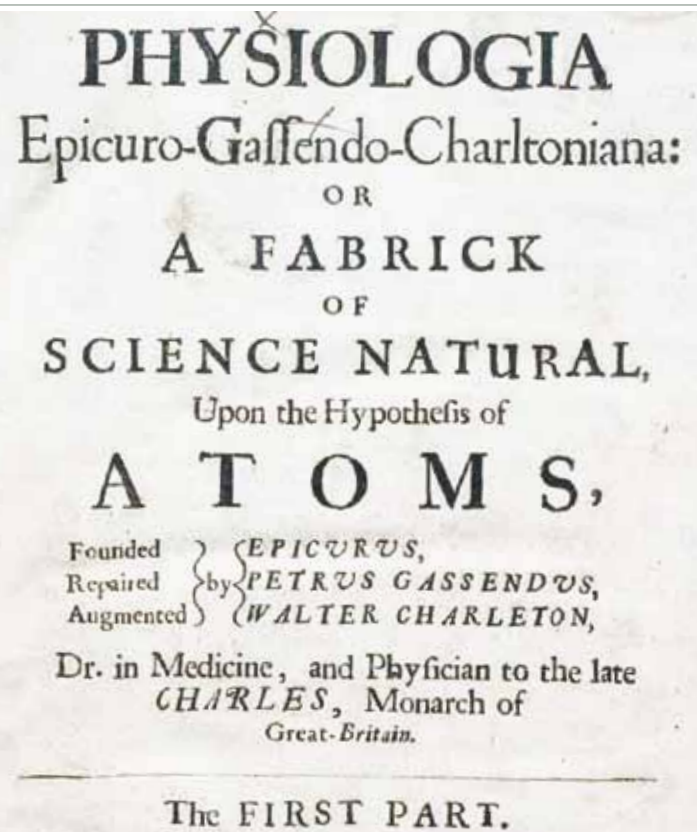


Research Institute for Philosophy, Theology and Religious Studies



Pierre Gassendi (1592-1655; French philosopher, scientist and mathematician) introduced a theory of the universe: a homogeneous entity with independent bodies.



The Research Institute for Philosophy, Theology and Religious Studies (PTR) aims to enhance knowledge of fundamental academic issues relating to society, human beings and their place in the natural world. It conducts interdisciplinary research on three dominant themes in philosophy, theology and religious studies, each of which is addressed in a distinct research programme.

Programme 1: Competing Worldviews

This programme, which has the subtitle *Philosophy, Theology, and Science as Competitors and Complements*, addresses the complex relationship between philosophical, scientific and religious views on humankind, society and the natural world. Both the history and the current status of these problematic issues are investigated. The programme encompasses projects that focus on specific *concepts* (such as that of 'natural law'), *methods* (e.g. explanation vs. understanding) and *institutions* (e.g. the Inquisition or the University). It is carried out by researchers working on the *History of Philosophy* (Prof. Lüthy), *Systematic Religious Studies* (Prof. Hübenal), *History of Church and Christianity* (Prof. