



IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement September
2021

Introduction

To Officers and Individual Members of IAHR Member Societies and Affiliates Dear Colleagues, I hope you are all well despite the difficult circumstances the world continues to face.

The IAHR Executive Committee (EC) had its annual meeting on August 31, during the 2021 EASR Conference held in Pisa, Italy, as an IAHR Regional Conference. The EC meeting was originally planned as a physical gathering but changed to a hybrid format because some of the EC members, including myself, could not travel to Pisa.

This *e-Bulletin Supplement* brings you the results of the meeting and other news.

Most importantly, regarding our 2025 World Congress, the EC meeting could not reach a conclusion as to where to hold it. Due to COVID-19 and other emerging concerns, it has increasingly become difficult to find a place that meets several essential criteria, including safety and IT infrastructure, in addition to regular criteria such as the quality of the academic program, financial stability and geographical rotation. Therefore, we, the EC, have decided to call for bids more widely and extensively (see #1).

The date and location of our intermediate International Committee meeting will depend on the location of the 2025 World Congress. Therefore, we have not decided upon where, but it should be held in summer, 2023, during an IAHR Special or Regional Conference.

While the planning of IAHR conferences and meetings has been moving slowly, our publication activities having been going forward steadily. As previously announced, Prof. Gregory D. Alles stepped down from the *NVMEN* Managing Editor position in December 2020, and Prof. Ülo Valk has taken over the role. Let us extend our heartfelt thanks to Prof. Alles for his hard and caring work as the editor. The other managing editor, Prof. Laura Feldt will step down in January 2022, and be succeeded by Prof. Nickolas Roubekas. Prof. Roubekas is an assistant professor at the University of Vienna. We have to add that we could not manage to strike gender and regional balances in the journal's editorship, as it was very difficult to find an eligible scholar who is not only committed to *NVMEN* but also has experience as a journal editor and specializes both in our tradition of the history of religions and in new theories of the study of religion. Let us welcome Prof. Roubekas, who has already started working as a trainee editor.

In addition, this *e-Bulletin Supplement* includes:

-Information on the documentation of the canceled Otago World Congress (#2)

-IAHR conferences and events (#3)

-Announcement of the fifth Women Scholars Network webinar (#4)

-Information on an open access option for the IAHR Book Series (#5)

-Report on an exhibition of Annemarie Schimmel, given by Ms Paulina Rinne (M.A.) and Prof. Dr. Edith Franke in Marburg (#6). As Prof. Dr. Schimmel is a former IAHR president, and its first woman president, the IAHR supported the exhibition, which was opened in spring this year.

Last but not least: officers and members of the IAHR had access to a special folder with all the documents pertaining to the IAHR Extended Executive Committee meeting held in Delphi in September 2019. You thus also have had the possibility to read Prof. Donald Wiebe's letter of resignation as an IAHR Honorary Life Member as well as the IAHR President's detailed response (and Prof. Wiebe's rejoinder).

Further to this Prof. Wiebe, in an article in *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* (32/2, 150–158), elaborated on his criticism of several aspects of the Extended Executive Committee meeting as well as of the decisions taken *after* the meeting by the Executive Committee. The decisions had been communicated directly to the invited participants to the extended meeting, Prof. Wiebe included.

I, with the President, was invited to respond to Prof. Wiebe's criticism in the same issue of the *MTSR* and we did so in line with previous responses by the President, Prof. Jensen, but in even more detail ([32/2, 159–184](#)).

Then, in August 2021, Prof. Wiebe published a whole book with his criticism of the mentioned matters. The IAHR leadership does not want to once again comment on all the claims and arguments made by Prof. Wiebe in an even more detailed way in this book. However, since IAHR members, be it officers or individual members of IAHR member associations, may not have read or forgotten the abovementioned documents and responses, including the factual decisions taken by the Executive Committee after the extended meeting, the IAHR leadership wants to make sure that IAHR members know that nothing has

changed since those decisions were communicated to the membership at large in the *IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement, November 2019*, pp. 6-8. The decisions taken and discussed by the Executive Committee were and are the ones communicated here. Nothing else.

