have engaged with some of the recently admitted associations, revitalized associations, and potential future applicants to aid them in advancing the academic study of religion across various global regions. For example, the President, Prof. Jensen, visited Toronto and Montreal in May/June 2023, invited by Canadian Society for the Study of Religions (CSSR) and La Société québécoise pour l'étude de la religion (SQÉR). He participated in a roundtable, gave a lecture and had discussions with the leadership of each society.

In my report in the [IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement, Bern Edition, 2018](#), I highlighted multiple potential collaborations between the IAHR and the American Academy of Religion (AAR). Some of these collaborations have come to fruition despite pandemic-related challenges. Notably, an AAR International Connections Committee's session has occurred in partnership with the IAHR during the AAR Annual Meetings from 2019 to 2021. President, Jensen has conducted meetings with the AAR and SBL leadership during each AAR/SBL annual conference, and he has been engaged in various IAHR-supported SBL initiatives meant to further and strengthen historical and philological studies of ancient and canonical texts.

3.2. Membership Declared Lapsed

No memberships have been declared as lapsed since 2018. Nevertheless, a number of member associations have failed to remit their annual dues for more than two years. The Executive Committee will address this issue during its meeting on December 15 in Tokyo and may consider removing some of them from the IAHR membership roster.

4. Financial Situation

Referring to the Treasurer's Report for 2020–2023, which is included in this e-Bulletin Supplement, I am pleased to report that the financial health of the IAHR remains strong. However, it is crucial to note that this is due to some extraordinary circumstances:

- The cancelation of the Otago World Congress has provided the IAHR with funds initially allocated for the execution of the Congress.
- All Executive Committee meetings took place online between spring 2020 and summer 2021. When in-person meetings resumed, not every Executive Committee member could make it to the venue. Furthermore, the Executive Committee members were not able to visit IAHR member associations to enhance their collaboration with the IAHR as frequently as before 2020. As a result, we have spent less on travel subsidies during 2020–2023 compared to typical years. It is also worth mentioning that many Executive Committee members, even before the pandemic, often bore their own travel expenses, thus minimally impacting the IAHR budget.

Given these conditions, and while being mindful of expenditures to sustain the IAHR's robust financial health, the Executive Committee has decided to allocate a portion of the budget towards the following:

- IAHR Book Series Publication Grant Program
- Travel subsidies for Ukrainian scholars intending to attend the EASR Conference in Vilnius, 2023

Please consult the Treasurer's report for detailed information on these topics.

5. CIPSH

Here are updates on the IAHR's relationship with the International Council for Philosophy and Human Sciences (CIPSH) since my last report in [the IAHR e-Bulletin, 41, 2020](#):

The CIPSH General Assembly convened online, on December 14 and 15, 2020. During this gathering, elections took place, resulting in the appointment of new Board and Executive Committee members. Notably, IAHR President Jensen was designated as Deputy Secretary General, and I was chosen as the IAHR representative to the CIPSH Executive Committee.

In 2021, the CIPSH's XXXV General Assembly was held at the University of Southern Denmark, Odense, December 13–14, 2021 (rescheduled by a year). This assembly was followed by an academic program on December 15–16, themed "Sustainability, Social Relevance, and the Humanities: Opportunities and Challenges." IAHR President, Prof. Jensen, played a key role on the hosting side of the GA and the adjacent conference, and I had the honor of delivering a keynote, addressing "The Global History of Religions in the Era of the SDGs."

Fast-forward to 2023, the CIPSH's XXXVI General Assembly took place at Keio University, Tokyo, August 21–22. This was succeeded by an academic program, August 23–24, which centered on the theme "Humanities in the Global and Digital Age: The Role of Humanities Research Traditions and Interactions in Contemporary Society." IAHR President Jensen had been key in drafting the CIPSH's revised constitution, and, furthermore, delivered a keynote on "Why a Scientific Study-of-Religions-based Religion Education (RE) Ought Be a Must All Over the World, Irrespective of Various State-Religion Relations."

During the assembly I was reelected as a member of the CIPSH Executive Committee. After the assembly the Board appointed additional officers to the Board, and Prof. Jensen was subsequently elected as one of the three vice-presidents.

You can find the CIPSH report on the 2020 General Assembly here: <https://www.cipsh.one/web/news-311.htm>

As I also noted in [IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement, December 2020](#), the CIPSH has unveiled various programs and projects. For instance, CIPSH Chairs program aims to spotlight existing research networks in the humanities, drawing more global attention and emphasizing their significance in today's society. While the program encourages interdisciplinary collaborations and often centers around universities or research institutions in various countries, it poses a challenge for specialized international federations like IAHR to orchestrate a Chair. However, should your institution seek recognition for an academic network it's a part of, the CIPSH Chairs could be an apt fit. For more details, please reach out to the IAHR Secretary General.

One notable endeavor that CIPSH will be focusing on between 2023 and 2025 is an educational initiative spearheaded by its new Treasurer, Jesús de La Villa. Both President Jensen and I are enthusiastic about contributing to this project, especially from a Study-of-Religions-based Religion Education viewpoint.

6. IAHR Related Publications

6.1. *NVMEN*: International Review for the History of Religions

At the outset of 2022, Prof. Laura Feldt transitioned out of her role as Managing Editor, and Prof. Nickolas Roubekas assumed the position. As a result, the present *NVMEN* Editorial Board comprises Prof. Ülo Valk and Prof. Roubekas serving as Managing Editors, Dr. Jenny Butler in the capacity of Review Editor, and IAHR Executive Committee members, including IAHR Publications Officer Prof. Katja Triplett. Additionally, Dr. Tessel Jonquière has joined as the new Acquisitions Editor of Brill. The Editorial Board convenes annually, typically alongside the Executive Committee's annual business meeting. If the Acquisitions Editor faces challenges attending the EC meeting, an alternative context is chosen. Accordingly, the Editorial Board conducted its 2021 meeting online, the 2022 meeting in Cork during the EASR Conference, and the 2023 meeting in Vilnius, coinciding with the EASR Conference.

Between 2020 and 2023, the predominant challenge faced was the impact of Covid-19, particularly regarding reviews. Many publishers abstained from dispatching physical books, and the acceptance rate for peer reviewers evaluating articles declined more than usual. Consequently, Volumes 68 (2021) and 69 (2022) featured fewer reviews than their predecessors, although article numbers remained steady. The pandemic also influenced article download rates. Fortunately, as of 2023, the situation has shown signs of improvement, with expectations of increased articles and reviews.

The top five article downloads from *NVMEN*, Volumes 67–70 on Brill.com, from January to August 2023, include:

1. The Ancient Greek Pharmakos Rituals (69:5-6, 2022)
2. Prophesying the Demise of Egyptian Religion in Late Antiquity: The Perfect Discourse and Antoninus in Canopus (68:2-3, 2021)
3. "Rehabilitating" Pilgrimage in Scotland: Heritage, Protestant Pilgrimage, and Caledonian Caminos (67:5-6, 2020)
4. How Do We Explain the Quiet Demise of Graeco-Roman Religion? An Essay (68:2-3, 2021)

5. The Role of Rulers in the Winding Up of the Old Norse Religion (68:2-3, 2021)

While this data does not account for downloads on alternative platforms and databases, such as Ebsco, it potentially provides insights into *NVMEN* readers' interests.

A commendable highlight is that all issues between 2020 and 2023 were released either ahead of or within their scheduled month. Acquisitions Editor Jonquière commended the journal for its impeccable operational efficiency, which is a testament to the relentless efforts of the Managing and Review Editors. Special thanks are also due to the former Brill Acquisitions Editor, Dr. Laura Morris, for her longstanding collaboration with us.

6.2. IAHR Book Series Equinox

As of 2023, [the IAHR Book Series, "The Study of Religion in a Global Context,"](#) boasts six published volumes, with two more for forthcoming. Each volume showcases the remarkable progression of the study of religion from diverse perspectives. However, it is noteworthy that the majority of submissions have originated from European scholars. I urge you to introduce the series to the members of your organization. This series serves as an optimal platform for both seasoned and early-career researchers. It welcomes not just historical and comparative studies but also interdisciplinary ones.

The Series Editor, Prof. Katja Triplett, alongside Managing Editor, Prof. Alexandra Grieser, and the IAHR Executive Committee, deliberated on strategies to incentivize submissions from the Global South. These discussions culminated in the inception of the new Publication Grant, first unveiled in the [IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement in September 2022](#). This grant covers publishing expenses, offering up to €6000 annually for open-access publications. Furthermore, the grant can also be utilized as a Language Editing Grant. For detailed information, kindly refer to [our official website](#).

7. Report on the Current Executive Committee's Resolution Not to Propose Changes in the Name and the Constitution of the IAHR

As detailed in the [IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement, November 2019](#), the previous Executive Committee, following its 2019 Delphi meeting, resolved to suggest changes to both the name and the Constitution of the IAHR (refer to Appendix III for the full proposal). This proposal was slated for discussion at the International Committee Meeting in Otago, 2020. However, due to the meeting's cancellation, it never underwent scrutiny by the International Committee and responsibility for this resolution was handed on to the current Executive Committee. During 2020–2021 the Executive prioritized supporting the IAHR community amidst the pandemic, focusing on organizing IAHR webinars and workshops rather than delving into the IAHR name discussion. The matter was revisited at the 2022 business meeting, where it was decided *not* to present this proposal to the International Committee for the 2020–2025 term. A summary of this discussion is provided below.²

² Members interested in the discussion about the proposal to change the name may be interested in the critical writings of Prof. Wiebe as well as the responses we have given. D. Wiebe, ["A Report on the Special Executive Committee Meeting of the International Association for the History of Religions in Delphi,"](#) *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion*, published online May 6.

