Editor's Preface: Looking Back and Looking Forward

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Postscripts was launched in 2005, under the editorship of Elizabeth A. Castelli. It was conceived as a journal that would take seriously the interdisciplinary study of religion, but with a specific focus on sacred texts as part of this complex matrix. While the academic study of scriptures has traditionally tended to focus on the origins, context, and interpretation of such texts, *Postscripts* was envisioned as a place where the use of these texts—both in historical contexts and in the contemporary world—would be brought to the fore. In the inaugural editorial, Castelli wrote,

Postscripts hopes to bridge academic worlds that have often been artificially separated: the study of sacred texts and the study of religion and its effects in the contemporary world. The study of sacred texts—of “scripture”—has historically been a highly technical, specialized, and elite practice, held in preserve by religious authorities and professional scholars. As important as this technical and specialized work is, it represents only a small sliver of the rich panoply of engagements with texts that are foundational in the lives of individuals and communities around the world. *Postscripts* will focus on both historical and contemporary engagements with “scripture,” exploring in new ways questions of authority and influence, interpretation and appropriation, scriptural reasoning and the complex ways in which individuals and groups mediate (and are mediated by) sacred texts. The journal will emphasize the “afterlives” of sacred texts, their mediation with and through other cultural and social forms. ... *Postscripts* aims beyond questions of reception and influence: “post-” has its most ordinary resonances in the sense of “after,” but we hope to call up its other resonances: “beyond,” “as a result of,” “having traveled through.” Hence, the journal hopes to open up the very organizing categories of “scripture” and “sacred text” to critical engagement and supplement: looking not only at writing, but also at the oral, the performative, and the visual.

(Castelli 2005, 5–6)

Fifteen years later, we are committed to carrying on this original vision of *Postscripts* and the contribution that this journal makes to the academic study of religion and sacred texts. As we celebrate this anniversary, however, we are also looking toward the future. The original subtitle for

Postscripts was “The Journal of Sacred Texts and Contemporary Worlds.” *Postscripts* has a long history of publishing research on the contemporary use of sacred texts, but throughout the journal’s history there has also been more historically-focused research exploring the cultural reception of such texts. To account for this, and to make it clear that such work is welcome in the journal, we have recently expanded the subtitle to *Postscripts: The Journal of Sacred Texts, Cultural Histories, and Contemporary Contexts*. This change was made in part to reflect the broad-ranging research that the journal has published since its inception. However, we also want to highlight that the journal is interested in more historically-oriented examples of the use and reception of sacred texts. “Cultural Histories and Contemporary Contexts” paints a picture of how these texts have been and continue to be employed, and our vision is that *Postscripts* will continue to be an important vehicle for disseminating this and other interdisciplinary research, particularly that which questions and expands our very ideas of what constitutes something as a “sacred text.”

As *Postscripts* looks to the future, I want to acknowledge the work of those who have made the journal what it is today. In particular, I want to thank the previous editors of *Postscripts*: Elizabeth Castelli, James Crossley, and Phillip Tite. I would also like to thank the members of the Society for Comparative Research on Iconic and Performative Texts (SCRIPT). A number of issues of the journal have highlighted work that originated in SCRIPT conferences and gatherings; this has been a fruitful cooperation that we hope will continue into the future.

Postscripts is always happy to receive submissions of original, critical work that takes up the question of the ongoing reception and mobilization of sacred texts (broadly understood) in areas ranging from contemporary politics, to culture, to social life, as well as historical examples that reflect this diverse usage. The journal also pays particular attention to thinking broadly and critically about the very category of “sacred texts.”

More specifically, *Postscripts* is interested in research that explores:

- Contemporary uses of and engagement with sacred texts (broadly understood)
- Scriptures and their cultural histories, particularly forms of reception that go beyond the mainstream exegetical and interpretive traditions
- Sacred texts and cultural criticism
- Materiality and sacred texts

- Performative and iconic dimensions of scriptures
- Theoretical reflections on scriptures
- Classification and categorization of sacred texts
- The arts and sacred texts
- The intersections of religion, textuality, media, and mediation across disciplinary boundaries

The journal also welcomes curated collections of essays, alternative formats such as moderated forums on specific issues in the field, and although we do not publish book reviews, we welcome review essays that assess the state of scholarship in the field. Please do not hesitate to contact the editor should you have any questions, queries, or proposals.

Reference

Castelli, Elizabeth A. 2005. "Editor's Preface." *Postscripts* 1(1): 5–6.