The IAHR EC, thus, has not decided, nor even briefly discussed, as claimed several times in this book by Prof. Wiebe, to turn the IAHR into a "World Academy of Religion". It has not discussed nor taken a decision, as claimed by Prof. Wiebe on the back cover of the hard copy version of his book, "[...]" to include in its mandate promotion of theological, normative, and applied studies of religion."

Let us also, with reference to the IAHR Constitution and By-Laws, stress that it is *not* up to the Executive Committee to make any decisions as regards its "mandate". The "mandate" of the Executive Committee is prescribed by the Constitution and By-Laws, and changes to the Constitution and By-Laws are in the hands of the IAHR International Committee and General Assembly. The Executive Committee can only "make a decision" to make a recommendation to the International Committee, and, with regard to the Constitution, the International Committee can then adopt and support such a recommendation (or not), and then "send" it on (or not) to the General Assembly for it to make a decision.

Moreover: the so-called Extended Executive Committee meeting in Delphi could make no decisions whatsoever. It was a consultative body only, and it could make suggestions for recommendations to the IAHR Executive Committee to consider. Yet it could not make it compulsory for the Executive Committee to discuss or do anything against its will.

So, please be concerned only about the decisions that have actually been taken by the Executive Committee, - and that can in fact be taken by the Executive Committee.

Please share this *IAHR e - Bulletin Supplement, September 2021* with the members of your respective national or regional IAHR member associations and societies. It is most important for the well-functioning of the IAHR that not only officers but also all individual members of your organization are continuously being informed and updated on IAHR-related matters.

If you have any questions regarding the IAHR, please do not hesitate to contact me (fujiwara@l.u-tokyo.ac.jp).

Respectfully yours,

Satoko Fujiwara, IAHR Secretary General Tokyo, September 15, 2021

Cover picture shows what we have been missing since last year: Dinner and conversation with IAHR friends & colleagues.

"Reception of Prince Rima Kasa in the 'Kurhotel,' Marburg 1960" [Empfang Prinz Rima Kasa im Kurhotel 1960], provided by Dr. Martin Kraatz. From left to right: Gershom Scholem, Annemarie Schimmel, Raphael Judah (R.J.) Zwi Werblowsky, Marcel Simone (Strasburg). Courtesy of Prof. Dr. Edith Franke and Paulina Rinne at Philipps-University Marburg.

Cover picture of the e-Bulletin Supplement, December 2020 was from Amsterdam 1950.



1. Call for Bids for Hosting the IAHR XXII World Congress 2025

It has been a normal procedure to call for bids or “letters of interest” for hosting the next IAHR Quinquennial World Congress before its previous Congress takes place. However, throughout 2020 I hesitated to issue such a call when the threat of COVID-19 was spreading all over the world. Instead, President Tim Jensen and I approached several member associations to see if they would be able to host the 2025 World Congress. Although we could not have immediate positive reactions, three associations showed interest in the summer of 2021. I asked them to submit a proposal by the end of August, so that the IAHR Executive Committee would be able to examine the proposals during our annual meeting on August 31.

As mentioned in the preface of this e-Bulletin, we could not reach a decision because there were many additional things to take into consideration regarding the 2025 Congress, which were not necessarily described sufficiently in the submitted proposals.

Therefore, I herewith re-open possibilities to all the IAHR member societies and associations and ask the officers of the interested members to send me a bid by email.

A basic proposal includes:

- Structure of local organizing committee
- Congress program & format
- Congress theme
- Proposed timeline
- Preliminary budget
- Conference venue
- Accommodation

It can also include:

- ICT Infrastructure (whether the venue can host a large hybrid event, if necessary)
- Recent large conferences hosted by related international associations
- Institutional supports and conference organizing company information
- Travel & visa information
- City attractions & tourism For details, please look at [“A Basic Framework for Running an IAHR World Congress”](#) on the IAHR website. Please also note that Rule #1 of [“Rules and Procedures for IAHR Regional Conferences”](#) is also applicable to a World Congress.

Deadline for a bid: December 31, 2021



2. IAHR 2020 Congress Record

Prof. Will Sweetman, the Congress Director, has composed [“Records of Papers and Panels Accepted for Presentation at the XXIInd World Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions.”](#) It is available at the IAHR website. We would like to express our gratitude to Prof. Sweetman for this important documentation. We also hope there will be another chance in the future to hold an IAHR World Congress in New Zealand.



