

Editorial Note

It is appropriate and important to celebrate this 50th anniversary volume of *Temenos* together with colleagues from our fellow Nordic countries. After all, the original subheading of the journal was 'Studies in Comparative Religion presented by scholars in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden.' Texts by Nordic scholars have thus always been the primary focus of *Temenos*.

As they set out to establish the journal, Lauri Honko and Juha Pentikäinen travelled around the Nordic countries, meeting with all central figures in the field of comparative religion and securing their support for the new journal. Nordic cooperation, promoting Nordic scholarship and presenting Nordic themes lay, and still lies, at the heart of *Temenos*' mission. But even when the contributors to the journal were entirely from the Nordic countries, it was nevertheless clear from the start that *Temenos* would find readers far outside these geographic limits. The spectrum of languages in which the articles were written was broad in these early days: in addition to the Nordic languages and English, also French and German.

It is important both for young and for more established researchers of religion to know the roots of their discipline. In this issue, these Nordic roots are presented side by side, which allows for comparison between the countries but also for the identification of similarities in the respective developments. The pioneers of our discipline were united by a fascination for faraway countries and a historical approach to the research of religion. Initially, the discipline sprung from linguistic research and the study of historical texts – therefore the researchers of comparative religion often had a vast command of languages. The ethnographic approach has also been central from the start, and renowned researchers such as Edvard Westermarck and Hilma Granqvist from Finland travelled in North Africa and the Middle East.

In this anniversary volume, we have broadened the scope of the initial volumes to include both Iceland, which of course belongs to the Nordic countries, but also Estonia, which has always been an especially close and appreciated partner for researchers of religion. Already in the inaugural issue of *Temenos*, the researcher of ethnology Ilmar Talve presented a review of Estonian research entitled 'A History of Folklore Research in Estonia.'

In the editorial of the inaugural issue, the editor-in-chief and founder of the journal, Lauri Honko, emphasised the multidisciplinary character of comparative religion. Among the members of the Finnish Society for the Study of Religion, which had been founded a few years earlier, one could

find representatives from several different disciplines: sociology, psychology, folklore studies, history, art history, philosophy, philology and theology. Nordic co-operation thus did not involve only researchers of religion, but spanned a much vaster range of the humanities and the social sciences.

To conclude his first editorial, Lauri Honko described the background of the name of the journal, *Temenos*, in the following way:

The word τέμενος [temenos] was used in both the profane and the sacred sense. Liddell and Scott distinguish the meanings as follows: 1. 'a piece of land cut off and assigned as an official domain, esp. to kings and chiefs', 2. 'a piece of land marked off from common uses and dedicated to a god, precinct', 3. 'temple'. Aristophanes called the Acropolis ἱερόν τέμενος [hieron temenos] (of Pallas Athene) and Pindar often uses the word in his Pythian Odes. On the cover of the periodical are reproduced parts of a vase painting. The handshake between Dionysos and Apollo in the τέμενος of Delphi symbolizes the reconciliation, which allowed the cult of both gods to take place in the same temple. It is our hope that the same liberal atmosphere will be reflected in the pages of *Temenos*. Or, putting it another way, *te me nos decet religionibus investigandis operam dare!* [It suits you, me and us to endeavour with research on religion.]

Continuing on a similar theme as the earliest editions, the current cover of *Temenos* is decorated by the image of an holy oak, borrowed from the cover of *Kuolematonten lehto* [The grove of the immortals] (1961) by Martti Haavio, the first President of the Finnish Society for the Study of Religion.

We are humble and proud to serve as the editors of this venerable and distinguished scientific journal and hope that it will continue to bring ground-breaking, border-crossing and thought-provoking analyses of religion to its readers in at least fifty further volumes! This issue, presenting the development of comparative religion in the Nordic countries, will be complemented in the autumn by a second anniversary issue, presenting visions for the future by leading international scholars of comparative religion.

Editors-in-Chief

Ruth Illman & Tiina Mahlamäki