The discussion revolved around the potential renaming of IAHR (International Association for the History of Religions) to IASR (International Association for the Study of Religions) and the possible inclusion of the term “scientific” in Article 1 of its Constitution.

- Many ECs recognized the established identity of IAHR but some, nevertheless, believed it might be time for a change, *inter alia* because of the tendency of many IAHR members to use “study of religions” rather than “history of religions” in their names.
- There was significant emphasis on the term “religions” being plural.
- Some members showed concerns about using the German term “*Religionswissenschaft*” in the Constitution, suggesting alternatives like “academic, historical, and scientific” for more inclusivity.
- A recurring point was the need for the association to be more inclusive and international, to support decolonization, and to avoid the “conceptual violence” entailed in using the term “scientific” without clarifying what it means.
- The importance of the organization’s identity, being distinct from theology, was also stressed, with some expressing concerns about diluting its essence.
- Several participants pointed out that while the organization should be inclusive geographically and embrace scholars from different continents, it should remain exclusive in terms of preserving its academic identity distinct from theological perspectives.
- No consensus was reached about the name change, but there was some support for separating the discussion about the name from changes to the constitution.

Given that the issue concerns the identity of the IAHR as well as the nature and scope of the academic study of religion, the Executive Committee believes that any proposals related to these changes should achieve unanimous agreement within the Committee. As such, the Committee has chosen not to present any proposal to the International Committee Meeting during this term.

In wrapping up, it is clear that the past three years have marked one of the most tumultuous times in IAHR’s history. Although the pandemic restricted our ability to convene in person, the IAHR Executive Committee adapted by meeting online in a more informal and frequent manner. This allowed us to brainstorm ways to enhance the IAHR’s academic stature and enrich its scholarly endeavors. While we managed to set some of these ideas in motion, further initiatives, including a series of IAHR webinars, were abruptly interrupted by the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Amid these circumstances, the Executive Committee recognized the imperative to define more clearly the nature and essence of the study of religions promoted by the IAHR, particularly its scientific foundation in global contexts. Such discussions underscore the need for a dedicated conference to deeply explore these themes. Consequently, the forthcoming Tokyo event is poised to fulfill this need.

Satoko Fujiwara, IAHR Secretary General, Tokyo, November 1, 2023

S. Fujiwara and T. Jensen, “[What’s in a \(Change of\) Name? Much—but Not That Much—and Not What Wiebe Claims,](#)” *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion*, published online May 6.

V. IAHR Treasurer's Report, 2020-2023

1. Introduction

This summary offers a general overview of the development of the IAHR finances from 2020 until October 2023. It is meant to serve as a general orientation.

2. Account Information

The IAHR has a single bank account in EUR. For this reason, this report uses this currency as its reference. Whenever possible, all bank transactions with the IAHR should be made in EUR to avoid conversion fees.

3. 2022 Balance

In 2020, the IAHR an opening balance of **€83,429.57** The Associations' balance evolved as follows:

2020	€83,429.57	+€8,821.14	+€35,309.47
2021	€92,250.71		
2022	€127,560.18	+€12,480.61	+€265.48
2023	€140 040.79		
October 2023*	€140,306.27*		

The significant surplus between 2021 and 2022 is due to the completion of the reimbursement process that followed the cancellation of the 2020 IAHR World Congress in New Zealand. It is also due to the cancellation of the World Congress that the IAHR possesses extraordinary reserves, which, considering the fact that the IAHR is a non-profit organization, should be used wisely, but also generously.

3.1. Income 2021

The IAHR has three main sources of income: the membership dues of the Member Associations; the membership dues of the Affiliated Associations; and the contributions by Brill/NUMEN.

3.1.1. Member Associations and Affiliated Associations

The income from Member Associations has remained relatively stable with an average of **€9,700.00** a year. The average yearly income from the Affiliated Associations stands at **€760.00**. There is a light tendency towards a yearly decrease in the income form Member and Affiliated Associations. This is often due to unforeseeable circumstances, such as post-COVID difficulties in collecting local membership fees or in processing payments.

3.1.2. Other income

a) There are some fluctuations in the income from NUMEN, but the amount averages out over the year to **€9450.00**.

b) Other sources of income such as donations are extremely rare.

3.2. Expenditure

a) Bank administration fees (120), and the CIPSH subscription (130), constitute regular expenditure. Fixed costs for the bank account average around **€85.00** a year, although these costs could potentially rise in the future. The average in the table (as detailed in the

attachment) includes the costs for the audit. The CIPSH subscription is of exactly **€600.00** a year.

b) Congress support (140) and Conference support (141) expenditure help to cover a part of the costs of various IAHR events and initiatives. Expenditure for Congress support can be variable from year to year. According to the Memorandum of Agreement with the Host of the 2025 World Congress in Kraków, the IAHR will contribute **€25,000.00**, most of them in form of bursaries. Additional **€10,000.00** have been budgeted as reserve in case of extreme necessity.

Conference support expenditure also fluctuates from year to year, averaging **€2556.00** per year. The IAHR was able to support numerous events across the globe, including international conferences in Africa, Asia, and South America.

c) Miscellaneous expenses (150) are rare and concern very modest amounts. In 2023, €2.400.00 from an anonymous donation were used to support the digitalization of the IAHR archives.

d) Costs for publications (160) and Internet costs (161) used to be part of the same category. Average Internet expense amounts to roughly **€580.00** a year (the average in the table includes the cost of refurbishing the IAHR website in 2020).

e) Travel expenses amount, on average, to **€4,061.00** a year. The COVID-19 pandemic caused a significant dip in travel expenses, which are expected to rise in the coming years. In addition to supporting EC members meeting on the margins of various conferences, the IAHR has a vested interest in supporting the President's work in promoting the Association's interests in various international academic settings, such as the AAR annual conferences.

**Comparative table 2020–
2023, in EUR**

	2020	2021	2022	2023 (October)	Averages
INCOME					
200 Dues national assoc.	10119.51	9542.93	9665.04	9553.23	9720
210 Dues affiliates	803.49	892.98	738.05	593.6	757
220 NVMEN	9300	7520	15280	5760	9465
240 Donations	0	0	0	0	0
260 Other Income	676.44	18880.33	0	0	4889
TOT INCOME	20899.44	36836.24	25683.09	15906.83	24831
EXPENDITURE					
120 Bank charges + audit	908.6	80.41	122.86	50.04	290
130 CIPSH subscription	600	600	600	600	600
140 Congress support	525	0	0	8000	2131
141 Conference support	4000	70	2800	3354.21	2556
150 Miscellaneous Expenses	93.38	280.78	0	2400	694
160 Publications*	0	0	0	0	0
161 Webpage	1731.13	496.58	576.52	658.67	866
170 EC Travel and Expenses	4220.39	0	9064.3	2958.9	4061
TOT EXPENDITURE	12078.5	1527.77	13163.68	18021.82	11198
SURPLUS/DEFICIT	8820.94	35308.47	12519.41	-2114.99	13633.4575

VI. IAHR XXIII Quinquennial World Congress in Kraków, Poland, August, 2025: Call for Panels and Papers

The XXIII Quinquennial World Congress of the IAHR will be held in Kraków, Poland, from August 24 to 30, 2025. This event is proudly hosted by the Institute of Religious Studies & Centre for Comparative Studies of Civilisations, Jagiellonian University in Kraków, in collaboration with the Polish Society for the Study of Religions.

Congress Theme:

“Out of Europe: Studying Religion(s) in Interconnected Worlds”

While the Congress is open to contributions from all fields within the academic study of religion, there is a special emphasis on the following themes:

1. Mapping

the unity and diversity of the discipline: past, present, and future

The study of religion(s) as an academic discipline was created in framework of the secular European universities. The effort to understand the “Other” has resulted in the study of religion(s) as a human phenomenon, both in Europe and out of Europe. In this section, we would like to explore the variety of theoretical and methodological forms the study of religion(s) has taken. We shall explore the groundbreaking achievements of European scholars working on fundamental disciplinary concepts and methods. We shall also consider the same themes as they are reflected upon in different parts of the world and interrogate the complex connections between the processes of disciplinary identity formation and other historical, cultural, social, political, and institutional developments. What does it mean to decolonize the study of religion(s)? Could it be achieved?

2. Understanding

the concept of “religion”: uses and contexts

According to many scholars, the central categories of the study of religion (including “religion” and “world religions”) originated in the modern post-Reformation West due to specific historical and political processes. Has this indeed been the case? In this section, we would like to discuss the key concepts of our discipline, their political, cultural, social, and historical entanglements, as well as alternative, indigenous ways of conceptualizing formations customarily referred to by scholars as “religion”.

3. Connecting

the particular and the universal

The dynamic growth of area studies has influenced the study of religion(s). How do we imagine the relation between our context-specific data and more generalized approaches? How do specific, empirical case studies contribute to more generalized reflections about “religion”? How do we study religious life in practice? The development and differentiation of the cognitive science of religion raises similar issues related to culture and cognition. How do panhuman cognitive processes interact with implicit and explicit cultural learning to produce different religious and nonreligious worldviews and ways of life?

