



CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

14-15 JUNE 2017 | LSE, LONDON



A Message from the Convenors

The greatest enemy we face in these turbulent times is ignorance. It is ignorance that makes believers susceptible to radicalisation. It is ignorance that turns neighbours against each other. It is ignorance that makes us suspicious, fearful and hopeless. We, the convenors of the conference 'Religious Imaginations and Global Transitions: How narratives of faith are shaping today's world,' hope that we can make a contribution towards countering that ignorance. We have brought together scholars and practitioners from ten countries to present papers with the aim of furthering better understanding of the Other.

'We are all increasingly aware that religion is a crucial element in many of the challenges facing the world today,' Dr James Walters, the Director of the LSE Faith Centre wrote about the conference. 'But the way in which narratives of faith can shape the individual and the collective imagination is often not well understood, particularly in parts of the world that had assumed religion was in inexorable decline. We hope this conference will contribute to a richer understanding of the imaginative capacities of religion, both as a cause of conflict but equally as the driver of a peaceful shared future.'

On the evening of the 14th June, a concert curated by Professor Mena Mark Hanna, Dean of the Barenboim-Said Akademie, will be held at Holy Trinity, Sloane Square. The concert will feature works by Uģis Prauliņš, Maurice Ravel, Salamone Rossi and Hanna himself, each exploring religious imaginations in music with an emphasis on the shared liturgical and musical traditions of the Abrahamic faiths. As the concert falls during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, the evening will conclude with an iftar in the church to celebrate the breaking of the fast.

'The Book of Psalms, attributed to David, are early evidence of religious creativity and inspiration—songs and poems meant as praise, as reflections, and (sometimes) as utterances of frustration. The Qur'an refers to Psalms given to David as inspired gifts from above (Sura 4, ayah 163; Sura 17, ayah 55), and in both the Jewish and Christian liturgical tradition, Psalms are used as they were originally intended: as an encounter between language and voice.

'The concert uses the setting and performance of Psalms as its fulcrum: Psalms sung in traditional and ancient cantorial settings, Psalms set by the Renaissance Jewish composer Salomone Rossi, and cantorial praise used as inspiration for modern composers.' Professor Hanna.

Gingko Trustee Dr Barbara Schwepcke further stresses the concert's importance: 'We have an opportunity to listen to music from the Eastern and Western tradition as an expression of religious imagination. We believe that in order to achieve better understanding we have to learn to listen to each other'.

The former Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks once wrote 'Faith is God's call to see his trace in the face of the Other'. In that spirit, the LSE Faith Centre and Gingko have brought you all together and say to all: Peace be with you! Shalom! Salaam Alaikum!

Professor Mena Mark Hanna, Dr Barbara Haus Schwepcke and Dr James Walters

Wednesday 14th June

- 9.00 Registration at Clement House, Aldwych
- 9.30 Welcome: **James Walters** on behalf of the LSE Faith Centre and his fellow convenors, and **Lord David Owen** on behalf of Ginkgo
- 9.45 **Karen Armstrong OBE FRSL** introduced by James Walters
What Can Our Scriptures Tell Us?
- 11.00 Coffee
- 11.30 **Mona Siddiqui OBE FRSE FRSA** introduced by Barbara Schwepcke
Time, Space and the Ethics of Religious Narratives
- 12.30 Lunch
- 13.45 Short papers in three parallel tracks: track I, II, III
- Track I: *Reimagining Doctrine* – Chair: **Melanie Gibson**
- Kamran Bashir** (Victoria, Canada): Reimagining the formative moments of Islam
Mohammed Nizami (Warwick): Reimagining Doctrines: Maturing religious narratives for the formulation of an Islamic political theology
Abby Day (Goldsmith): Believing in belief
Elena Arlyapova (Moscow): Interreligious relations in contemporary Russia (on the materials of the cities of Moscow, Kazan and Ufa)
- Track II: *Challenges of Modern Faith* – Chair: **Gianluca Parolin**
- Eileen Barker** (LSE): New religious movements as resources in a changing world
Jamal Thahir (Hyderabad): Muslim movements as Interpreters of Islamic Principles: Imagination of a New social and political order in South India
Oliver Davies (Kings, London): Religions and the scientific imagination
Catriona Robertson (Christian Muslim Forum, London): Who do you trust? Enabling cross-religious involvement in public life for a peaceful and equitable future
- Track III: *Making of Modern Religion* – Chair: **Hugh Kennedy**
Hussein Omar: The invention of ‘minority’ and the making of sectarianism in the Arab world
Adrian Gregory: The birth of Christian Zionism and the origins of the Balfour Declaration
Patrick Houlihan: Roman Catholicism and the origins of human rights
- 15.15 Coffee
- 15.45 **Craig Calhoun** introduced by James Walters
The World Is More Than it May Seem

- 17.00 Close of sessions at the LSE and transfer to Holy Trinity Sloane Square
- 18.00 Doors open, Holy Trinity Sloane Street
- 19.00 **Mena Mark Hanna** introduced by Father Nicholas Wheeler
Music and the Religious Imagination (pre-concert talk)
- 19.30 Concert at Holy Trinity Sloane Square
- Coptic Psalm Cantillation
Mena Mark Hanna
- Missa Rigensis, Uģis Prauliņš
Choir of Holy Trinity conducted by Oliver Lallemant
- Wadi-n-Natrun, Mena Mark Hanna
Rohan de Saram, Cello
- INTERVAL
- Hebrew Psalm Cantillation
Cantor Paul Heller
- Psalms, Salamone Rossi
Choir of Holy Trinity conducted by Oliver Lallemant
- Deux Melodies Hebraïques, Maurice Ravel
Rohan de Saram, Cello and Peter Foggitt, piano
- 21.19 Call to Prayer followed by Iftar celebration in the church
(there are segregated spaces available for prayer).

Thursday 15th June

- 9.00 Registration
- 9.30 **H.E. John Casson** introduced by James Walters
- 9.50 **Bishop Anba Angaelos OBE** introduced by Mena Mark Hanna
- 11.00 Coffee
- 11.30 Short papers in three parallel tracks: track IV, V, VI

Track IV: *Global Issues in Interfaith Relations* – Chair: **John McHugo**

Mohammed Gamal (Al-Azhar, Cairo): Rethinking Islamic orthodoxy, with special reference to the theory of abrogation '*naskh*'

John Fahy (Cambridge/Qatar): The field of interfaith in the Middle East

Dimitri Cavouras (Alexandria): Jabaliya Bedouins and St Catherine Monks: At the crossroad of dialogue yet at the mercy of geopolitics

Haydar al-Lami (Aga Khan University): Religious History and Imagined Identity: the case of Iraq-Iran War (1980-1988)

Track V: *Faith and Diplomacy* – Chair: **Sue Breeze**

Fabio Petito (Sussex) & **Scott Thomas** (Bath): Religious Engagement in International Relations: From problem-solving theory to prophetic innovation

Jenna Reinbold (Colgate, USA): Human rights as a narrative of faith

Magdalena Delgado (LSE): Discerning the link between normative notions of Islam and Western populism

