

of blasphemy in response to some public criticism of Islam. However, the essay is neither an apologia for Muslim reactions nor a criticism of those who defended the publication of the cartoons. The author reflects on what contemporary debates over Islamic blasphemy claims suggest about the shape of liberal secularity, and its ideal of the free human being. What, in contrast, do Islamic ideas of blasphemy tell us about our modern liberal assumptions about free speech? Asad discusses some moral, political, and aesthetic problems that have crystallized in the form of the idea of free speech and shows that even in a liberal society (liberal university) free speech is not an absolute value but necessarily conditional. Secular societies do have legal constraints on communication in the form of copyright, patent, and trademark and laws protecting commercial secrets, all of which prohibit in different ways the free circulation of expressions and ideas. Ultimately, Asad argues, that all limitations of free speech derive not simply from sociopolitical constraints but from the theological language in which such constraint is articulated, since theology invokes dependence on transcendental power, while secularists reject such power in the name of its own particular, and ideological, conception of human freedom.

Let us repeat some major outcomes. In “Rethinking Secularity” we have got an up-to-date report about the contemporary state of discussion concerning the categories of “secular,” “secularization,” and “secularism” and the problems grouped around this words. The well-tested and validated theses, with a lot of empirical, detailed examples and models, are founded on solid erudition, deep knowledge, and skills of the competent authors. They focus on how “the secular” and “religious” are constituted and understood in sociopolitical struggles and cultural politics. On the one hand, they stress the continued relevance of religion for the world politics, and on the other hand, they see the secular as the absence of religion rather than a positive formation of its own that can be studied and analyzed. They all question a sharp line between things, secular, and religious, that has been a habit of thought since the Enlightenment, and show the mutations of these categories through ages and their dialectical interdependence right up to the opposition. The monotheistic definition of religion, with a genealogy in universalist Deism and in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century European expansion, which constructs the object of study of religious studies and defines religious actors and institutions according to a particular set of parameters, should not be taken as a norm, as it misconstrues or misses entirely a spectrum of political actors, religious histories, and social processes.

The words “secular/religious,” even if applied universally, do not mean the same thing in each iteration. It is a mistake to think that the boundaries between the religious and the secular are fixed and that the Western distinction (made and not simply found!) between “politics” and “religion” could be uncritically exported to other regions. There are many different ways in which other civilizations have drawn boundaries between “sacred” and “profane,” “transcendent” and “immanent,” “religious” and “secular.” Therefore, there is no singular secularism but rather a cluster of related terms and multiple competing secularisms, as there are multiple and diverse forms of religion. Secularisms differ from one another, particularly those that arose not out of Christianity. The fact, that the modernization of so many non-Western societies is accompanied by processes of religious revival, puts into question the premise, that the decline of religious beliefs and practices is a *quasi*-natural consequence of processes of modernization. It proves as Casanova stated that the historical process of secularization of European Latin Christendom, instead of being the norm, is an “exceptional process, which is unlikely to be reproduced anywhere else in the world with a similar sequential arrangement and with the corresponding stadial consciousness” (64). If modernization *per se* does not produce necessarily the progressive decline of religious beliefs and practices, then we need a better explanation for the radical and widespread secularity one finds among the populations of most Western European societies.

Critical Analysis of the Czech Study of Religions and Philosophy of Religion in the 20th Century according to Tomáš Bubík

A Review Article

Henryk Hoffmann

Lately in some of the post-Communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe (particularly in Russia, Poland, and the Czech Republic), there is an increasing interest in the reflection of the history and national tradition of the study of religions as a discipline. Such historical analyses are especially being pursued by the international project of the Czech

Science Foundation “Development of the Study of Religions in Central and Eastern Europe in the 20th Century” headed by Tomáš Bubík of the University of Pardubice. Bubík has organized a group of specialists from six countries – Poland, Ukraine, Russia, Romania, Hungary, and the Czech Republic – to carry out the project. The team’s first results were presented at the International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR) XX Quinquennial World Congress in Toronto 2010 as a paper entitled “History and Methodological Approaches to the Study of Religions in Eastern Europe.” The paper, together with all the other congress panel contributions, will appear in *Pantheon. Journal for the Study of Religions*.

