
Carole M. Cusack and Rachelle Scott

EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

Carole M. Cusack is Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Sydney. She trained as a medievalist and her doctorate was published as *Conversion Among the Germanic Peoples* (Cassell, 1998). Since the late 1990s she has taught in contemporary religious trends. She is the author of *Invented Religions: Imagination, Fiction and Faith* (Ashgate, 2010).

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Rachelle Scott studies the history of Theravada Buddhism in South and Southeast Asia, with an emphasis on contemporary Buddhism in Thailand. Her first book, *Nirvana for Sale?: Buddhism, Wealth, and the Dhammakāya Temple* (SUNY Press, 2009), examined contemporary debates over monastic and lay wealth in Thailand.

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The first issue of *Fieldwork in Religion* for 2021 contains five articles on a variety of methodological considerations and fieldwork contexts that are of interest to researchers in the field of religious studies.

The first article is by Zoe Alderton and Christopher Hartney (University of Sydney), and is titled “Anzac Celebration During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Observations from Fieldwork in Katoomba, New South Wales”. This builds on an earlier publication by these authors (with Daniel J. Tower), “Fieldwork on Anzac Day: A Performance Analysis of the Dawn Service and Other Rituals, 25 April 2015”, which appeared in *Fieldwork in Religion* 11(2) in 2016. This latest research focuses on the difficulties attendant upon enacting rituals of the “state cult” of Anzac and the commemoration of the Australian (and New Zealand) war dead during the Covid-19 lockdown in 2019 in the Blue Mountains town of Katoomba. The ceremonies of Anzac Day had been cancelled in 1919 due to the Spanish ‘flu pandemic, and in 1942 due to the potential threat of a Japanese attack. The lack of collective assembly and participation in 2019 was striking, but violation of restrictions was

limited. The authors speculate that five years of Great War commemorations may have lessened the appeal of the 2019 Anzac Day observances.

The second contribution, “Charisma—Elusive or Explanatory? A Critical Examination of Leadership in New Religious Movements”, is by George Chryssides (York St John University). The four leaders discussed are Charles Taze Russell (International Bible Students Association, the ancestor of the Jehovah’s Witnesses), Sun Myung Moon (Unification Church), Kelsang Gyatso (New Kadampa Buddhism), and the anonymous female founder of the Church of Almighty God, a mainland Chinese new Christian sect. Chryssides argues that these individuals do not have shared qualities that render them charismatic, and that their charismatization is largely the result of a coalescence of the attitudes and expectations of their followers, hagiographical texts, and media and publicity portrayals, which intensify the special status of the founder/leader. The lenses through which these figures are viewed include Max Weber’s ideas on charisma, Eileen Barker’s notion of charismatization, and the perspectives of anti-cultists like Margaret Singer. The post-charismatic leader bureaucratization of new religious movements is also touched upon.

The next article, “Talking about Sexuality within Catholic Consecrated Communities in Poland”, is by Wojciech Sadlon and Marcin Jewdokimow (Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University, Warsaw). This research aims to shift the discussion of sexuality and sex in Catholic religious communities of monks and nuns from being a discourse focused on sexual abuse or chastity to a more open conversation. The methods used are of interest; a traditional survey (with 1,543 respondents) is combined with the world café method, where participants talk openly around tables (with 92 subjects). The fieldwork was conducted in 2019 and 2020 and supported by the National Science Centre. The discussion was sensitive and intimate, and a particular constraint involved navigating normative expectations (theological and institutional) of sexuality and celibacy with the personal accommodations and understandings of individuals surveyed or interviewed. The respondents articulated problems, challenges and opportunities that were correlated with gender (female religious being more inclined to argue for de-privatization and acknowledgement of sexuality, while male religious emphasized the personal and private aspects of sexuality in the consecrated life).

The fourth contribution, “Celebrating the Construction of the Most Important Pilgrimage Centre in Modern Greece: The Festival of the Finding of the Holy Icon (*Eortē Agias Euresēōs*) or the Lanterns (*Phanarakia*)”, is by Evy Johanne Håland (Independent Scholar, Norway). This is a study of a pilgrimage site on the island of Tinos, where in 1823 an icon of the *Panagia* (Virgin Mary) was found after a local nun, Pelagia, received visions relating to its location. This event occurred during the Greek War of Independence, and the festival in honour of it, The Finding of

the Holy Icon on 30 January, is the subject of Håland's field research. The descriptions of the festival are detailed and intricate, and are richly illustrated by the author's photographs. Themes of ancestor worship, sacralized geography, and the participation of children in the religious life of the island are canvassed.

The final article is by Ahmed Kulanić (Institute for Bosniak Studies, Sarajevo), and is titled "Survey of Religious Movements, Communities and Churches in Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Socio-political Perspective and Insight into Public Attitudes". This valuable study situates Bosnia-Herzegovina at the crossroads of east and west, and explores the diversity of religions found there. Quantitative data from a research survey was gathered, and in the results the Abrahamic faiths Christianity and Islam are prominent, as would be expected, but the diversity contained within them is interesting and includes new religious groups like Ahmadiyya and the Jehovah's Witnesses. Issues such as the capacity of religions to create unity and division; the relationships religious groups have with charities and NGOs; and the discipline of sociology in the former Yugoslavia are also briefly discussed.

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