3. IAHR Special/Regional Conferences 2021-22

Due to continued COVID-19 and other concerns, hosts of the IAHR Special/Regional Conferences planned for 2021 have made the following changes.

- Special Conferences

-European Society for the Study of Western Esotericism (ESSWE) & University College Cork: “Esotericism, Art and Creativity,” 8th ESSWE Conference, Cork, Ireland --Postponed to July 5-7, 2022.

-British Association for the Study of Religions (BASR) & the University of Edinburgh: “From Religious Studies to the Study of Religion/s: Disciplinary Futures for the 21st century,” annual BASR Conference, September 6-8, 2021, Edinburgh, U.K. --Held online on the same days.

- Regional Conferences

-South and Southeast Asian Association for the Study of Culture and Religion (SSEASR) & University of Yangon: “Indigenous Civilisations and Peoples in South and Southeast Asia: Connecting Past with Present and Beyond,” 9th SSEASR Conference, July 13-19, 2021, Yangon, Myanmar --Canceled.

-Italian Society for the History of religions/Società Italiana di Storia delle Religioni (SISR), European Association for the Study of Religions (EASR) & the University of Pisa: “Resilient Religion,” 18th EASR Conference, August 30-September 3, 2021, Pisa, Italy --Rescheduled and held hybrid.

We are especially concerned about the host of the Myanmar conference and her colleagues.

- Special/Regional Conferences for 2022

Therefore, in 2022, we will have the postponed Special Conference hosted by ESSWE and a Regional Conference hosted by EASR, June 27-July 1, both at University College Cork in Ireland.

NAASR (North American Association for the Study of Religion), with AAR (American Academy of Religion) and SMER (Mexican Society for the Study of Religions), is also planning an IAHR Special Conference for 2022.

Since there are fewer Special/Regional Conferences in 2021, we all the more encourage IAHR member associations and affiliates to share their activities by exhibiting their webinars and awards information on the IAHR website. Please look at our last e-Bulletin for details.



4. Fifth IAHR Women Scholars Network Webinar

I am pleased to announce that the fifth IAHR Women Scholars Network webinar will be held on October 4th as follows.



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS
WOMEN SCHOLARS NETWORK WEBINAR

QUEER AND TRANS STUDIES IN RELIGION: AN INTRODUCTION

DR. MELISSA M. WILCOX
Professor and Holstein Family and Community Chair of Religious Studies
University of California, Riverside, USA

October 4 -- UTC 4pm
9am Los Angeles || 12pm New York || 1pm Rio de Janeiro || 5pm London || 6pm Barcelona ||
7pm Nairobi || 7pm Moscow || 9:30pm New Delhi || 10pm Dhaka || 11pm Bangkok

Moderators: Amy L. Allocco (Elon University, USA) and Milda Ališauskienė (Vytautas
Magnus University, Lithuania)

Zoom Meeting ID: 998 5996 5436
Passcode: 170043



5. IAHR Book Series: Open Access Option Available

Equinox, the publisher of the IAHR Book Series, now offers an open access option, expecting that more proposals will be forthcoming.

The average cost for an open access monograph of up to 256 pages by a single author is £4500 (= ca 6250 USD = 5275 Euro) and £5000 (= ca 6950 USD = 5860 Euro) for edited books.

For details, please contact the editors of the Book Series, Prof. Katja Triplett and Prof. Alexandra Grieser.



6. Report: Annemarie Schimmel Exhibition

Annemarie Schimmel – female scientist, linguistic genius, poetess and “friend collector”

[Annemarie Schimmel - Wissenschaftlerin, Sprachgenie, Dichterin und „Freundesammlerin“]

Following a suggestion by representatives of the WSN and IAHR, a research and exhibition project dedicated to the scholarly significance of Prof. Dr. Annemarie Schimmel started one year ago in the Department of the Study of Religions in Marburg, Germany. One outcome of this project is a small exhibition located in the “Religionskundliche Sammlung” (Museum of Religions), Philipps University of Marburg which asks, what kind of perspectives women had in an androcentric environment like the academic world while focusing upon the study of religions in the second half of the 20th century. It does so, using the example of the internationally renowned Islamic and religious studies scholar Annemarie Schimmel (1922-2003), her life's work and her connections to the Museum of Religions and the Department of Study of Religions, Philipps University. In contrast to today, at the beginning of her career, it was uncommon for women in Germany to obtain a doctorate or habilitation.