Track VI: *Religion and Sustainability* – Chair: **Fatima El-Issawi**

Khushwant Singh (Rat der Religionen, Frankfurt): Spiritual transitions: Natural development is like good medicine – It has no side effects

Emmanuel Karagiannis (Kings College, London): Understanding the Islamic Perspective on Environment – Doctrine and Practice

Caleb Gordon (Yale Divinity School): The Relationship of Ecological Science to Christian Narrative

- 13.00 Lunch
- 14.00 **Naftali Brawer** introduced by James Walters
Between the Ideal and the Real: A Diaspora Jew's Relationship with Israel
- 15.15 Coffee

15.45

Imagining Religious Leadership in the Future – Chair: **Barbara Schwepcke**

Abu Bakr Muhammad (OneUmmah, Nigeria): The role of religious leaders in ensuring a non-violent future

Roland Stolte (House of One, Berlin): Introducing the Foundation House of One, Bangui, CAR

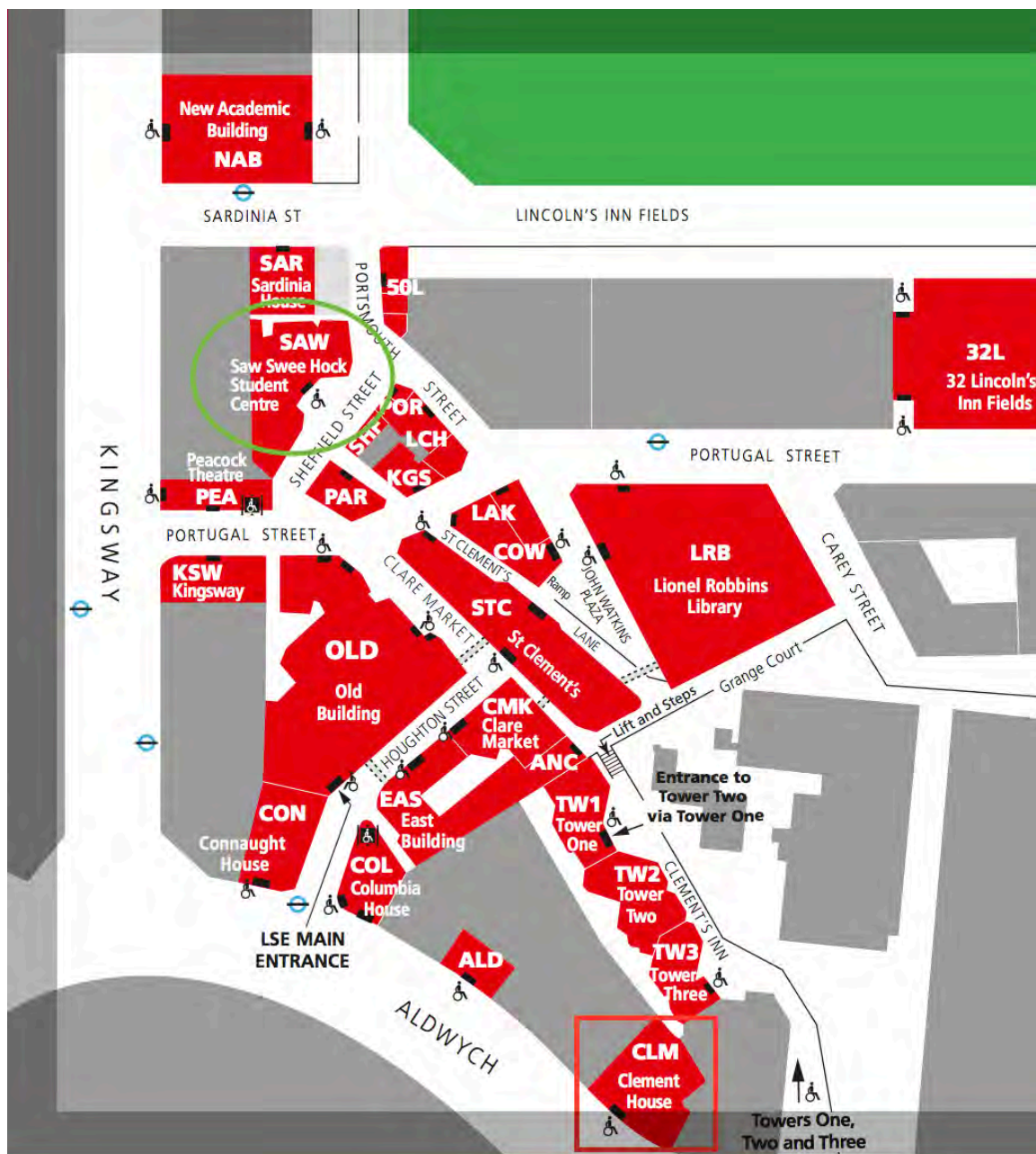
Megan Shore (Western University, Ontario): Religious Leadership in South Africa's transition

17.15

Closing remarks from the convenors

Closing reception at the LSE Faith Centre

2nd floor of the Saw Swee Hock Student Centre



Map of conference venue. Prayer rooms available at the LSE Faith Centre

Keynote Speakers and Chairs

Bishop Anba Angaelos OBE

His Grace Bishop Anba Angaelos is General Bishop of the Coptic Orthodox Church in the United Kingdom, and is widely recognised for his extensive advocacy work. As a result he was conferred with the honour of Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire by Her Majesty The Queen, for 'Services to International Religious Freedom'. He has also been conferred with the Lambeth Cross for Ecumenism by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Coventry Cross of Nails for Reconciliation. With a pastoral ministry spanning two decades, Bishop Angaelos also specialises in youth ministry and travels extensively around the world to speak at youth conferences and conventions.

Having commenced his pastoral ministry in the United Kingdom in 1995 as a parish priest, His Grace Bishop Angaelos was consecrated a General Bishop in 1999 by His Holiness, the late Pope Shenouda III, with whom he served as private secretary. Since then he has specialised in initiatives relating to advocacy, human rights, international religious freedom and development work, and is a member of, and chairs, numerous local, national and international bodies dealing with these matters. His Grace is founder and convenor of the Asylum Advocacy Group which works closely in partnership with the All Party Parliamentary Group on International Religious Freedom or Belief.

As director of the Media and Communications Office in the United Kingdom and Europe, Bishop Angaelos frequently issues statements and comments relating to current religious and minority issues, with his particular focus on dialogue, conflict-resolution, and reconciliation. His comments and views are frequently sought on matters of human rights, civil liberties and international religious freedom, particularly in relation to the situation in Egypt, the Middle East, and North Africa.

He has been ecumenically active at local, national and international levels, while also actively working in the area of inter-religious relations. He works extensively to build bridges and promote dialogue and unity between Churches, faiths and communities in the United Kingdom and has established and maintains contact with governmental, inter-religious and ecumenical bodies through which this work is enabled. Under the leadership of His Grace the Coptic Orthodox Church is now a member of all the official ecumenical instruments in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland.