Tomáš Bubík, the project’s central figure, is Associate Professor of the Department of the Study of Religions at the University of Pardubice, Vice-President of the Czech Association for the Study of Religions, and Editor-in-Chief of *Pantheon*. For many years, he has specialized in different aspects and issues of religious studies. Analyzing his scholarly work, one can easily discern his main domains and fields of interests, which are often interdisciplinary in their character, as he is working at the borderlines of the disciplines in areas such as the relations of philosophy and the study of religions with overlaps to other fields such as humanities, philosophy of religion, history of religion, methodology of religious studies, sociology of religion, and political studies of religions.

His most important publications include mainly Czech studies on philosophy of religion: “Filosoficky o spravedlnosti” (2007), “Úvod do české filozofie náboženství” (2009d), “České bádání o náboženství ve 20. století” (2010a), and the articles “Zarys historii badań religioznawczych w Czechach” (2006), “Stereotypy badawcze w obszarze historii religii” (2008), “Outsider and Insider Perspectives in the Czech Study of Religions” (2009b), and “Defence of Tradition or of Modernity. Two Opposite Sides of the Czech Philosophy of Religion” (2010b).

Bubík is also very active internationally, participating in congresses, conferences, research grant projects, and lecturing abroad. He contributes greatly to academic networking among scholars from Eastern and Western countries. Bubík’s compendium of many years’ research in the history and methodology of the study of religions is presented in his recent book “České bádání o náboženství ve 20. století.”¹ This “Czech Study of Religions in the 20th Century. Possibilities and Limits” can truly be con-

sidered as the first systematic work on the topic, as the history of the Czech *Religionswissenschaft* was not thoroughly surveyed until this publication. There were only partial studies written by Břetislav Horyna (2001, 2005).

Bubík’s book is not merely a general overview of the Czech history of the study of religions (even though historical analyses are essential), because the historical material he discusses serves as a base for deeper, philosophical reflections on various roles of the humanities (heuristic as well as ideological and worldview functions). Thus one can assert that the book, on one hand, presents a compendium of the Czech history of the study of religions and of the history of science in general, and, on the other hand, it is a philosophical and methodological treatise about pressing issues of contemporary humanities.

Bubík’s work consists of six chapters, includes an English summary and a bibliography listing more than 450 items. The “Introduction” (13–16) is rather essayistic in style, but clearly sets the tasks and aims of the study, stressing especially the need for the analysis of the methodological status of academic study of religion, particularly in its dependence on worldviews and ideological viewpoints of scholars (15). The influence of scholars’ worldview presuppositions on their research presents a still unresolved problem, yet a very complex and important one. It has been frequently addressed, by K. Rudolph in the past, and by A. Bronk, T. Fitzgerald, D. Wiebe more recently. The point is that religious studies as a discipline did not manage once and for all to achieve ideological independence. Analyzing the discipline’s history makes clear that its ideological independence, or a lack thereof, had, at times, been very urgent, and nowadays, it is still topical.

In the first chapter, “Religion in Perspectives of Modern Inquiry” (17–44), the author situates the origins of the scientific study of religion in the 17th and 18th centuries within the context of the abiding controversies about the meaning and importance of religion (J. J. Rousseau, F. M. Voltaire, D. Hume, I. Kant) as the protest against the speculative *Religionsphilosophie* (F. W. J. Schelling, G. W. F. Hegel, F. D. E. Schleiermacher) of that period. Then Bubík points out the crucial role of the empirically oriented “science of religion” (É.-L. Burnouf, F. M. Müller, C. P. Tiele, P. D. Chantepie de la Saussaye) and also the impact of anthropology of religion (E. B. Tylor, W. R. Smith, J. G. Frazer, and others). He proceeds to the description of the processes of institutionalization of the newly established discipline, to-

1 Bubík, Tomáš: České bádání o náboženství ve 20. století. Možnosti a meze [Czech Study of Religions in the 20th Cen-

tury. Possibilities and Limits]. Červený Kostelec: Pavel Mervart, 2010. 246 pp. ISBN 978-80-87378-09-0. Price: € 19.00.

day generally called the “study of religions.” Even though this topic is well elaborated in the works of E. Sharpe, J. Waardenburg, I. Strenski, M. Stausberg, G. Benavides, and others (Bubík quotes all the important authors), I would like to stress Bubík’s innovative approach with its emphasis on philosophical and worldview context of the impending changes. He presents them as arising from the then dominant Positivism, Evolutionism, and Marxism and sees them in connection with the processes of secularization, with the religious indifferentism of the libertinism’s or the fundamentally atheistic anticlericalism’s sort. Bubík also pays attention to the fact that the reaction to these changes was an attempt at a neutralization of the study of religions (in the sense of “re-theologization/re-fideatization,” though the author does not use these terms) by means of the cultural-historical school of Wilhelm Schmidt and at the same time of establishing a new method called “phenomenology of religion” (including the various currents stemming from it: W. B. Kristensen, R. Otto, M. Scheler, G. van der Leeuw, F. Heiler, K. Goldammer, G. Mensching, C. J. Bleeker, G. Widengren, M. Eliade, G. Lanczkowski, and others). It is also necessary to emphasize that the amount of the author’s interest in religious or antireligious positions and various methodological approaches of the scholars discussed is depended on the degree to which they serve as examples of an ideological influence (“engagement,” “worldview perspective,” “stereotypes” – these terms are the author’s favorite ones) on science as such.

The second and most extensive chapter (93 pages), entitled “Czech Journey to the Nonengaged Inquiry of Religions – From Critique to Study” (45–128), consists of two crucial parts “Philosophically about Religion” (45–73) and “The First Systematic Attempts to Introduce How ‘to Do’ the Discipline” (73–128). At first the author analyses the Czech, mostly philosophical, discussion on religion (represented by T. G. Masaryk, F. Krejčí, J. Tvrđý, L. Kunte, F. Linhart, J. B. Kozák, E. Kadeřávek, F. Soukup, F. Žilka, etc.) from the beginning of the 20th century to the Second World War. Bubík understands the philosophy of religion (*Religionsphilosophie*) of that time as a scholarly discipline which, even before the establishing of the study of religion at Czech academia, tried to answer the most important theoretical questions such as “the essence of religion,” “the origin and development of religion,” “the relationship between science and religion, between faith and reason,” “the possibility of the so-called ‘religio nova’” from the point of view of both the secular and the religious (especially Catholic and Protestant) philosophy. Despite their critical po-

sition on one hand, and their apologetic position on the other, these philosophers had a significant influence on the construction of the fundamentals necessary for the future development of the academic, secular, and objective reflections on religion.

The second part of that chapter (2.2) presents the Czech reception of the main events and works of the Western study of religions as represented by Otakar Pertold and Josef Hanuš. Apart from establishing the discipline’s terminology and originating its institutionalization, Bubík sees the issues, such as the origin and evolution of religion, the adaptation of the then popular methods – especially the historical comparative method – used simultaneously by secularists and theologians (including several Catholic philosophers) as the most significant problems of the Czech study of religions of the first half of the 20th century. Theologians in particular protested on principle against evolutionism and referred to the ethnological (diffusionist) argumentation of the cultural-historical school of Wilhelm Schmidt. In regard to the interests and issues then discussed, the author discerns the first phase of the development of incipient objectification of the national academic study of religions.

In the third chapter, entitled “Inquiry on Religion in the Period of Ideological Changes – From Study to Critique” (129–172), Bubík proceeds to the very difficult and burdensome assessment of the situation of the Czech study of religion in the period of the so-called “real socialism” during which a strong influence of Marxist dogmatism in all humanities prevailed (especially until 1956). The author characterized the Communist transformation of science in general as a “sovietization” of it. The study of religions as a scholarly discipline was substituted by the so-called “scientific atheism” of Marxism-Leninism (departments of scientific atheism were quickly established during that period, with the sole exception of Poland, where none ever existed). Pursuant to Marxist directions (particularly Feuerbach’s 11th thesis: “philosophers had only interpreted the world variously, the matter is to change it”) the task of scholars researching religion was not simply to learn what religion is but mainly to use that knowledge to help defeat religion, or as said in Marxist terminology, to get rid of the “religious prejudices.” Bubík claims that for many religious studies’ scholars (even for Otakar Pertold, scholar of crucial importance and merits for the development of the Czech study of religions) anticlericalism and the “new ideology” were frequently interconnected. The author illustrates the period’s understanding of the “scientific atheism” in Czechoslovakia by analyzing terminology, theoretical concepts, and issues

of the Czech representatives of Marxism-Leninism such as O. Nahodil, E. Kadlecová, A. Robek, I. Svi-
ták, R. Kalivoda, Z. Lahulek-Faltys, and I. Novotný.

For the Marxists, in the 1950s and the 1960s, some of the problems and controversies important to them during the time of the birth of the study of religions in the 19th century were still relevant, as, for example: 1. the relationship between faith and reason or between religion and science; 2. the origin and development of religion; 3. the dispute about the *Leben-Jesu-Forschung* – including historicity of Jesus; 4. the issue of the future, i.e., of the extinction of religious beliefs; and 5. a sharp anticlerical critique of Christianity seen as a support of unjust social conditions. After the Second Vatican Council, interesting initial attempts were made at a dialog between some Marxist philosophers (P. Bendlová, V. Gardavský, M. Machovec) and Christian theologians and philosophers (mostly adherents of Christian Existentialism, Death of God Theology – especially Personalism and Theology of Rescue).

The author holds that during the 1980s, in Czechoslovakia, the interest in studying the processes of secularization dominated, together with a widely developed “scientific atheistic” education (J. Loukotka, I. Hodovský, H. Pavlincová, and others).

It is necessary to highlight that Bubík in his analysis of the Czech version of the “scientific atheism” of Marxism-Leninism does not remain only on the level of cheap critique of the ideological engagement of such an approach to the study of religions and depreciation of its scholarly results (today very easy to do). He often admits that some of the representatives of Marxism-Leninism, despite their ideological position, were scholars who made significant contributions to the development of the Czech study of religions and some even had international reputation.

Apart from the development of the “scientific atheism” of the 1960s, interesting approaches to the academic study of the history of religion evolved in Christian theology (both Catholic and Protestant – M. Kaňák, J. M. Lochmann, J. Heller, J. Kubalík). Especially the works and the personality of the Protestant theologian Jan Heller became significant for the further development of the study of religions, particularly since the 1990s with the reestablishment of the discipline (Heller et al. 1990).

Tomáš Bubík devoted the fourth chapter, entitled “The Development of the Study of Religions after the Political Changes in 1989” (173–184), to the description and analysis of the process of reestablishment of the Czech study of religions after the breakdown of the totalitarian regime. He not only demonstrates the naturally anticipated overcoming of the “scientific atheism” of the previous political

system, but focuses also on the institutionalization of the discipline. Assessing their contributions to the discipline, he pays attention to the concept of detheologization of the study of religions (177–184) promoted particularly by Protestant theologians (such as J. Heller, M. Balabán, P. Pokorný) and also by some Catholic ones (T. Halík, K. Skalický, I. Štampach). Although this chapter is the shortest, it must have surely been the most difficult one to write. Undoubtedly, the discussion of the current issues has not yet come to an end. The chapter naturally presents the evaluation and critical analysis of the processes *in statu nascendii*. It is hard to maintain a neutral distance from the present-day situation, especially since Bubík is an active participant in it. As far as I know, this part elicited some hostile reactions from several former proponents of “scientific atheism.” The author’s courage at opening this unfortunate chapter in the discipline’s national history must be appreciated, even if possible simplifications of his view will eventually be put right in further works inspired by his publication.