Nevertheless, Annemarie Schimmel is one of the very few women who received their doctorate in Marburg and one of three who received the doctorate *scientiarium religionum* under Prof. Dr. Friedrich Heiler (1954). As it was common in those days, Heiler, in his position as Director of the Museum of Religions and head of the department, suggested Annemarie Schimmel as his successor to his professorship to the University. Nevertheless, this proposal was rejected and she did not succeed Heiler, but had to assert herself against the pressures and exclusions of patriarchal power structures at various German universities. Only in the USA did she receive the academic recognition she deserved, owing to a professorship sponsored by the Pakistani state. The Xth conference of the International Association of the History of Religions (IAHR) helped her to gain international fame. It took place in Marburg in 1960 and Annemarie Schimmel, together with Friedrich Heiler, Martin Kraatz (a student at that time and later curator of the museum) and Anni Boymann (Heiler's then secretary), were significantly involved in the organization of that event.

Later, Annemarie Schimmel became the first president of the IAHR (1980-1990); no other female scholar became president of the IAHR until Rosalind Hackett in 2005. With her amiable and multi-faceted personality, Annemarie Schimmel remains one of the few women who were able to stand up to patriarchal power and the social structures associated with this. She pursued her own path through academia. Her journeys have taken her to numerous destinations from Europe and the Near and Middle East to Pakistan and Japan. Her scientific work, her linguistic talent and her closeness to and empathy for Islamic culture make her a central pioneer and classic in the study of religions. The exhibition concept is honoring her as one of the pioneers of the research in the history of religions and is trying to make her visible as a role model and impulse for today's female scholars. The exhibition is based on preliminary work carried out in the context of a PhD research project on Annemarie Schimmel, which Paulina Rinne is conducting since summer 2020.

[The exhibition](#) was successfully opened with a [digitally vernissage](#) on the 21st of April 2021. Prof. Dr. Edith Franke, head of the department for the study of religions in Marburg, led through the evening. Welcome speeches were given by Prof. Dr. Christl Maier (director of the Center of Gender Studies, Philipps University Marburg), Dr. Nina Schumacher (equal opportunities representative, Philipps University Marburg), Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Michael Pye (former general secretary and president, IAHR) as well as by Prof. Dr. Satoko Fujiwara (general secretary IAHR, WSN, University of Tokyo) and Dr. Chie Warashina (Tokai University). Prof. Dr. Dr. Peter Antes (former president of the IAHR, former chairman of the German Society of the History of Religions, Leibniz University Hannover) took part in an interactive conversation with Prof. Dr. Edith Franke about his personal impressions and memories of Annemarie Schimmel. Dr. Gudrun Schubert (Schubert-Durand Foundation) then addressed Schimmel's love of books and her very own approach to Islamic poetry and mysticism. A first (albeit virtual) glimpse into the exhibition was also possible, as Paulina Rinne (curator of the exhibition and doctoral student at the department of the study of religions) presented important stations in Annemarie Schimmel's life based on selected objects. The relevance and implications of Schimmel's biography and research for today's scholars was the topic of the concluding panel discussion with Prof. Dr. Rosalind Hackett (former president of the IAHR, co-founder of

WSN; University of Tennessee) and Dr. Arezou Azad (University of Oxford). Anyone interested in learning more about Annemarie Schimmel, her research in religious studies, and her extracurricular work can visit the special exhibition in the rooms of the Religionskundliche Sammlung as soon as this is possible again under the pandemic regulations.

The project was funded by the International Association for the History of Religions, the Women Scholars Network, the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, the Research Center for Gender Studies as well as the Equal Opportunities Representatives of the Philipps-University.

Paulina Rinne (M.A.), Prof. Dr. Edith Franke