Karen Armstrong OBE FRSL

Karen Armstrong became a member of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, a teaching congregation, in which she remained for seven years. Once she had advanced to professed nun, she enrolled in St Anne's College, Oxford, to study English. Armstrong left her order in 1969 while still a student at Oxford.

In 1984, Channel Four commissioned her to write and present a documentary on the life of St Paul entitled *The First Christian*, a project that involved traveling to the Holy Land to retrace the steps of the saint. Armstrong described this visit as a 'breakthrough experience' that defied her prior assumptions and provided the inspiration for virtually all her subsequent work. In *A History of God: The 4,000-Year Quest of Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (1993), she traces the evolution of the three major monotheistic traditions from their beginnings in the Middle East up to the present day and also discusses Hinduism and Buddhism. Armstrong's *The Great Transformation: The Beginning of Our Religious Traditions* (2006) continues the themes covered in *A History of God* and examines the emergence and codification of the world's great religions during the so-called Axial age identified by Karl Jaspers.

Armstrong is a fellow of the Jesus Seminar, a group of scholars and laypeople, which attempts to investigate the historical foundations of Christianity. She has taught courses at Leo Baeck College, a rabbinical college and centre for Jewish education located in North London, and says she has been particularly inspired by the Jewish tradition's emphasis on practice as well as faith: 'I say that religion isn't about believing things. It's about what you do. It's ethical alchemy. It's about behaving in a way that changes you, that gives you intimations of holiness and sacredness.'

She maintains that religious fundamentalism is not just a response to, but is a product of contemporary culture and for this reason concludes that, 'We urgently need to make compassion a clear, luminous and dynamic force in our polarized world. Rooted in a principled determination to transcend selfishness, compassion can break down political, dogmatic, ideological and religious boundaries. Born of our deep interdependence, compassion is essential to human relationships and to a fulfilled humanity. It is the path to enlightenment, and indispensable to the creation of a just economy and a peaceful global community.'

When she was awarded the TED Prize in February 2008, Armstrong called for drawing up a Charter for Compassion, in the spirit of the Golden Rule, to identify shared moral priorities across religious traditions, in order to foster global understanding and a peaceful world.

Rabbi Dr Naftali Brawer

Rabbi Dr Naftali Brawer was ordained as an Orthodox Rabbi at the age of twenty-two and served as the spiritual leader of congregations in both the United States and Britain. He served as an interfaith advisor to Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks and in that capacity he participated in interfaith dialogue in Britain, Europe, India and Taiwan. He holds a PhD in Hebrew and Jewish Studies from UCL and writes and lectures on a wide range of topics including Hasidism, theology and spirituality. He is the author of two books and his thought pieces appear in academic journals as well as in the national press. Rabbi Brawer is also a seasoned broadcaster frequently appearing on the BBC. He is co-founder and Rabbi of Mishkan: The Jewish Community beyond Borders.

His Excellency John Casson CMG

John Casson became Britain's ambassador in Cairo having worked at 10 Downing Street where he was the Prime Minister's Foreign Affairs Private Secretary from 2010 to 2014. He received a CMG in the 2014 Queen's Birthday Honours List.

His career has had a strong focus on the Arab world, including as Deputy Ambassador in Jordan, as Head of the FCO's Near East and North Africa Department, and accompanying the Prime Minister on his visit to Egypt in 2011. From 2002 to 2005 he held the high-profile role leading the US political outreach of the British Embassy in Washington.

He has also worked in the UK Representation to the EU in Brussels and as Senior Policy Adviser in HM Treasury. Before entering Government he worked as a Research Assistant at Cambridge University and in the House of Commons.

Professor Craig Calhoun

Craig Calhoun became the President of the Berggruen Institute in Los Angeles in the summer 2016. Professor Calhoun is a world-renowned social scientist whose work connects sociology to culture, communication, politics, philosophy and economics. At LSE Professor Calhoun led a number of significant advances, including a major initiative to strengthen faculty and research quality which was followed by an excellent performance in global rankings. He also oversaw efforts to enhance interdisciplinary research and teaching, especially to address major global issues like climate change, urbanization, and inequality.

Prior to his post at LSE, he was University Professor at New York University, director of the Institute for Public Knowledge, and President of the Social Science Research Council. He is the author of several books including *Does Capitalism Have a Future?*, *Nations Matter*, *Critical Social Theory*, *Neither Gods Nor Emperors*, and most recently, *The Roots of Radicalism* (University of Chicago Press, 2012).

Dr Melanie Gibson

Dr Melanie Gibson, BA (Oxon) MA, PhD (SOAS) participates in a range of academic activities that include teaching and publishing. She has been teaching on Islamic ceramics and glass, as well as more widely on art and architecture since 2005, and from 2012-2016 she was head of the Art History department at New College of the Humanities, London. She is series editor of the Ginkgo Library Art Series.

Professor Dr Mena Mark Hanna

Mena Mark Hanna is dean of the Barenboim-Said Akademie. He received his Ph.D. from Oxford University's Merton College, where he studied musicology and music composition. Prior to coming to the Barenboim-Said Akademie, Hanna was assistant artistic director and dramaturg at Houston Grand Opera, and visiting scholar and lecturer in musicology at Rice University's Shepherd School of Music.

Hanna also teaches musicology at the Akademie. His research and teaching interests include Middle Eastern chant, music of the 20th and 21st centuries, and composition and electronic music. His Ph.D. thesis, *Towards a Structural Theory of Coptic Chant*, is a forthcoming publication by The Ginkgo Library, distributed by University of Chicago Press.

He is a recipient of the Marshall Scholarship, the James Ingham Halstead Travelling Scholarship, and the BMI Young Composer Award. His compositions have been premiered at the Fondation Royaumont, the Darmstadt New Music Festival, and ISCM World Music Days, and performed by Ensemble Linea, Les Cris de Paris, the Cygnus Ensemble, and the Momena Quartet, and others.

Professor Hugh Kennedy FRSE FRAS FBA

Professor Hugh Kennedy spent a year on a FCO scholarship studying at the Middle East Centre for Arab Studies at Shemlan in Lebanon. He went on to study at the University of Cambridge where he completed his doctoral thesis entitled *Politics and the political élite in the early Abbasid Caliphate*. In 1972, Kennedy joined the University of St Andrews as a lecturer in Mediaeval History. He was appointed Professor of Middle Eastern History in 1997 as well as holding several administrative appointments at St Andrews: he was Deputy Head of the School of History from 1992 to 1998, and was Dean of the Faculty of Arts from 1995 to 1998.

In 2007, he left the University of St Andrew's to join the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). He was appointed Professor of Arabic at SOAS. Among his research topics is the History of the Islamic Middle East, Islamic Archaeology and Muslim Spain. His most recent book *The Caliphate* was published in 2016 to critical acclaim.

John McHugo

John McHugo is an international lawyer and Arabist, with over forty years' experience in the region. A board member of the Council for Arab-British Understanding and a director of the British Egyptian Society, McHugo is also chair of the Liberal Democrat Friends of Palestine. His writing has featured in *History Today*, *The World Today* and the BBC News website, and his debut work, *A Concise History of the Arabs*, was published to critical acclaim in 2013. McHugo was shortlisted for the Salon Transmission Prize in 2014, the same year he published *Syria: From the Great War to Civil War*. In September he will publish *A Concise History of Sunnis and Shi'is*.

Lord David Owen

David Owen was a Member of Parliament for Plymouth for 26 years from 1966-92. Under Labour Governments, he served as Navy Minister, Health Minister and Foreign Secretary. He was co-founder of the Social Democratic Party

and its Leader from 1983-87 and 1988-90. He was created a Life Baron – Lord Owen of the City of Plymouth – in 1992 and sits as an independent social democrat in the House of Lords.

From 1992-95 Lord Owen served as EU peace negotiator in the former Yugoslavia working alongside the UN appointed peace negotiator, Cyrus Vance. Together they co-authored the Vance-Owen Peace Plan. Lord Owen was Chancellor of Liverpool University from 1996-2009.

He is the author of numerous publications including *Time to Declare* (1991), *Balkan Odyssey* (1995), *The Hubris Syndrome* (2007 & 2012), *The Hidden Perspective* (2015) and *Cabinet's Finest Hour* (2016). Lord Owen has been an advisor to the Gingko Library since its foundation in 2014.

Professor Gianluca Parolin

Gianluca Parolin joined Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations at the Aga Khan University in London in September 2015 with a specialism of comparative law. He is also the faculty lead on the Governance Project. Dr Parolin previously worked at the American University Cairo in the Department of Law, having served as a research fellow and earlier as a postdoc in the Law Department of the University of Torino (Italy), his alma mater, which awarded him an LLB/LLM (2001, with honors) and later a PhD in public law (2006). Dr Parolin has actively contributed to the debate on the constitution drafting in Egypt since early 2011, and has taught classes on the constitutional transitions in the region every semester. His research interests heavily focus on the Middle East. Within the broader field of comparative law, he explores areas that bridge the public/private law divide. Four main lines of research can be identified: regional governance and constitutional arrangements; citizenship in the Arab world; the concepts of public good (*maslahah*) and the aims of the law (*maqasid al-shari'ah*); and the way Islamic law is applied by Muslim communities in non-Muslim-majority settings - what some scholars call *Fiqh al-Aqalliyyat*.

Dr Barbara Haus Schwepcke

BA magna cum laude from Mount Holyoke, MSc (Econ) and PhD from the LSE (International History, supervised by Professor DC Watt). After editorial positions at ZDF and *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, Dr Schwepcke became foreign editor at *Focus*, a weekly news magazine. She is the author of *Töchter Asiens* (Europa Verlag, 2006) and *Aung San Suu Kyi: Heldin von Burma* (Herder, 1999). After working as Publisher of *Prospect Magazine* she became an editor at Harvill Press, and later founded Haus Publishing, an independent publishing house based in London, in 2003. Dr Schwepcke is a founding member and trustee of Gingko and of the Stiftung Gingko Library, in Germany.

Mona Siddiqui OBE FRSE FRSA

Mona Siddiqui joined the University of Edinburgh's School of Divinity in December 2011 as the first person to hold a chair in Islamic and Interreligious Studies. She also holds the posts of Assistant Principal for Religion and Society and Dean International for the Middle East at the University of Edinburgh. Prior to this she worked at Glasgow University directing the Centre for the Study of Islam. Her research areas are primarily in the field of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and ethics and Christian-Muslim relations. Amongst her most recent publications are, *50 Ideas in Islam* (Quercus, 2016), *Muslim Christian Encounters* 4 volumes, (Routledge, 2016) *Hospitality in Islam: Welcoming in God's Name* (Yale UP, 2015), *My Way: A Muslim Woman's Journey* (IB Tauris, 2014), *Christians, Muslims and Jesus* (Yale University Press, 2013), and *The Good Muslim: Reflections on Classical Islamic Law and Theology* (Cambridge University Press, 2012). She is currently working on writing her Gifford lectures on the theme of human struggle for publication. She has held visiting professorships at several Dutch and American universities including a Humanitas Professorship at Cambridge University in 2014.

She is well known internationally as a public intellectual and a speaker on issues involving religion, ethics and public life. She is a regular commentator in the media, known especially for her appearances on BBC Radio 4 and BBC Radio Scotland's Thought for the Day. In June 2016, she became a panellist on BBC Radio 4's The Moral Maze. In 2012, she appeared as a guest on Radio 4's Desert Island Discs' and in July 2015 was a guest on BBC Radio 3's Private Passions.

She chairs the BBC's Religious Advisory Committee in Scotland and during 2016 served as chair of the Scotland 'Stronger In' pro-Europe campaign. In April 2016, she was invited by the Home Office to lead an independent review of shari'a councils in the UK. She is an elected member of the Nuffield Council of Bioethics as well as the British Medical Association's ethics committee; she is also a member of the Franco-British Council and, in November 2016, was invited to join the Robertson Trust trustees. She is a fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, holds five honorary doctorates and an honorary fellowship of the Royal Society of Scottish Architects for her contributions to public life. In 2011, she was awarded an OBE for her contribution to interfaith services. In 2014 she spoke on religion and politics at the World Economic Forum in Davos and is currently listed in the Debetts top 500 most influential people in the UK. In 2018, she will deliver the second British Academy Religious Studies Lecture in London.

Revd Dr James Walters

The Revd Dr James Walters is Chaplain to the London School of Economics and Political Science. He is a Senior Lecturer in Practice at the LSE Marshall Institute for Philanthropy and a Senior Fellow of the LSE Institute of Public Affairs.

Since his appointment in 2010 Dr Walters has established the LSE Faith Centre which works to foster interreligious understanding across a student body drawn from 150 different countries. The Centre is home to the LSE Faith & Leadership Programme, which combines interfaith religious literacy with leadership development and encourages students to connect their own beliefs with the issues of today's world.

Dr Walters is a regular contributor on the interface of theology, philosophy, and politics. In 2012 he published his theological engagement with the work of the French philosopher Jean Baudrillard. As well as developing this philosophical work he is currently researching the theology of money and recently delivered a series of public lectures on this theme as International Theologian at Murdoch University in Perth Australia. He has also served as an officer of the British Society for the Study of Theology.

Dr Walters has interests in the role of religion in education and contributes to the theological direction of Church of England schools at the national level. More locally he chairs the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education in the London Borough of Camden.



LSE Faith Centre was opened in 2014 in response to significant changes in religious identity both on the LSE campus and in the wider world. It runs innovative programmes and events promoting religious literacy, transformational interfaith leadership, and engagement with religion in the public sphere. The Faith Centre also works internationally, taking students of different faiths to engage with the Israel-Palestine conflict each year and developing a new collaborative programme promoting Resilient Religious Communities in Egypt. From the autumn this year the Faith Centre will be working with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to develop training on religion and diplomacy for UK diplomats.