4. Crossing

the boundaries: approaches and methodologies

The rich variety of methodological perspectives in the study of religion may lead to the conclusion that there is no one method that is specific to our discipline. In this section, we would like to critically consider both classical and new methods available to scholars of religion. For example, how do the aims and methods of the study of religion(s) differ from those of other disciplines who engage religion as their subject matter? What does it actually mean to work trans- or inter-disciplinarily? How do we embrace and/or challenge the interdisciplinary ethos of religious studies? In addition, by adopting the “out of Europe” focus we want to open a space for examining approaches and methodologies that originated outside Western academia. Can a ‘dialogue’ between the academic study of religion and emic categories as well as indigenous methodologies contribute to our scholarship? Or, does such a ‘dialogue’ blur the contours of the academic study of religion(s)?

5. Engaging

scholarship and knowledge exchange

The study of religion(s) is increasingly related to identity politics, social activism, (im)balance of powers and authority, gender and more recently environmental and climate issues. In this section, we want to discuss these, and other approaches, often connected with engaged, activist scholarship. In what ways can scholars of religion(s) contribute to outreach and educational activity and to solving social and political problems? Or should scholars of religion(s) seek to balance or counter the ‘identity turn’? Or eschew engagement altogether?

6. Relating

religion with culture and society

The study of religion(s) has moved away from the conception of religion as a sui generis phenomenon. In light of this important shift, scholars in our discipline are called to reflect not only on new ways to conceptualize religion, spirituality, and secularity, but also to relate them to other domains of social and cultural life. In this section we want to discuss how “religious” or “spiritual” people, groups, institutions, discourses, and objects interact with sociocultural processes such as migration and urbanization, life realities such as marginalization and assimilation, and functional spheres such as politics, art, and the economy.

Submission Deadlines

Open panels: 15th Oct. 2023 – 15th Dec. 2023; Notification by 1st Feb. 2024

Closed panels: 15th Feb. 2024 – 1st Dec. 2024; Notification by 5th Jan. 2025

Roundtables: 15th Feb. 2024 – 1st Dec. 2024; Notification by 5th Jan. 2025

Individual papers: 15th Feb. 2024 – 1st Dec. 2024; Notification by 5th Jan. 2025

For further details, please visit the official website: <https://iahr2025.org/welcome/>

The Congress is set to be a grand gathering, with over a thousand in-person attendees expected. Everyone of IAHR member associations and affiliates can look forward to rekindling old ties and forging new international collaborations.

EASR 2022 CORK CONFERENCE REPORT



The Irish Society for the Academic Study of Religions (<https://isasr.wordpress.com/>), in conjunction with the Study of Religions Department at University College Cork (<https://www.ucc.ie/en/religion//>) hosted the 19th European Association for the Study of Religions Conference themed “Religions and States of Freedom”, which took place from 27th June to 1st July 2022. The conference was a Regional Conference of the IAHR. The local organisers were Dr Jenny Butler, President of ISASR, and Dr James Kapaló, Treasurer of ISASR, supported by a team comprised of the ISASR board and members of the Study of Religions Department including Dr Brendan McNamara, Dr Alexandra Grieser, and Dr Hazel O’Brien. This was the first time that the island of Ireland has hosted an EASR conference and represented the largest gathering of scholars of religion in Ireland to date.

The conference theme was chosen to commemorate the centenary year of the founding of the Irish Free State, Saorstát Éireann. Ireland’s historical journey towards this goal of political freedom, like that of many other states, was bound up with a complex history of religious competition, conflict, and domination. Despite bringing Catholic emancipation, this era also resulted in the institution of a harsh period of social control stemming from the alliance of the Catholic Church and the state. Our reflections on this history and the numerous ways in which religions are implicated in and intersect with struggles for freedom, both personal and communal, with political and social oppression, with colonisation and de-colonisation, with the destruction of indigenous cultures, and with race, gender, and privilege, inspired us to dedicate the conference to exploring the diverse connotations associated with the words “freedom” and “religion” – including freedom in, from, and of religion.

The conference was opened by Professor Chris Williams, Head of UCC's College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences, representing the host institution, with Dr Jenny Butler giving the opening address on behalf of the Irish Society for the Academic Study of Religions. Dr Amanullah De Sondy, Head of UCC's Study of Religions Department, offered words of welcome on behalf of the department.

As well as attracting delegates from every corner of Europe, participants travelled from the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Israel, UAE, India, Bangladesh, Australia, and Mexico, making the conference a truly global gathering. In all there were close to 500 delegates from 40 countries who participated in 13 parallel sessions over five days with a total of 144 panels and 10 roundtable events. The participation of graduate students and those from economically weaker countries was supported by funding from the ISASR and the IAHR with a total number of eight bursaries, which were in addition to the EASR's own bursary scheme that supported 15 scholars.

The conference included a series of keynote speakers who addressed the conference theme from a number of disciplinary and historical perspectives. The opening keynote was delivered by Professor Tom Inglis, Emeritus Professor of Sociology at University College Dublin, with the title "Can Religion Save Humankind?". Turning our attention to climate emergency, Professor Inglis considered the type of religious beliefs and values that might emerge to contribute to saving humankind and the planet we call home. Pitching the idea of individual salvation against collective consciousness concerning humankind, Professor Inglis challenged us to explore what types of religious ecologies might compete with the forces of the market, media, and the state.

Professor Masimo Introvigne, managing director of CESNUR, the Centre for Studies on New Religions, in Torino, Italy and until 2016, Professor of Sociology of Religions at Pontifical Salesian University, explored the theme of religious freedom in relation to contemporary discourses and state policies around "separatism". In his keynote entitled "New Religious Movements, Anti-Cultism, and Campaigns Against 'Separatism' in Europe", he contrasted recent developments in Western Europe with those in Eastern Europe in relation to the rise of nationalism and attitudes that regard alternative religious lifestyles as a form of dangerous separatism from the nation and national church.

The third keynote of the conference was presented by a team of researchers, Professor Brian Bocking, Emeritus Professor of the Study of Religions at University College Cork, Dr Laurence Cox of Maynooth University, Ireland, and Dr Alicia Turner of York University, California. Based on their collaborative research project on the life and legacy of one of the first Western Buddhists, and the first known Irish Buddhist monk, U Dhammaloka, a controversial figure who used his status as Buddhist monk to confront British colonial rule in Burma and India. The presentation reflected on memory, lineage, and history in Buddhism.

Moving from the religious history of East Asia to the Middle East, Dr Sa'ed Atshan of Anthropology at Emory University, Georgia, in his keynote "Palestinian Christians: Past, Present and Future" explored from a refreshingly personal perspective the position of Palestinian Christians and how scholars, practitioners, and individuals at the grassroots level have each understood the past and present of Christianity in Palestine from differing perspectives.

The fifth keynote of the conference returned to Ireland as the starting point for the context of analysis. Focusing on "Religion and Freedom in a 'Post'-Covid World: Mapping Research Agendas", Dr Gladys Ganiel, Reader in Sociology at Queen's University Belfast, challenged us to think about the way that the pandemic was reshaping debates about religious freedom and the ways that governments and religious communities and institutions responded to the closure of religious buildings and vaccine mandates.

Based on her empirical research findings on the theme of gender and equality amongst Syrian refugee families in Europe and the Middle East, Dr Yafa Shanneik, Visiting Professor of Islamic Studies at the University of Lund in Sweden, in her keynote "Syrian Muslim Refugees and the Framing of Gender: A Challenge to European States of Freedom?" challenged us to question the impact of global discourses on gender equality on refugee women whose child or polygamous marriages disadvantage them or exclude them from joining their husbands and children in some European countries.

The closing keynote of the conference was delivered by Professor András Máté-Tóth of the University of Szeged in Hungary. "Wounded Collective Identity - Towards a Regional Interpretation of Religious Processes in Central and Eastern Europe" presented a theoretical framework for understanding the transformation of Churches in Central and Eastern Europe.

The thesis proposed by Professor Máté-Tóth's presentation foregrounded the role of collective wounds, as opposed to modernization and secularization, as the key explanatory factor in the long-durée transformation of the societal dimensions of religion.

In addition to the keynotes, the conference programme included the book launch of the landmark publication, *The Study of Religions in Ireland: Past, Present and Future*, edited by Hazel O'Brien and Brendan McNamara (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022). Conceived of and executed by the members of the conference committee and past and present members of the Study of Religions Department in Cork, the book represented a way of marking the significance of hosting the EASR conference for the history of the discipline in Ireland and for the Irish Society for the Academic Study of Religions.

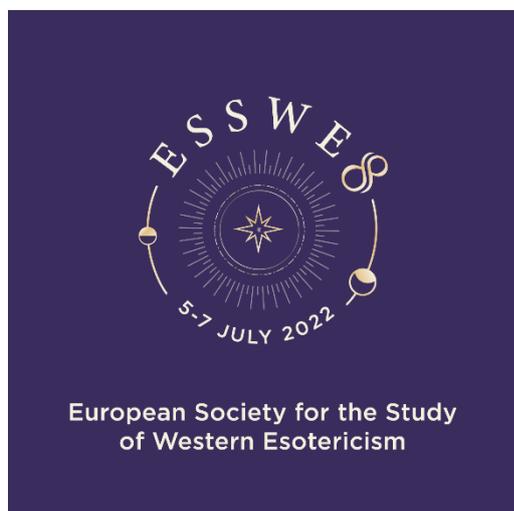
The conference was generously sponsored by the IAHR and enjoyed marketing support from the Fáilte Ireland Conference Ambassador Support Programme. Cork Convention Bureau also supported the conference and sponsored entertainment and the welcoming reception at the Aula Maxima on University College Cork's historic campus. Bloomsbury Publishers generously sponsored the entertainment at the Gala Dinner.

The conference was recognised as important for Visit Cork and Cork's business tourism and Dr Jenny Butler, as a member of Fáilte Ireland Conference Ambassador Club since 2016, was honoured as winner of the overall Association Category Award for her role in bidding for the EASR conference. Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Defence, Simon Coveney, presented Dr Butler with the award and stated that the EASR conference together with the Eighth European Society for the Study of Western Esotericism (ESSWE8) Conference that she organised, directly following the EASR, brought an estimated 1.6 million euro to the local economy. EASR President, Professor Kim Knott, gave a short speech as part of the award presentation (clip on YouTube here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H7_fEy9T-BU).

We would like to end this summary report by offering our thanks to the members of the Scientific Committee of the conference who generously gave their time to reviewing all the paper and panel proposals, to the conference participants for their excellent presentations and inspiring and thought-provoking discussions, and to our team of student helpers whose energy and friendly faces ensured a "Pure Cork" welcome for our delegates.

- Dr Jenny Butler and Dr James Kapaló

ESSWE8 CONFERENCE REPORT



The Eighth European Society for the Study of Western Esotericism (ESSWE8) Conference on the theme of “Western Esotericism and Creativity: Art, Performance and Innovation” was hosted by the Irish Network for the Study of Esotericism and Paganism (INSEP) (<http://insep.ie/>) and the Study of Religions Department at University College Cork (<https://www.ucc.ie/en/religion//>) and took place from 5-7th July 2022. The ESSWE (<https://www.esswe.org/>) is an affiliated society of the IAHR and a related scholarly organisation of the American Academy of Religion (AAR). Dr Jenny Butler, who teaches a module on Western Esotericism and New Religious Movements on UCC’s BA Religions and Global Diversity Programme, was the local organiser alongside the Executive Committee of the ESSWE and she subsequently was elected to the ESSWE Board. The conference was an important occasion, being the first time an ESSWE conference has come to Ireland and the first time there has been an international, interdisciplinary gathering of scholars who work on esotericism in the country. ESSWE8 was an IAHR Special Conference and both the IAHR and the ESSWE provided bursaries for PhD students which enabled them to participate in the conference.

The conference brought together scholars who seek to examine the intersections of esotericism and artforms, creative performance, innovation, and cultural production. Participants interpreted the theme in many and varied ways, which was the intention with

the broad conference theme. The programme had a broad geographical scope as well as historical depth, with scholars examining cultural contexts from antiquity to the present day. The conference was held on-campus, bringing together over 140 scholars with Irish-based colleagues being joined by those travelling from Sweden, the United Kingdom, Canada, Denmark, France, the Netherlands, Iceland, Italy, Estonia, Switzerland, Austria, Czech Republic, Finland, Belgium, Poland, Portugal, Germany, Australia, Israel, and the United States. Due to the difficulties posed to academic engagement presented by the war in Ukraine, special mention goes to the Ukrainian scholars who managed to join us in person and online to present their papers. Also, we were happy to see some of our Chinese-based colleagues who could not travel because of Covid restrictions still in place at the time were able to join us online and present within their panels.

The conference being held in 2022 was significant as the centenary of the foundation of the Irish state in 1922. During the revolutionary period preceding the birth of the Irish nation, the Easter Rising of 1916, and the foundation of the state, esotericism played an important role in influencing the worldviews and activities of key political and cultural figures. This link was acknowledged on the programme with papers examining the life and times of people like Ella Young and William Butler Yeats. Similarly, the intersection of art, the literary scene, and esotericism in the Irish context was explored, such as with the influence of James Joyce on Timothy Leary, Robert Anton Wilson, and Terence McKenna. Some Irish and Celtic flavour to the programme was positioned alongside explorations of esotericism in various regions and cultures including India, Slavic countries, and Persia.

The keynotes were each significant figures in their respective fields and their work is of great value for the study of esotericism. The first keynote address was by Andreas Kilcher, ESSWE President and Professor of Literature and Cultural Studies at the Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule (ETH) in Zurich, titled "The Ghost in the Writing: Magic and Mediality in the Story of Faust". The second keynote was by a key figure in the field of Western esotericism and the study of religions more generally, Dr Marco Pasi, Associate Professor, University of Amsterdam, Department of Humanities, on the topic of "Occulture in Contemporary Art". The third keynote address by Claire Nally, Associate Professor, Northumbria University, Department of Humanities, brought the focus back to Ireland with the topic of "Ireland's Funerary Culture and Ancestral Memory: W. B. Yeats's Early Poetry and Prose".

The ESSWE Thesis Prize Winner 2022, Yves Muehlematter, was presented with his award and gave a plenary lecture based on his PhD thesis entitled “Accelerating Evolution in Annie Besant’s Theosophy: Pedagogy in India between ‘Western’ and ‘Eastern’ Roots”. There was an ESSWE Student Roundtable, and the ESSWE Network meetings that took place on site were ESOGEN - Esotericism, Gender, and Sexuality Network, SNASWE - Scandinavian Network for the Academic Study of Western Esotericism, ESOSTETICS – Esotericism and Aesthetics in the Nordic Countries, and ENSIE - European Network for the Study of Islam and Esotericism.

Paper presentations ranged from literary analysis of esotericism to the visual arts and interesting discussions were had on a wide range of topics. UCC Research Collections Librarian, Crónán Ó Doibhlin, gave a presentation to delegates on the esoteric holdings of UCC Boole Library, and a letter written by Aleister Crowley and some rare esoteric books were on display in the library during the conference.

The panel titles give a sense of the thematic variety and multi-disciplinarity of presentations: “Capital Magic: Esoteric Narratives and Shaping the Capitals of East-Central Europe”; ENSIE Panels “Islam and Esotericism in Literature”, “The Arts and Contemporary Western Sufism” and “Islam and Esotericism in the Visual and in Artefacts”; the SNASWE & ESOSTETICS Stream of four panels: (1) “Esotericism and Creativity in the Nordic Countries: Arts as a Spiritual Practice” (2) “Literary and Visual Representations of Esoterically Inspired Concepts in a Nordic Context” (3) “Performing Esotericism Between Tradition, Play, and Innovation” and (4) “Thinking about Creativity, Innovation, and Esotericism”; “Analysing Esoteric Artworks”. There was the ESOGEN Panel: “Sex, Gender, and Creativity in Western Esotericism”. Other panels included “Gods, Goddesses and Druids”; “Symbols and Sacred Geometry”; “The Arts, Practice, Ritual”; “Methodologies for Literary Esotericism Studies: A Key Words Panel”; “Theosophy in Cultural Context”; “Esotericism and Pop Culture”; “Illusion, Surrealism and Visionary Works”; “Occult Theatre”; “Kabbalah, Esotericism and Jewish Literature in the early 20th century”; “Esotericism in a Globalised World”; “Magical Themes in Literature”; “Esoteric Tropes and Themes”; “Aleister Crowley, The Thelemic Tradition, and the Creative Arts”; “Contemporary Anthroposophy: Politics, Pandemics, and Conspiratoriality”; “Occulture and Cultural Expressions, Film and Screen Media”; “Novels, Magick and Weird Fiction”; “Knowledge and Texts”; “Archeosophy and the Arts”; “Tuning In, Projecting Out”; “Histories and Making Magic”; “Mediums and Vessels”; “The Magic of Images: Tarot Decks and Masonic

Glyphs”, and the Research Association for the Study of Esotericism (RASWE) Panel “Designing Reality: The Art of Magic”.

The conference programme included the launch of Wouter Hanegraaff’s book, *Hermetic Spirituality and the Historical Imagination: Altered States of Knowledge in Late Antiquity* (2022, Cambridge University Press) sponsored by the HHP (History of Hermetic Philosophy and Related Currents). The programme had an Arts strand consisting of practice-based panels “The Art of Esotericism in Theory, Practice, & Exposition” as well as a performance piece by ritual-theatre performance artist, bellydancer and poet, Aepril Schaile, titled “I Guard Your Death”. As part of the Arts strand, there was the launch of an exhibition by the visual artist, poet and Current 93 singer, David Tibet, sponsored by the UCC Study of Religions Department. The exhibition, TeaTime With The Channellers, was held in UCC’s Boole Library gallery.

The ESSWE Board must be commended for their encouragement, patience, and generous financial support of this conference and for allowing it to be postponed from its original date in 2021 so that it could take place in Ireland during these turbulent times. Fáilte Ireland Conference Ambassador Support Programme and Cork Convention Bureau are due thanks for their backing, funding, and marketing support. Jenny Butler subsequently received a Conference Ambassador Award from Cork Convention Bureau for bidding for and organising this inspiring conference in the face of significant challenges. Thanks are due to the IAHR for its support, both financial and collegial, of the ESSWE8 conference.

Appendix III: 9th SSEASR Conference, Kathmandu, Nepal, 2023: Report for the IAHR

The 9th SSEASR Conference, Kathmandu, Nepal, April 01-04, 2023

A Report

The ninth SSEASR (South and South East Asian Association for the Study of Culture and Religion) conference with theme of **Sacredness, Symbolism, and Society: Practices in South and Southeast Asia** was organized and hosted by the Central Department of Nepalese History, Culture and Archaeology (NeHCA), Tribhuvan University and the Nepal Academy of Tourism and Hotel Management (NATHM) at the campus of the Nepal Academy of Tourism and Hotel Management (NATHM), Kathmandu, Nepal from April 01-04, 2023. The conference was supported by the Kathmandu Metropolitan City (KMC), Nepal Tourism Board (NTB) and the Pashupatinath Area Development Trust (PADT). The conference was well organized by **Dr. Tina Manandhar**, who was the Organizing Secretary of this SSEASR Conference and a faculty of the Central Department of Nepalese History, Culture and Archaeology (NeHCA), Tribhuvan University.

The conference aimed to inspire academic discourses on preservation and promotion of global cultural heritage values and facilitate cultural exchanges worldwide. It serves as collaborative platforms for knowledge sharing and fostering relationships among researchers. The conference theme shed a spotlight on the diverse cultures and heritages of South Asia and South East Asia, revealing their multi-faceted facets. Approximately 300 participants from various parts of the world working on South and Southeast Asia gathered to attend this conference and presented their research findings. Among them, 80 were foreign participants, highlighting the global interest in the event. The conference attracted a diverse range of attendees, including professors, researchers, cultural experts, heritage practitioners, students, and recent university graduates. These participants actively engaged in the conference and directly benefited from the enriching experience.

Nepal possesses a rich heritage, culture, and natural beauty, yet these aspects remain relatively unknown to intellectuals around the world. This conference specifically focused on culture and heritage, providing with a remarkable opportunity to introduce the cultural wealth of Nepal to the participants through the pre-conference and post-conference tours. The pre-conference tour was organized on April 01, 2023 to highlight the UNESCO World Heritage Sites of Kathmandu. Participants were guided by knowledgeable personnel from the Kathmandu Metropolitan City (KMC) who skillfully explained the historical and architectural significance of each sites. The tour included a delightful break at Swoyambhunath, where the KMC officials warmly welcomed the participants. Following the conclusion of the tour, a pre-conference dinner was graciously organized by the Pashupati Development Trust (PADT) at the Hotel Anand, Kathmandu.

From April 02-04, 2023, the academic sessions of the conference took place at the premises of the co-host of the conference Nepal Academy of Tourism and Hotel Management (NATHM). The inaugural session was graced by the presence of the Honorable Minister for Culture, Tourism, and Civil Aviation, **Mr. Sudan Kirati**, who officiated the opening ceremony. **Prof. Tim Jensen**, the President of the International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR), attended the session as the Guest of Honor. The Vice Chancellors of both Tribhuvan University

Prof. Dharma Kanta Banskota and Jawaharlal Nehru University **Prof. Shantishree Dhulipudi Pandit** were also present at the inaugural session.

The esteemed speakers of the inaugural session highlighted the profound significance of this academic conference. They recognized that this academic gathering offers a unique opportunity for Nepal to exhibit its cultural splendor and heritage on a global scale. By bringing together scholars, researchers, and experts from various disciplines, the conference serves as invaluable platform for knowledge sharing, collaboration, and intellectual growth. The speakers emphasized that the conference played a crucial role in promoting and preserving Nepal's rich cultural legacy. By facilitating discussions, presentations, this gathering contributes to a deeper understanding and appreciation of Nepal's cultural beauty, historical significance, and traditional practices.

Following the inaugural session, the keynote address was delivered by **Prof. Shantishree Dhulipudi Pandit**, Vice Chancellor of Jawaharlal Nehru University, India. In her enlightening talk, she focused on the theme of Sacredness among Tamils in South and Southeast Asia within the Indic Belt and highlighted the sacred practices, beliefs, and cultural expressions of the Tamil community across the region.

Day 2 commenced with an enlightening plenary session by **John Solt** from the Edwin O. Reishauer Institute of Japanese Studies at Harvard University. He delivered a thought-provoking presentation titled "Imagining the Future," which delved into the rapid advancements in technology and the challenges they pose. He raised the question of whether we can overcome these challenges before they overwhelm us. Additionally, he explored the role of digital technology and the struggles of artificial intelligence in theorizing abstract concepts like flatulence. He also touched upon the current state of human morality, sparking engaging discussions and contemplation among the attendees.

Supported by the Kathmandu Metropolitan Office, the dinner of the second day offered a delectable spread of traditional Newari cuisines for an authentic culinary experience. The setting was elevated by enchanting traditional Newari music as well.

Over the course of two and a half days, the conference featured parallel sessions for paper presentations. These sessions took place simultaneously in four different rooms, allowing for a diverse range of topics and discussions. Both individual and panel presentations were conducted, offering a comprehensive exploration of the conference's 14 sub-themes. With a total 125 paper presenters, the sessions provided a platform for scholars to share their research and insights. Following the paper presentations, a critical question and answer session ensued. This session provided an exciting and engaging opportunity for academics to delve deeper into the topics discussed, ask probing questions, and offer thoughtful comments. The Q & A sessions proved to be highly stimulating, offering a wealth of interesting insights and fostering valuable knowledge exchange. It facilitated the exploration of new perspectives, broadened visions, and delivered numerous beneficial outcomes for all participants involved.

The conference facilitated the acquisition and sharing of global academic knowledge.

- The Central Department of Nepalese History, Culture & Archaeology, Tribhuvan University gained international exposure.
- This is considered as one of the largest academic gatherings ever held by the Humanities and Social Science Faculty of Tribhuvan University.

- It brought 30 national paper presenters in a single platform, which is a significant academic achievement.
- Foreign participants visited heritage sites that contributed to the promotion of tourism.
- Hotels benefited from the influx of foreign participants.
- The conference fostered international coordination and exchange programs.
- The conference strengthened professional development and created new career opportunities.
- It provided an opportunity to showcase the prosperity of Nepalese culture and heritage to intellectuals from around the world.
- Overall, the outcomes surpassed expectations and marked a significant milestone as the first of its kind organized by the Central Department of Nepalese History, Culture, and Archaeology (NeHCA), Tribhuvan University.

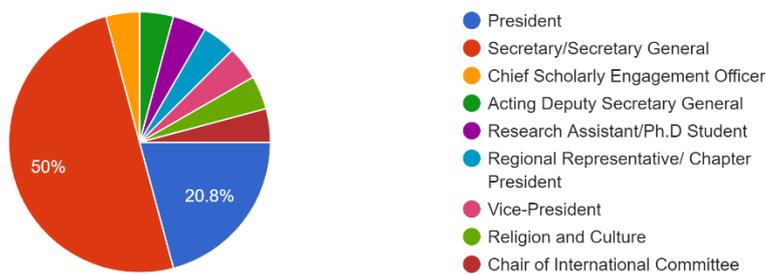
The financial support extended by the IAHR was utilized in providing air ticket and accommodation support for paper presenters from Bangladesh, Bhutan and Philippines. In addition, 15 foreign students' registration fees were covered. The SSEASR expresses its heartfelt gratitude for the financial support of IAHR which was extremely useful. **Prof. Tim Jensen**, the President of the International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR), represented IAHR in the conference.

REPORT PREPARED BY Prof Shahnaj Husne Jahan, SSEASR Secretary General with the input from Dr. Tina Manandhar, Organizing Secretary, 9th SSEASR Conference and Dr. Amarjiva Lochan.

Appendix IV: Summary of Responses to the “IAHR Questionnaire: Feasibility of Online Gatherings”

In August 2020, the IAHR Secretary General distributed a survey on the feasibility of online gatherings to officers of IAHR member associations/societies and affiliates. accompanying cover letter stated, “Due to COVID-19, both the 2020 World Congress and the business meetings (International Committee meeting and General Assembly) have been cancelled. However, considering the prolonged effects of the pandemic and increased ecological concerns, it may be timely to ask you a few questions about online gatherings. We, the IAHR Executive Committee, would appreciate your observations and opinions.” We received responses from 24 officers. Presented below is a summary of their feedback.

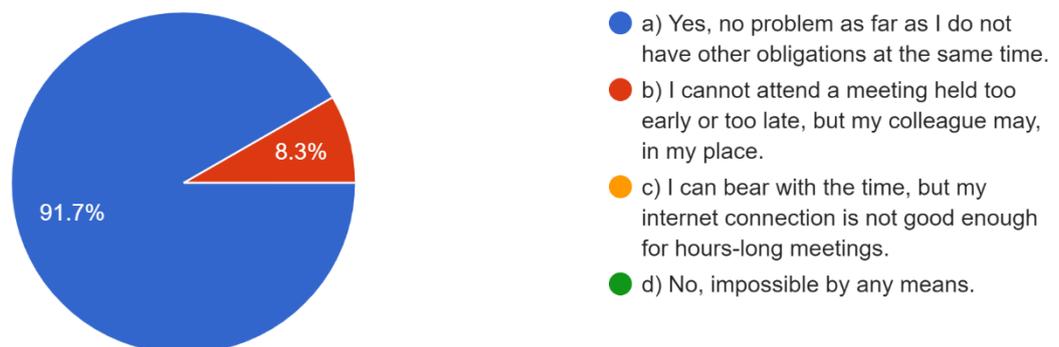
Your office
24 responses



1. Online Business Meetings

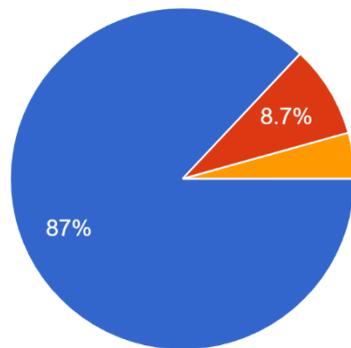
1.1 Despite the problem of time difference, will you be able to participate in an International Committee meeting online? (Assume it takes p... 2-3 hours between 6am and 10pm by your time.)

24 responses



1.2 Do you think online participants of an International Committee meeting should be allowed to vote? Online voting will be made anonymous. (At t... voting, online participants could not have voted.)

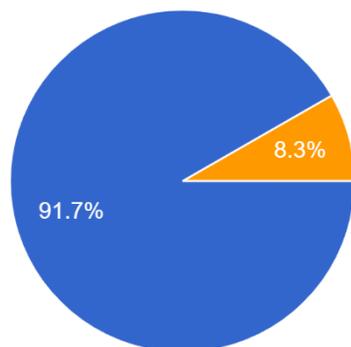
23 responses



- a) Yes.
- b) No, voting rights should only be given to participants on site.
- c) Other answer/I do not know.

1.3 If a quinquennial congress has to be cancelled in the future or if there is no IAHR conference that can accommodate an International Committee m... in either 2022 or 23 for discussion and a vote?

24 responses



- a) Yes, the issue should be discussed and decided at the next IC meeting.
- b) No, I do not think that is necessary.
- c) Other answer/I do not know.

1.4 Please write below if you have other opinions or ideas regarding online business meetings. 6 responses

We are not Business Houses but academicians of very specific subject. Many a times, we change our ideas on certain issues while talking with each other. The IC Meeting of the IAHR is like that. This situation of Covid-19 should not be taken as a world shaker. World is full of positive hopes!

Wholly viable - if well moderated so that delegates with strongest voices and most self-confidence are not overrepresented.

As a truly global organization, IAHR online gatherings could be planned in two parts (with some 6-hours difference at least).

Meetings can be held virtually. It calls for a review of the constitution and perhaps, make way for the acceptance of the conduct of meetings Virtually.

Considering the climate crisis and ecological concerns, I think it's absolutely vital that the IAHR considers digital solutions.

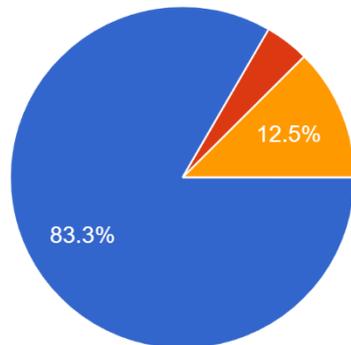
Why do you choose a convenient time for European delegates first? Do they have any privileges?

2. Online Academic Programs

2.1 Online symposia or seminars (recently called “webinars”)

We are considering hosting online symposiums or se... think they would be interested in participating?

24 responses

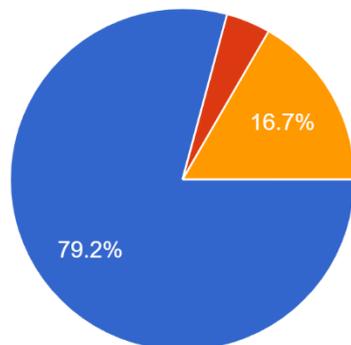


- a) Yes, many of our members would be interested in such events, though it will depend on who will discuss what.
- b) No, I do not think many of our members would welcome such events because: (please identify reasons if you can)
- c) I do not know.

2.2 Online workshop for young scholars

We are considering developing online workshops on ... think they would be interested in participating?

24 responses

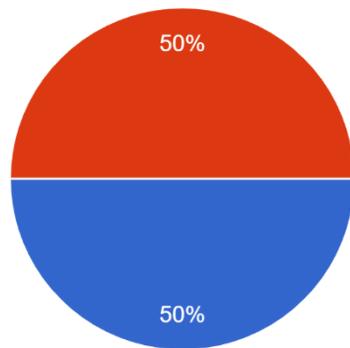


- a) Yes, many of our young members would participate in such workshops.
- b) No, I do not think our members would be interested in such workshops because: (please identify reasons if you can)
- c) I do not know.

2.3 Online options for IAHR Special/Regional Conferences

The IAHR grants IAHR Special or Regional Conferen...le can attend the conferences without traveling?

24 responses



- a) Yes, the IAHR should encourage conference hosts to move in that direction and perhaps make it a condition for getting an IAHR status.
- b) Yes, but the IAHR should not push conference hosts too much.
- c) No, I do not think conference hosts should implement online programs.

2.4 Please write below if you have other comments or ideas regarding online academic programs.7 responses

I think webinars potentially could be an idea for future seminars and conferences. However, I also think that the present 'faced online' activities might have several of our members feeling fed up with it, looking forward to 'real meetings'.

By offering online options we can include participants that often cannot afford going to the IAHR conferences, in this way we could also contribute to the academic study of religions in more parts of the world, but also support those who are doing such studies.

Online participation is a good and sustainable way to attend conferences. This also concerns aspects of time, financial aspects and family aspects, especially for young scientists. Chats running parallel to conferences or other connecting methods could integrate several media. This connects participants worldwide and initiates new research projects among them. New ways of online participation should be developed. Thank you for working on this.

The new normal has compelled many organizations to resort to virtual conduct of business. We have to follow suit but we have to be really prepared for this new modality. We need to make an assurance that we gain optimum results.

With regard to questions 2.1 and 2.2, I think that some of our members would be interested, but I ticked the box "I don't know" because the only options were many or none. It's difficult to say, but we should probably try it out.

How do you deal with China/Taiwan issue? Do you exclude Taiwan scholars even online conferences? Are you talking about future arrangements even after COVID-19 vaccine will be made?

Re: requiring online panels - good technology is not always available in our conference locations in Africa.

Appendix V: The Former Executive Committee's Proposal of Changes in the Name and the Constitution of the IAHR

Reproduced from the IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement, November 2019, pp.6-8

1. Proposal to change the name of the IAHR

The Executive Committee will recommend to the Otago International Committee that the IAHR change its name from the International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR) to the International Association for the Study of Religions (IASR).

This may be a surprising proposal to many of you because it was only four years ago that the proposal to change the name given by Prof. Donald Wiebe and Prof. Luther Martin was rejected by a majority of the members of the International Committee in Erfurt. However, the situation surrounding the IAHR has been changing more rapidly than was imagined in 2015, and the term "history of religions", formerly often seen as an apt umbrella term, nowadays more and more often tends to be seen as one of many approaches in the study of religion. Therefore, even Executive Committee members who voted against the name change in 2015 have decided to support the change.

It is true that the name "study" was once rejected by the IAHR International Committee in 1992 because it was considered to be too generic and amorphous (Cf. *IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement Aug 2017*, p.23). Nevertheless, since then many of the IAHR member societies and associations have adopted "study of religion(s)" for their official names or their English translations. The EASR, i.e. the "European Association for the Study of Religions" and the DVRW, i.e. the "Deutsche Vereinigung für Religionswissenschaft" ("German Association for the Study of Religion" as its official English translation) may serve as examples. Therefore, the proposed change to the "International Association for the Study of Religions" will hopefully function as an up-to-date umbrella term in the same way as the "history of religions" did in the past. In addition, the plural of "religions" is intended to signal some continuity with the current name. The proposal will be first discussed by the International Committee, and if a majority is in favor, the proposal will then be presented to the General Assembly, which will adopt it with a 2/3 majority in favor.

The Executive Committee is consulting IAHR member associations that use French as their primary language as to what the French equivalent should be for the "study of religions."

2. Proposal to insert "scientific" into the IAHR Constitution

As indicated above, the Executive Committee did not decide to recommend the name "study of religions" in order to signal an "anything goes" policy in regard to the approaches to religion pursued and promoted by the IAHR. On the contrary, discussions in Delphi, continued afterwards online, resulted in unanimous agreement to signal a wish to tighten up the academic, scientific profile of the IAHR in various ways, and one of these was by way of a proposal to insert the word "scientific" in Article 1 of the IAHR Constitution:

Original Article 1

"[...] The IAHR is a nonprofit worldwide organization which has as its objective the promotion of **the academic study of religions** through the international collaboration of all scholars whose research has a bearing on the subject. The IAHR is not a forum for confessional, apologetical, or other similar concerns."

Proposal

“Article 1

[...] The IAHR is a nonprofit worldwide organization which has as its objective the promotion of **the scientific study of religions (“Religionswissenschaft”)** through the international collaboration of all scholars whose research has a bearing on the subject. The IAHR is not a forum for confessional, apologetical, or other similar concerns.”

In order to avoid giving the impression that the word “scientific” refers only to the natural sciences, the Executive Committee also suggests adding “Religionswissenschaft.” In this way, hopefully, it is also signaled that the IAHR despite timely innovations and changes stays in line with the “ethos” of the Marburg 1960 statement (Cf. A. Schimmel, “Summary of Discussion,” *NVMEN* Vol.VII, Fasc. 2, Dec 1960, 236-7) on the “identity” and specific task of the IAHR.

3. Proposal to change Rules for hosting an IAHR Special and Regional Conference

Closely related to the second proposal and its rationale, the Executive Committee proposes that it becomes part of the requirements for hosting an IAHR Special or Regional Conference that one or more Executive Committee members become members of its organizing committee. Currently, the IAHR Deputy Secretary General functions as the co-chair of the Academic Program Committee of every IAHR World Congress, and other officers, e.g. the President and the Secretary General, also function as co-chairs of various World Congress committees. The EC will draft a proposal (to be presented to the International Committee in Otago 2020) that will introduce something similar to the Rules for IAHR Special and Regional Conferences. The exact wording of the proposal is under discussion.