The fifth chapter, “Possibilities and Limits of the Czech Study of Religions. The Case of the Orient” (185–208), is concerned with the issue of a worldview engagement (theological, philosophical, atheistic, ideological, etc.) present in Oriental studies. Bubík critically assesses specific stereotypes used in the understanding of Oriental culture and its religions. According to him these stereotypes, including patterns of thought, field terminology, personal values, and frame of reference, have deep roots in Western culture, especially in Christian theology and philosophy. These traditional preconceptions were modified by secular sciences during the 19th century, and then used for a nonreligious categorization of reality. Bubík’s critical reflection indicates a strong dependency of many branches of the humanities on previous thought structures and thus questions the objectivity of modern science, including history of religions. This part of the book can be considered as an original contribution to the study of religions and its importance exceeds the scope of national research significantly.

The last part of the book (209–223) summarizes methodological problems of the study of religions. The author concludes (210) that in the Czech study of religions in the 20th century three basic worldviews, influential in the understanding and research approaches concerning this subject, can be discerned: religious, antireligious, and nonreligious/secular views. Finally, Bubík considers the problems of philosophical fundamentals of the academic research of religions. He very interestingly explains possible effects of subjectivization of scholarly ap-

proach, the function of personal and cultural ideology (religious faith or engaged atheism) in science, the issue of nonscientific tasks (for example, effort at interreligious and interconfessional dialog), problems of scientific reductionism, etc. Unambiguously he defends the postulate of the necessity for scientific objectivity and admits that the study of religions is “a modest (and minimalistic) scholarly project” (223), despite the permanent presence of ideological tendencies trying to defend ideology by ongoing critical self-reflection. It is clearly implied that the philosophy of the study of religions (or rather “*Meta-Religionswissenschaft*”) is significant as a critical theory of academic studies of religion and as such it plays a protective role over its scholarly character.

Tomáš Bubík’s work is well-structured, logically argued, supported by examples, clear, and readable. However, it contains a few imperfections, for example, in the bibliography there are some incomplete entries (lacking subtitles), although they are complete in the footnotes (for example, the works of K. Banek and Z. Zdybicka). On p. 238, a text by Z. Poniatowski is quoted, but the information that it comes from his preface to the translation of G. van der Leeuw’s “Phenomenology of Religion” is missing. In several places, authors’ names are incomplete or misspelled, for example, the name of W. B. Kristensen is incomplete (234), the name of E. B. Tylor is misspelled (28), but correct in other places, Å. Hultkrantz’s surname is also misspelled (39, 244). But these might be just typographical mistakes and will be easily corrected in a second edition of the book.

It is not possible to list all the merits of Tomáš Bubík’s work in such a short commentary. Suffice it to say that the progress of science in general depends on cumulating knowledge about the subject explored, and in that sense Bubík’s inquiry presents a valuable and helpful compendium for the understanding of his researched topic. This work is original, precious, valuable, and will impact not only the Czech but also the international studies of religion. The book is a useful source for scholars, such as philosophers (especially those working in theory of science), scholars of religious studies, historians of sciences, and all others interested in the methodological status of humanities and issues of their external and internal autonomy.

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Auf den Spuren der modernen Sozial- und Kulturanthropologie

Die Jesup North Pacific Expedition 1897 bis 1902 in Ostsibirien

Michael Knüppel

Das wohl herausragende Ereignis in der Geschichte der sibiristischen Feldforschung dürfte wohl bis heute die Jesup North Pacific Expedition, die in den Jahren 1897–1902 durchgeführt wurde, darstellen. Dieses Unternehmen war eine anthropologisch und