Religion is present in the public sphere today in ways that many had not anticipated. Faith commitments are shaping lives, communities and nations in dramatic ways all around our world. So as a university that gathers people from every corner of the world and every imaginable faith tradition, we have had to think hard about how to accommodate radical religious pluralism within our staff and student bodies, as well as develop the culture of interfaith understanding that is so urgently needed in the wider world.

Former Archbishop Rowan Williams has described the creation of the LSE Faith Centre as “a major step in recognising the crucial importance of faith commitments for the understanding of contemporary society, here and worldwide. A genuine sign of hope.”

Look at our website lse.ac.uk/faitchcentre or email faitchcentre@lse.ac.uk to find out more about our work and programmes.



Speakers & Abstracts

Dr Elena S. Arlyapova

Associate Professor, Comparative Politics Department at Moscow State Institute (University) of International Relations (MGIMO)

Abstract

The paper is based on research accomplished in several multi-ethnic and multi-confessional Russian cities. It highlights interim results of state efforts to harmonize the sphere of inter-religious relations and the ways through which religions, religious communities and organizations adapt to a changing political environment and state policy towards so called “traditional” religions in Russia. The paper also contributes to the elaboration of the Russian Ummah’s reaction to ongoing events in Syria; and of the internal contradictions of the local Muslim community in this regard.

Professor Eileen Vartan Barker

Professor Emeritus, London School of Economics / INFORM

Abstract

This paper considers ways in which contemporary new religions act as a resource that can be sought, drawn upon, adapted, rejected or ignored by both individuals and institutions throughout the global scene. Of the thousands of voices, ideas and practices ‘out there’, most fall by the wayside, but those that are selected can usually be seen to have an ‘elective affinity’ with their selectors. However, while adopting a particular idea or practice because it has a ‘resonance’, an entire package can be embraced, containing elements which introduce new and unplanned dimensions.

Kamran Bashir

PhD Candidate / Adjunct Faculty at Department of History, University of Victoria (Canada)

Abstract

The life of the Prophet Muhammad and the period of the early Caliphate act as the sacred histories for Muslim believers. Traditionalists, fundamentalists and Islamists in Muslim populations often imagine this early history as the source of inspiration for both reforming the present and imagining a new future. Javed Ahmad Ghamidi (b. 1951), a contemporary religious scholar and public intellectual from Pakistan, reimagines these foundational moments of Islamic history in a vein drastically different from traditionalist and Islamist narratives. In addition to introducing and critiquing Ghamidi’s work, the current paper is especially aimed at assessing the epistemological and social potential of his ideas in giving birth to a new peaceful and creative religious imagination (and imaginaries) for the future.

Dimitrios Cavouras

Networks Manager of the Anna Lindh Foundation

Abstract

The Sinai Peninsula, a sacred place for the three monotheistic religions – Christianity, Islam, and Judaism – is home to the Jabaliya Bedouin tribe and also where the 6th century Monastery of St Catherine stands. Dialogue and cooperation is the basis of the strong ties between the Bedouins and the Monastery Monks. The landscape shaped their identity. Spirituality defines who they are and co-existence is the promise for their fate. Due to the increased geopolitical challenges in the Sinai and in the Middle East at large there is an increased need for sharing these values of co-existence in diversity.

Professor Oliver Davies

Professor of Christian Doctrine, King's College London, Renmin University of China

Abstract

The foundational, scientific narrative of the human as social is currently undergoing significant change, becoming more open to the richness and variety of the human and to the vitality of religions. We have an obligation today to think through the potential implications of this correspondence, creatively and constructively. This serves the interests of the long-term dialogue of science and religion, but it may also allow us to harness the narrative power of science for the production of convergent religious anthropologies in the Abrahamic religions and beyond, leading potentially to the constructive harmonization of core features in their religious narratives.

Dr Abby Day

Reader in Race, Faith and Culture; Convenor, BA Religion. Department of Sociology, Goldsmiths, University of London

Abstract

The term 'belief' is often attached to people and places as if it is a stable and universal category. And yet, belief can refer to religious, secular or mixed values, and needs to be understood in specific contexts. This is important because it has impact for people and policy. This paper explores belief in relation to cultural dialogue through the related issues that affect everyday lives: language skills, migration, integration, diversity, and openness in society. It will explore concepts about belief, culture, and identity in the context of wider discussions on religion, pluralism, and community. It argues that 'belief' can be developed as a core value in contemporary cultural relations, and can be instrumental in developing a new approach to future intercultural dialogue, activities and projects.

Dr Magdalena Charlotte Delgado

Abstract

Benign religious essentialism as a culprit? Discerning the link between normative notions of Islam and Western populism. Contemporary socio-political events are unfolding in support of essentialist understandings of religion that International Relations only relatively recently has come to challenge. The popularity of populists like Trump, Le Pen and Wilders, who negatively depict Islam, are contrasted with positive, but equally essentialist, depictions by political leaders like Obama and Corbyn. The argument of this paper is two-fold. First, it argues that a link can be discerned between "benign religious essentialism" and Western democracies' fear-driven populism, as it relates to religion. Second, the paper argues that, in order to prevent further entrenchment of essentialist perceptions of religion, an understanding of the latter as a malleable, evolving phenomenon needs to be developed and exercised across academic fields, and public debate. Central to this paper is the understanding of religious doctrine as necessarily shaped by the contemporary socio-political milieu, and its ability to be so without breaking with doctrinal ideals. In this lies our imperative to ensure that the socio-political milieu fosters a peaceful, rather than fearful, development.

Dr John Fahy

Research Fellow at Georgetown University, Qatar & The Woolf Institute, Cambridge

Abstract

Although 'interfaith', as a field of practice, can be traced back to particular 20th century discourses and developments in the West, it has garnered interest from all major religious traditions, and can be found all over the world, including in the Middle East. Today the region is home to several high-profile initiatives, including the Doha International Centre for Interfaith Dialogue. In describing the historical, social and political conditions that shape the kinds of

interfaith initiatives that have emerged in the region, this paper looks at how a field of practice that emerged in the West has developed in the context of the Middle East.

Caleb W Gordon

Community Member, Hilfield Friary

Abstract

In this paper I discuss the need for Christianity to recognize the planetary conditions described by ecological science and explore the meaning of its narrative through acknowledging those conditions. Willis Jenkins' idea that humanity's power over nature means we are 'narrating' the world's history through our behaviours and Thomas Berry's suggestion that a 'New Story' replace outdated Christian cosmology provides the primary reference points of my argument: Ecologically-conscious Christianity is its necessary maturation, and while introducing a new paradigm for Christian ethics, is a development not only coherent but continuous with the Christian narrative as it already exists.

Dr Adrian Gregory

Associate Professor at the University of Oxford and Fellow of Pembroke College, Director of the Globalising and Localising the Great War network

Abstract

Building on an ongoing AHRC-funded research project the panel proposes three papers which each tackle the myths and the legacies of those years: Dr Adrian Gregory on the birth of Christian Zionism and the origins of the Balfour Declaration; Dr Patrick Houlihan on Roman Catholicism and the origins of human rights; Dr Hussein Omar on the invention of 'minority' and the making of sectarianism in the Arab world.