Appendix VI: IAHR Executive Committee Statement concerning Russian War against Ukraine

International Association for the History of Religions Executive Committee statement concerning Russian war against Ukraine

In the wake of renewed Russian invasion of Ukraine we express our solidarity with the suffering Ukrainian people and our academic colleagues - scholars of the study of religions, who instead of conducting research and teaching students have to seek a safe haven against the bombing of their homes and cities. The scale and brutality of the military aggression unleashed by the Russian state against its peaceful neighbour demands that we take a stance and act without delay. In strong solidarity with the suffering Ukrainian nation we recommend that all member associations of the International Association of the History of Religions:

- a) terminate all cooperation with academic institutions and scholarly associations working in the study of religions area that have links to the Russian state or receive any form of Russian state funding or recognition;
- b) allow Russian scholars to participate in the international and regional scientific events linked with IAHR only as independent scholars not representing any Russian state research and/or study institution;
- c) allow Russian scholars to publish their research results in the academic journals linked with IAHR and its member associations only as independent scholars not representing any Russian state research and/or study institution;
- d) refrain from publishing in academic journals funded by Russian state institutions.

These recommendations should come into effect immediately after the dissemination of this statement and will apply until further notice.

We also urge all IAHR national associations to discuss how their members can contribute to helping the Ukrainian state and its people at this time by sharing employment and refugee information with Ukrainian colleagues as well as considering possibilities to arrange political support for Ukraine by approaching national governments and regional organisations.

February 27, 2022

Appendix VII: Secretary General’s Report on the Process Leading up to the Issuance and the Executive Committee’s Reflections

From my review of previous IAHR Bulletins, it appears that the “IAHR Executive Committee Statement concerning the Russian War against Ukraine,” released on February 28, 2022, was the second public statement of the IAHR, the first having been “The Joint statement on the European Academy of Religion by the European Association for the Study of Religions (EASR) and the International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR)” signed by IAHR and EASR Presidents in 2017. Given the discussions and debates the issuance of the 2022 statement has sparked, both internally within the Committee and across our regional/national IAHR member networks, both the Committee and I find it imperative to elucidate the process leading up to this statement at the upcoming International Committee Meeting.

This report serves not only as an explanation but also as a historical reference for future IAHR Executive and International Committees. Recognizing the inherent subjectivity in interpreting matters of such significance, I have endeavored to maintain a neutral stance throughout this report. Where personal opinions are expressed, they have been clearly marked as such.

For transparency and collaboration, this report has been shared with the Executive Committee members, who unanimously concurred on its inclusion in the materials for the International Committee Meeting. One member who resigned from the Executive Committee was unable to engage in the discussion of this report.

* “EC” in the following report represents “the IAHR Executive Committee.”

Process Preceding the Issuance

On February 24, the very day on which the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine began, President, Secretary General and Treasurer of the IAHR sent a message of sympathy and solidarity to Ukrainian colleagues, addressing it to the President of the Ukrainian Association of Researchers of Religion.

Dear Liudmyla, dear colleagues in Kiev and Ukraine

It is with sadness and horror that we are witnessing from the distance the terrible development in Ukraine.

Unfortunately, we cannot do much to help but we want to express our deep sympathy and solidarity.

We fear the worst but hope for the best.

Tim Jensen, Satoko Fujiwara and Andrea Rota.

One EC member, who regarded the above measure as insufficient, suggested issuing a public statement. Secretary General called for an emergency online EC meeting to discuss the matter.

On February 27, the EC meeting took place for 2 and a half hours.

The meeting was attended by the leadership (President, Secretary General, Treasurer) and four other members. Unfortunately, the remaining five members were unable to attend due to the suddenness of the convening.

1. A proposal from the leadership

The leadership proposed to communicate the above message of sympathy and solidarity, with modifications if necessary, not only to the Ukrainian Association but also to all IAHR members. The other four members rejected the proposal, deeming it insufficient and urging more decisive action.

2. Drafting of Public Statement

The four members presented a pre-drafted, more assertive public statement that was debated and edited on the basis of opinions expressed in the meeting. Discussions ensued regarding the statement's issuance and the potential exclusion of Russian State-linked or funded scholars and organizations from the IAHR.

3. Concerns about Conflict of Interest:

One member raised a concern about another member's past involvement in a Russian state-funded project. That member abstained from the discussion.

4. Proposal for Additional EC Meeting:

Secretary General proposed another EC meeting to involve more, if not all, EC members in such a pivotal decision-making process.

This suggestion was rejected due to what the four considered the urgency of the situation in Ukraine.

5. Voting Compromise:

A compromise was reached to have all EC members anonymously e-vote within 16 hours on whether to release the public statement.

On February 28, the voting was closed. 6 ECs were in favor of issuing the statement, 1 was against, 4 abstained from voting, and 1 did not vote.

Secretary General then sent a message and the statement, with a personal note from President and her, to all member associations and affiliates.

Dear Officers of IAHR Member Associations and Affiliates,

In light of the ongoing Ukraine-Russia crisis, the IAHR Executive Committee has decided to publicly issue the attached statement.

Unlike most of their previous decisions, however, the IAHR Executive Committee did not agree on this statement unanimously. We took a vote. 6 out of 12 members were in favor, 1 was against to issue this statement. 4 abstained from voting and 1(one) did not vote.

As the majority were for the statement, I am sending it to you all.

Sincerely yours,

Satoko Fujiwara, Secretary General of the IAHR

Note: The IAHR President Tim Jensen and Secretary General Satoko Fujiwara would like to note that the IAHR has never issued such a political statement, and think it is most important to follow IAHR rules and procedures if such a significant change in the history of the IAHR is to be made. Although, the President and the Secretary General share deep concern for the situation in Ukraine and have sent, together with the Treasurer, a message to the president and members of the Ukrainian Association right after Russia started invasion on Thursday, they do not think that the Executive Committee alone can make this decision, and believe that an International Committee meeting would be necessary to do so.

Secretary General included the voting result for two main reasons: First, to highlight the importance of the issue, prompting officers of each member association to recognize the urgency and to consult their members for decision-making. Second, drawing a parallel to court decisions in democratic societies, she believed minority opinions (such as negative votes and abstentions) should be acknowledged and made transparent. Considering the unprecedented nature of the decision to draft and issue such a statement, her goal was to strike a delicate balance. She aimed to release the statement promptly for those in favor while also signaling that the President and Secretary General were aware of potential constitutional and procedural issues related to its nature and issuance. To achieve this, she did not include the voting results and the accompanying note in the pdf file of the statement, leaving it up to the officers of member associations and affiliates to decide whether to distribute the statement independently among their members.

Some EC members found this approach objectionable, feeling sidelined as they were not given an opportunity to consent or object to the inclusion of the voting results and the

accompanying note in the message conveying the statement.

On March 2, eight Honorary Life Members of the IAHR sent a protest message to officers of IAHR member associations/societies and affiliates. Two more HLMs signed it afterwards.

Dear members of the International Association for the History of Religions,

We, the undersigned Honorary Life Members of the IAHR, hereby protest the political statement positively approved by no more than half of the Executive Committee. It is both unconstitutional and ill-advised. It is unconstitutional because the Executive Committee does not have the right to dictate matters that the Constitution of the IAHR clearly designates as being under the expertise of the International Committee and the General Assembly. See articles 3A and 3B below. It is ill-advised because the IAHR and its members are academic organizations and not political organizations. Article 1 (see below) specifically states that “the IAHR is not a forum for confessional, apologetical, or other similar concerns.” Political ideologies, we maintain, are “other similar concerns.”

We therefore request that the Executive Committee retract the statement and that the International Committee decide at its next meeting which actions, if any, should be put into place. Until then, we do not acknowledge the above-mentioned statement.

Yours truly,

Peter Antes, Giovanni Casadio, Giulia Gasparro, Armin W. Geertz, Luther H. Martin, Jr.
Michael Pye, Hubert Seiwert, Abdulkader Tayob

On March 10, Secretary General sent a message to officers of IAHR member associations/societies and affiliates.

Dear Officers of IAHR Member Associations and Affiliates,

The IAHR Executive Committee statement on the Russian invasion of Ukraine, with its recommendation of sanctions sent to you on Feb 28, as well as with the added and separate note from the IAHR Secretary General and President, has called forth various reactions (among others, a statement of protest from several Honorary Life Members).

The reactions received force, as we see it, the Executive Committee as well as the International Committee and all the IAHR members, to thoroughly reflect on and discuss several fundamental matters related to the workings, tasks, and aims of the IAHR, including the

mandates of, respectively, the Executive Committee, the International Committee and the General Assembly. Matters, thus, linked to the very raison d'être of the IAHR and its Constitution and By-laws.

The IAHR President and Secretary General are of the opinion that it will not serve the purpose, the interest or wellbeing of the IAHR and its membership if these reflections and discussions are rushed and conducted online.

We therefore intend to discuss the above-mentioned matters first at the annual Executive Committee meeting in Cork in June, and later at the International Committee meeting which - in accordance with tradition, the Constitution and By-laws - is planned for 2023. In the meanwhile, the President and the Secretary General urge member and affiliated associations and societies, as well as individual members, to discuss these matters internally, in the hope that the discussions in the end will lead to unity rather than division.

Tim Jensen and Satoko Fujiwara

On June 26, the EC had its annual meeting in Cork, Ireland, and reflected on the issuance of the statement. To recap the points of discussion:

1. Opinions for issuing the statement

1.1 The IAHR should release a public statement effectively pressuring the Russian Federation. The IAHR's adoption of measures a)-d) in the statement will enhance this effectiveness. Member associations and affiliates are encouraged to follow suit.

1.2 While the IAHR has never issued a political statement before, the ongoing Russian aggression against Ukraine risks escalating to nuclear warfare or a third World War. Given the magnitude of this crisis – arguably the most significant in IAHR history – extraordinary procedures and measures are justified.

