

RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS

A Journal in the Study of Religion

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Executive Editors:

ARVIND SHARMA,
Religious Studies,
University of Sydney,
Sydney, Australia, 2006

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There are not so many journals promoting a study of religion that one more is too many. The discipline is too recent of arrival in our academies for that. This is especially so in Australia where the discipline is just beginning. Hence, an initial need for a forum for scholars in Religion, as distinct, say, from Theology or Philosophy, here in Australia, is plain to see — the need any academic community with definable boundaries of interest, even perhaps, of geography, has for a venue through which creative exchange may happen in print. No such forum or venue exists in Australia, and this Journal hopes in some measure to provide one.

Naturally, contributions from places other than this one will be encouraged, indeed, sought. There could be no other way to promote a more wide understanding of Religion in Australia, than this. The Journal, in other words, though meant in part to be the product of a need felt among Australian "religionists", must, by dint of that very fact, take its place beside other International Journals in the field.

The title is indicative of a certain stress — the desire of the editors to provide a venue for a wider understanding of Religious *knowledge*, of, that is, the "truth" or "wisdom" Religions seek to convey. Many Journals pride themselves on their standard of scholarly excellence, and often, it would appear, on that alone. Our hope is, whilst sacrificing nothing of substance in scholarship, nonetheless to produce, indeed, promote something more — writings which, in being read, effectively stimulate insight. We express this hope to indicate our earnest policy of producing something that matters, and not yet another place for scholarly self-indulgence. We are concerned, in other words, not merely with knowledge of religion, but as much with religious knowledge.

The first few issues, indicative of the approach of the Journal, included papers by:—

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ERRATA

The title of D.P. Brewster's article, Vol. 3, No. 1, was incorrectly printed in the Contents. It should have read:

“Murder in Baghdad: A Modern Egyptian Drama of Al-Ḥallāj by S. Abd Al-Ṣabūr*”.

EDITORIAL

It is with a mixture of sadness and gratitude that we note our lead-article to be a piece by Professor MacLaurin, whose contribution to Semitic Studies in this country over a considerable time has been vast. Sadness, because it appears after the too recent death of this fine scholar, itself too soon after his richly deserved retirement. Gratitude, in that we are able in this way to pay our small tribute to the work and person of Professor MacLaurin, whose involvement in Religious Studies was no less than in Semitic Studies more widely, which he saw very much in the light of the former. And whether the piece here included ranks among his finest, it clearly indicates these involvements.

There is more Semitic scholars in Religion Studies academics in this country owe to these involvements than they may ever realize, or acknowledge. It is interesting in this light to note that four other contributors to this issue are from Australian academics, or were — Alan Unterman, an Australian now in Manchester; David Trigger (once in Darwin, now in Queensland); and Smolicz and Crotty (both, Adelaide).

You will note we have developed our evolving policy of devoting most issues to a single theme or tradition, a step further, by acknowledging the contents — Judaism — on the cover. We have been fortunate in getting so many high-quality pieces so readily together, as Judaism is notoriously poorly served in the pages of most Religion journals. The journals can't be blamed; the pieces, we have discovered, simply aren't forthcoming. We hope this issue redresses things a little.

For those with an eye to the future, our next issue (Vol. 4, No. 1) will be devoted to Mysticism.