Dr Patrick J. Houlihan

Research Fellow at the University of Oxford, Faculty of History

Abstract

This paper concentrates on historical approaches to Catholicism, arguing for the importance of the papacy of Benedict XV (1914-1922) and its effect on global human rights discourse, especially focusing on children and indigenous clergy. Benedict would inspire a wide range of global actors, with important interreligious and transnational legacies. The Great War allowed the Catholic Church to emerge for the first time since antiquity as an NGO focused on global humanitarian concerns. Drawing on new evidence from the Vatican archives, this paper studies Great War humanitarianism, provoking reassessment of religiously inspired human rights during the era of the World Wars.

Dr Thahir Jamal KM

PhD Research Scholar at the Centre for Comparative Literature, University of Hyderabad, India

Abstract

This paper aims to understand the interpretations and re-readings of Islamic principles, including that of Qur'anic text, done by the contemporary Muslim movements in South India. With new interpretations that are outside the traditional Islamic scholarship, the new Muslim movements began to debate questions of environmental activism, gender justice, nation building and caste violence, which in turn changed their priorities and developed a broader democratic approach. The shift of Muslim articulations from the puritan idea of 'Islamic state' to a contemporary idea of 'welfare state' gives some insights to the new imaginations of Islam as a catalyst in coherent co-existence of diverse

communities. Cutting across the textual reading of Islamic principles and sociological analyses of movements, this paper will propose the necessity of understanding Muslim movements as one of the custodians of interpretations and argue the importance of immanent interpretations for imagining a peaceful social and political order.

Dr Emmanuel Karagiannis

Senior Lecturer, King's College London

Abstract

In the last 10-15 years, Muslims around the world have shown strong interest in organizing themselves for the protection of the environment. As a result, a number of eco-Muslim initiatives have been established in the Middle East and beyond. This trend of Islamic environmentalism goes beyond organized efforts to protect the environment, there is a lively debate about faith-based solutions to the ecological crisis. This paper aims at providing a theological overview of the relationship between Islam and the environment. More specifically, the paper will address different theoretical understandings of man's relationship with God and nature. It will focus on the Islamic perspective on animals and trees.

Mohammed Gamal Moawad Abdelnour Metawea

Faculty member at Al-Azhar University, Cairo

Abstract

The theory of abrogation (*naskh*) in the Qur'an is a conventional one. In this paper, I discuss the implications of classical and modern debates over abrogation on core orthodox views in Islamic theology of religions. As a case study, I discuss several Qur'anic exegetes' readings of the Qur'anic treatment of Christians. I then analyse how the modern Muslim jurist, Mohammed Abu Zahra (d. 1974), reads the same Qur'anic verses based on negating the possibility of abrogation, and how this opens a door for revisiting the classical Islamic views of the people of the book.

Ustadh Abubakar Sadiq Muhammad

President of Iummah (a faith-based NGO located in Abuja, Nigeria)

Abstract

This article aims to look at the role religious leaders from the Jewish, Muslim and Christian communities must adopt to ensure a future devoid of violent acts carried out in the name of religion. Globally, there is a rise in acts of violence perpetrated by a few misguided and ignorant members within religious communities that has adversely affected the possibility of peaceful coexistence between different religious groups. Citing scriptural references and instances of peaceful progress and understanding between religious leaders of the past, the article highlights the important role such leaders played, and continue to play, in building sustainable peaceful efforts that will stimulate and promote education, understanding, peace and security.

Mohammed Nizami

Resident Islamic scholar at Kingston Muslim Association; Post-graduate student in Political and Legal theory at Warwick University; Co-director of thinktank Averroes Trust.

Abstract

This paper examines current Muslim political imaginations by reference to particular doctrines operationalised by post-colonial grievances and the way in which contemporary articulations of these doctrines fail to provide the

nuances that varying contexts necessitate. It goes on to explore how the maturation of religious ideas drawn from the depth, flexibility and principles of Islamic law and theology can effectuate a set of values that prove compatible with other Abrahamic traditions as well as the crystallisation of a dynamic Islamic political theology that can provide scope for dialogue between Jewish, Muslim and Christian ways of envisaging the future.

Dr Hussein A H Omar

Postdoctoral Research Fellow, University of Oxford, Faculty of History and Pembroke College

Abstract

It has been argued that the First World War was the single most transformative event in the making of modern religion. Indeed, some have gone so far as to argue that the world's major religions-in their current incarnations-were produced by those tumultuous years. Yet despite its manifest importance in the shaping of global religion as we understand it today, there has been no sustained effort to produce a genuinely transnational history of religion, as a category, and the interaction between multiple, particular religions during the Great War.

Building on an ongoing AHRC-funded research project the panel proposes three papers which each tackle the myths and the legacies of those years: Dr Adrian Gregory on the birth of Christian Zionism and the origins of the Balfour Declaration; Dr Patrick Houlihan on Roman Catholicism and the origins of human rights; Dr Hussein Omar on the invention of 'minority' and the making of sectarianism in the Arab world.

Dr Fabio Petito

Senior Lecturer in International Relations, University of Sussex

Abstract

The concept of 'religious engagement' is fairly new in foreign policy, and the study of International Relations. Recently governments have started to strengthen their capacity to engage with the resurgence of religion in global politics. Religious engagement points to new ways governments and religious actors can partner on global issues. It emerges out of the recognition that today foreign policy requires not only to acknowledge that religious narratives shape global politics but also to develop something similar to a post-secular sensitivity. Analysing its theoretical underpinnings, we argue for the prophetic potential of religious narratives as theories of negative critique.

Dr Jenna Reinbold

Assistant Professor of Religion at Colgate University

Abstract

This paper will expand on my recent book, which explores the role of mythmaking in the creation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. While the association of the word "myth" with human rights might be perceived as advocating for a dismissal of human rights, I have argued that, when we theorize human rights from within the framework of myth, we gain a variety of novel insights into the nature, the foundations, and the internal contradictions of such rights. This paper will build upon these insights in an effort to understand the rise of human rights skepticism among religious conservatives in the United States.

Catriona Robertson

Christian Muslim Forum

Abstract

Drawing on contemporary examples of Christian-Muslim engagement with UK public policy, grassroots peace-building initiatives involving the Abrahamic faiths, European work addressing LGBT and religious human rights,

and the co-production of public services, this paper will propose that religious groups participate in public debate by working creatively across differences with other religious, civil society and academic bodies to offer smart, strategic, realistic and imaginative ways forward, informed by centuries of history, rooted in today's lived realities and infused with values and principles re-imagined to address heightened global tension, changing economic pressures and their impact at national level and in local community life.

Dr Megan Shore

Associate Professor, Social Justice and Peace Studies, King's University College, Western University, London, Ontario

Abstract

Religious leadership, like religion itself, has the powerful potential to foster justice and peace, yet it can also mobilize hatred and violence. As a result of this ambivalent relationship, international conflict resolution has largely adopted the position that organised religion is primarily, if not essentially, an instigator of violence and have tended to exclude religion as a source for peacebuilding. This paper will focus on the role that religious leadership can play in constructively contributing to conflict transformation. It will draw on the example of the role religious leadership played in South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy.