1.3 The conflict in Ukraine stands apart from other global conflicts, given that an IAHR national member association could cease to exist following its country's occupation.

1.4 Historical precedents, like the Taiwan situation, illustrate that IAHR decisions are sometimes influenced by external political contexts. The association has not in the past always remained neutral.

1.5 Timing is of the essence. With the possibility of Kyiv's conquest imminent, any delay could render the statement meaningless. Swift action is needed, without the luxury of time for an EC or an International Committee meeting. Any delay might be deeply regretted.

1.6 Measures a)-d) in the statement mirror the Olympic protocols and are less severe than outright sanctions, but they do ensure that the IAHR itself would not contravene international sanctions that are being introduced against Russia.

1.7 Many global academic communities and institutions took similar or even more drastic actions in response to the situation. IAHR's position is seen as moderate and grounded in its history and policies.

2. Opinions against issuing the statement

2.1 Bodies like IAHR, CIPSH, and ICSU/ISSC (CIPSH's natural/social scientific counterparts) were established post-WWII, with UNESCO's direct or indirect influence. These initiatives aimed to link scholars and scientists from both Cold War blocs. This gave rise to the academic independence of these international associations from political sway. Excluding Russian scholars and institutions goes against this core principle. While global international associations should avoid partisan political stances, individual members retain their right to political actions.

2.2 The proposed statement is inconsistent with the IAHR Constitution and By-laws:

- The only provision allowing the EC to declare an IAHR membership lapsed is based on unpaid dues, even after six consecutive notifications spanning 18 months (Rule 1c).
- The EC lacks legislative authority and cannot create new rules.

2.3 Overriding the principles outlined in 2.1 & 2.2 and adopting unprecedented extralegal measures is not absolutely necessary for several reasons:

- Even if all IAHR member associations implement measures a)-d) from the statement, it remains uncertain if Russia would halt its invasion.
- Labeling the current situation as IAHR's most significant crisis is debatable. Events such as the Cuban Missile Crisis posed a more direct nuclear threat, while conflicts such as the Vietnam War resulted in more casualties. If IAHR considers issuing a political statement now, it will have to decide on a consistent approach for similar global issues in the future.

This would necessitate criteria to gauge the gravity of situations, but only the IC has the authority to establish such guidelines.

- The EC lacked consensus in the decision-making process for the statement.

3. Other notable points:

- There were discrepancies in the perceived roles and responsibilities of different EC members, leading to tension and mistrust.
- A call for understanding the emotional backdrop of the decisions given the magnitude of the Ukraine crisis. Everyone acted with what they believed was in the best interest of IAHR.
- The possibility of support measures for Ukrainian scholars, such as travel subsidies for IAHR Conferences, was discussed.

Conclusion and recommendations

In wrapping up this report, I wish to present a set of recommendations for consideration by the International Committee.

Our topics for discussion can be categorized into two main areas: a) The respective mandates and discretionary powers of the Executive Committee, the International Committee (IC), and the General Assembly (GA). b) Matters surrounding the issuance of public statements, including whether the IAHR can release such statements, the nature of these statements (especially when they veer towards “political-ethical” subjects), and the definition of “political-ethical.”

From the Executive Committee discussion in Cork, it is evident that reaching a consensus on point b) might be challenging. While I encourage open discussions on both topics a) and b) during the upcoming International Committee Meeting in Tokyo, I believe a pragmatic next step would be to establish a clearer procedure for decision-making. This would entail defining the scope of decisions that the EC can and cannot make autonomously, those that require a majority vote, those necessitating unanimous agreement, and those that require a discussion and decision by the IC and/or the GA. A transparent decision-making process will likely reduce conflicts, especially when certain EC/IC members deem it essential for the IAHR to publicly declare its stance in future. If the IC in Tokyo concurs with this approach, they could task the EC to draft a new set of procedural rules for future decisions, with the intent of presenting them at the IC meeting in 2025.

Given the time constraints at the Tokyo meeting, and considering that most delegates will be joining online, I have a few requests for those wishing to share their views:

- Please inform me of your intention to speak by December 9 via email, allowing me to prepare a comprehensive list of speakers.
- Limit your remarks to 3 minutes during the meeting on this particular topic.
- If you wish to provide a more detailed perspective, kindly send a written statement by December 9. This will enable me to distribute it to the delegates beforehand.

Code of Conduct for IAHR Congresses and Conferences

The IAHR expects the organizers of any IAHR Congress/Conference to ensure that these events are accessible and productive for every attendee, irrespective of age, disability, gender identity, physical appearance, race, religion, belief, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, or maternity. Harassment in any form will not be tolerated. Participants are expected to adhere to the following guidelines:

Professional Behavior: Maintain a professional demeanor. Act with courtesy, respect, and awareness of cultural differences and sensitivities.

Zero Tolerance for Harassment: Harassment, sexist, racist, or exclusionary comments, or jokes are strictly prohibited. Harassment can encompass a range of actions including but not limited to sustained disruption of talks, inappropriate physical contact, unsolicited sexual attention or innuendos, intimidation, stalking, unauthorized photography or recording, and derogatory remarks about the protected characteristics mentioned above.

Constructive Communication: Engage in productive questions and discussions. Avoid insults or derogatory remarks about fellow attendees.

Appropriate Communication: All discourse should be suitable for a diverse professional audience.

Participants who are instructed to desist from any inappropriate behavior, for instance by the session chair, must comply immediately. Non-compliance or violations of these guidelines may result in the attendee being asked to exit the event, a decision that rests with the organizers.

The expectations and requirements outlined in this Code of Conduct extend beyond the physical conference venue and encompass all interactions related to the IAHR Congress/Conference, including but not limited to virtual meetings, social media engagements, social gatherings in public places and any other platforms or activities associated with the event.

Any attendee who wants to report a breach of this policy or seek assistance should confidentially contact the Secretary General of the IAHR, another IAHR officer, or a representative from the local organizing committee.

From:

dr. **Aleš Črnič**, president of the **Slovenian Association for the Study of Religions**

Date: 19 June 2023

To:

dr. **Satoko Fujiwara**, Secretary General of the **International Association for the History of Religions**

Application for membership in the International Association for the History of Religions

Dear Dr. Satoko Fujiwara, Secretary General of the IAHR.

On 8 June 2023, we founded the Slovenian Association for the Study of Religions (SASR). In the statutes adopted at our founding meeting, we expressed our will to become a member of the IAHR and EASR. Therefore, in accordance with the provisions of the IAHR Statutes (especially Article 3A), as the elected President of SASR, I am applying for the membership in the IAHR.

We have established the Slovenian national association on the basis of a tradition that started in 2004 with the establishment of the Religious Studies Section of the Slovenian Sociological Association. As it became clear during almost two decades of activity that this was not an optimal framework for the functioning of a national religious studies association for various reasons, this year we decided to establish a new society.

The founding meeting was attended by 29 Slovenian experts in the field of religious studies, the statutes of the Society were adopted and the Board was elected. We attach herewith the statutes (originally adopted in Slovene and translated into English with the help of AI-DeepL), the list of the members of the Board and their short CVs.

If there is anything else we need to do to start the membership process, I kindly ask for guidance.

Kind regards,



Dr. Aleš Črnič,

President of the Slovenian Association for the Study of Religions



To: Prof. Satoko Fujiwara – IAHR General Secretary
Members of the IAHR Executive Committee

Regarding: Membership of the Israeli Association for the Study of Religions in the IAHR

Dear Prof. Fujiwara and EC Members,

The Israeli Association for the Study of Religions (IASR) was founded in October 2015 to replace an earlier organization – The Israel Society for the study of Religions, which was headed the late Prof. R.J. Zwi Werblowsky, who also served as Secretary-General and later Vice-President of the IAHR.

The IASR aims at advancing the academic study of religions in the country by acting as a forum for relevant scholarly activities and holding relevant events, such as conferences, workshops, and seminars. The association became a registered NGO in January 2018, and has organized six successful yearly conferences that have attracted many local scholars, as well as several overseas presenters. Our sixth yearly conference took place in May at Tel Aviv University, with a focus on gendered aspects of the divine, attracting around 120 scholars, students, and members of the public.

We also provide financial and organizational support on occasion to other relevant conferences in Israel, such as a recent conference on "Yahwism under the Achaemenid Empire" in memory of the late Prof. Shaul Shaked (University of Haifa, 20-22.12.2022) and the Israeli Association for Japanese Studies' conference on "Multifaceted Divinities in Japan and Beyond" (Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 29-31 May 2016.)

For the past three years we have also awarded prizes for PhD Dissertations and MA Theses in Religious Studies. Named after the late Prof. R. J. Zwi Werblowsky. These prizes are made possible due to a generous yearly donation made to us by his children.

We feel that all these developments secure the IASR's future so that we are now able to apply for membership in the IAHR. We are eager to contribute to the organization's success and activities, as well as to enable our members to utilize the advantages that the IAHR offers to scholars whose national associations form part of IAHR.

With every good wish,

Prof. Ithamar Gruenwald – President, Israeli Association for the Study of Religions.



President Prof. Emeritus Ithamar Gruenwald (Tel Aviv University)
Secretary Dr. Shai Feraro (University of Haifa and the Open University of Israel)
Treasurer Prof. Hanoch Ben-Pazi (Bar Ilan University)

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Dr. Adam Klin Oron (Van Leer Jerusalem Institute)

The Students Representative

Ms. Karen Levisohn (Ben Gurion University of the Negev)