Khushwant Singh

President of the Council of Religions Frankfurt and representative of the Sikh Religion

Abstract

The global challenges we are facing are huge. According to Gurmat – timeless spiritual wisdom that is at the heart of the Sikh Religion – we need a transition to a life that leaves behind inconsistent beliefs, dogmas, selfishness, nationalism and a material and bodily-oriented world view. A humanistic narrative is needed that nourishes our sense of one human family and interconnectedness with all living species and nature. Such a narrative is inherent to spiritual wisdom. It reminds us that we are more than our body and that taking a look into the mirror is a prerequisite to change our behavior. It encourages us to overcome the paradigm of the *homo economicus*. It inspires us to pursue a holistic assessment that measures development based on the satisfaction of all citizens and Mother Earth. Our responsibility is to apply that wisdom in a secular sense so that we can benefit from it in private life, in educational institutions, in politics and economy, as well as in interreligious dialogue. Once we do this, we will realise: natural development is like good medicine. It has no side effects.

Roland Stolte

Christian-protestant theologian; he is the chairman of the executive board of the foundation Stiftung House of One – Bet- und Lehrhaus Berlin.

Dr Scott Thomas

Senior Lecturer in International Relations, University of Bath

Abstract

The concept of 'religious engagement' is fairly new in foreign policy, and the study of International Relations. Recently governments have started to strengthen their capacity to engage with the resurgence of religion in global politics. Religious engagement points to new ways governments and religious actors can partner on global issues. It emerges out of the recognition that today foreign policy requires not only to acknowledge that religious narratives shape global politics but also to develop something similar to a post-secular sensitivity. Analysing its theoretical underpinnings, we argue for the prophetic potential of religious narratives as theories of negative critique.

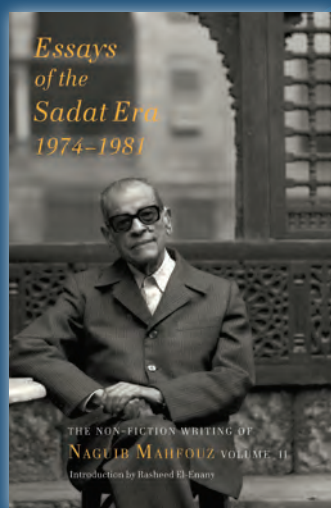


Gingko is committed to creating better understanding between the West and the Middle East, North Africa and West Asia. Founded in 2014, we achieve this through conferences and lectures, an ambitious scholarly publication and translation programme, and intercultural projects and events. In all these endeavours the Gingko brings together scholars, policy makers and the interested public in a lively yet respectful exchange of views based on the principle that in order to understand each other one first has to listen to the Other.

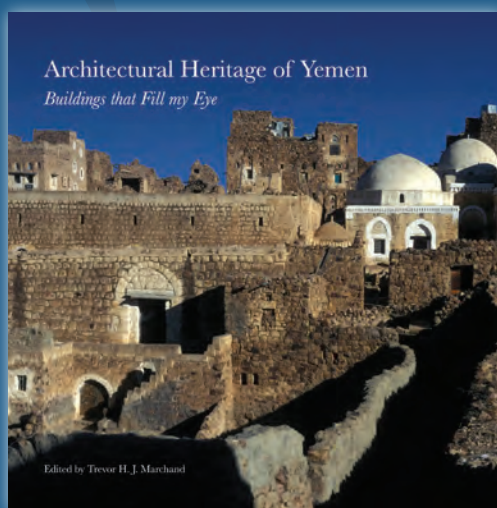
Previous conferences have included *The First World War and its Aftermath: The Shaping of the Middle East*, 2014 (SOAS), *Iran's Constitutional Revolution of 1906 and the Narratives of Enlightenment*, 2015 (British Academy), *The Mercantile Effect: On art and exchange in the Islamic world during the 17-18 centuries*, 2016 (Barenboim-Said Akademie, Berlin).

Forthcoming publications include *Architectural Heritage of Yemen* (edited by Trevor H. J. Marchand), *Christmas and the Qur'an* (Karl-Josef Kuschel), *Essays of the Sadat Era 1974-1981: The Non-fiction writing of Naguib Mahfouz Volume II* (introduction by Rasheed El-Enany), *The Mercantile Effect: On Art and Exchange in the Islamicate World during the 17th and 18th Centuries* (edited by Sussan Babaie and Melanie Gibson).

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*Christmas and
the Qur'an*
Karl-Josef Kuschel

We welcome proposals for new, learned books that deal with topics pertaining to the Middle East and North Africa, or the Islamic world in general, whether they are academic monographs, edited volumes, or general interest (non-fiction) books.

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Concert Notes

Coptic Psalm Cantillation
Missa Rigensis
Uģis Prauliņš
Wadi-n-Natrun
Mena Mark Hanna

INTERVAL

Hebrew Psalm Cantillation
Psalms
Salamone Rossi
Deux Melodies Hebraïques
Maurice Ravel

The Book of Psalms, attributed to David, are early evidence of religious creativity and inspiration—songs and poems meant as praise, as reflections, and (sometimes) as utterances of frustration. The Qur'an refers to Psalms given to David as inspired gifts from above (Sura 4, ayah 163; Sura 17, ayah 55), and in both the Jewish and Christian liturgical tradition, Psalms are used as they were originally intended: as an encounter between language and voice.

Tonight's concert uses the setting and performance of Psalms as its fulcrum: Psalms sung in traditional and ancient cantorial settings, Psalms set by the Renaissance Jewish composer Salomone Rossi, and cantorial praise used as inspiration for modern composers.

The setting and performance of Psalms were central to the musical imagination of the European Renaissance and Baroque; one such example is Claudio Monteverdi's setting of Psalms in his Vespers of 1610, the most ambitious religious work before J.S. Bach. An obscure contemporary of Monteverdi is the Jewish violinist and composer Salomone Rossi from Mantua, Italy. Rossi was the first to publish a collection of originally composed music for Jewish liturgical services, and was likely the first composer to set Hebrew and Aramaic text to Western notation. Rossi's music, however, is not marked by novelty firsts; it is original, vibrant, and features florid polyphonic writing, with a contrapuntal sophistication that rivals the work of the renowned composers of his time and locale.

Rossi likely wrote this music for performance in the Norsa Synagogue, which was reconstructed after the Jewish ghetto of Mantua was destroyed in the early twentieth century. Though not as sonorous as the great basilicas and cathedrals of Catholicism, the Norsa Synagogue is an acoustically capacious space. Like the music of Rossi's Catholic counterparts, these Psalms are meant to soar through the building's architecture, projecting the glory—and power—of God and Church (or Synagogue).

Uģis Prauliņš' *Missa Rigensis*, written for the Riga Dom Boys' Choir and premiered in 2003, is composed in the spirit of those same Renaissance masses that saturated the world of Rossi. Like Rossi's *Psalms*, the *Missa Rigensis* is meant for a vast acoustic religious space; the piece was premiered at Riga's cavernous medieval cathedral. Though Prauliņš has formal training in composition, his background is far more varied than the standard, thoroughly academicized modern composer of Western art music. Prauliņš has arranged pop songs, performed in rock bands, and written several successful 'crossover' pieces. The *Missa Rigensis* stands out in its neo-Renaissance and neo-Baroque flairs, with the canonic 'Kyrie' and thick textural polyphony of the 'Credo'. Moreover, Prauliņš reinterprets the most common of Western liturgical texts, the ordinary mass, and enlivens those words with a dazzling array of folk melodies, minimalist drones, and stylized speech. This is all done without the aid of an organ; Prauliņš is keen to preserve in its most natural form, vocal praise—that encounter of language and voice.

Roland Barthes called this encounter 'the grain of the voice'. It is a space that sidesteps linguistic law and convention, because both music and language germinate within the human voice simultaneously. With instruments composed to imitate the human voice—such as the cello in Ravel's *Deux mélodies hébraïques* (1914) originally for soprano and piano and transcribed for cello, or my piece for solo cello *Wadi-n-Natrun* (2006, rev. 2010)—the instrument

carries characteristics beyond its normal parameter set. Obviously, the instrument has a certain overriding limitation: it cannot speak. But it can 'sing'.

The music one hears in *Deux mélodies hébraïques* is first a French, European interpretation of Hebrew melodies (more apparent in the movement entitled *Kaddisch* than in *L'Enigme Eternelle*) and second a transcription of this already once-removed interpretation. But the *Kaddisch* prayer has a certain staying power. One can still hear a 'grain of the voice' in the grinding cello of Ravel's Hebrew melodies.

Wadi-n-Natron uses an inverted compositional form—a reverse theme and variations—in which the theme revealed at the end of the piece is a transcribed melodic fragment of a Coptic Paschal Psalm cantillation. The hope is that this fragment of music can somehow sound familiar and that the cello, after exploring a range of sonorities and extended techniques, can once again inhabit the grain of the voice, 'singing' a Psalm.

Professor Mena Mark Hanna, Dean of the Barenboim-Said Akademie



BARENBOIM-SAID
AKADEMIE

Close friends Daniel Barenboim and Edward W. Said founded the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra in Weimar, Germany, in 1999 with a mission to unite young Arab and Israeli musicians.

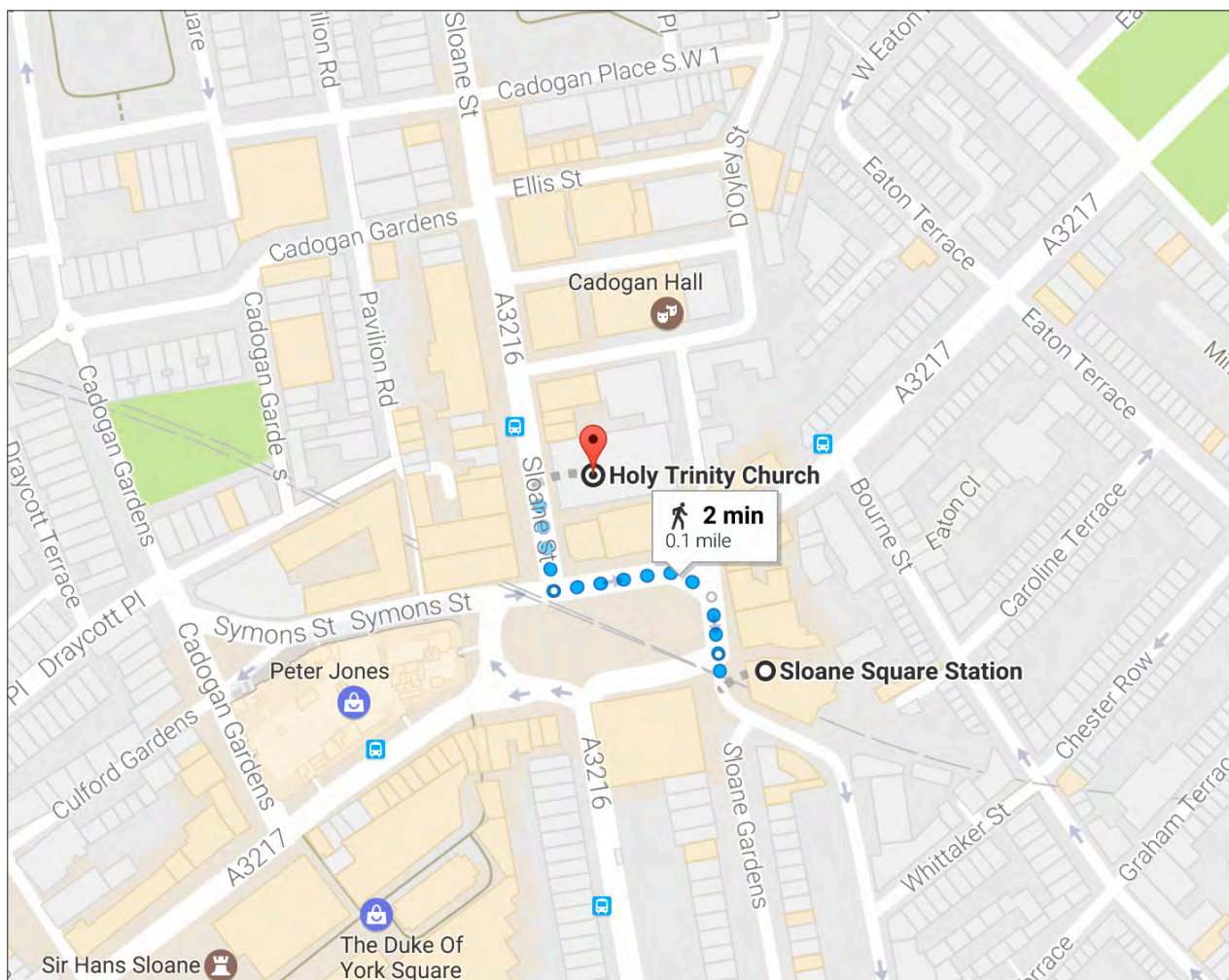
The two men were convinced that peace in the Middle East could not be achieved by military means, and they dedicated themselves to the search for alternative approaches to a political solution.

The Barenboim-Said Akademie opened in 2015 as a robust continuation of the spirit and mission of the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra. Named after the Orchestra's founders and leading lights, with a curriculum likewise inspired by their initiative, the Barenboim-Said Akademie is committed to educating a new generation of musicians.

The Barenboim-Said Akademie offers a conservatory education for talented young musicians from the Middle East, North Africa, and around the world, uniting music performance studies with a grounding in the humanities.

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Religious Imaginations and Global Transitions
How narratives of faith are shaping today's world

14&15 June 2017
LSE, London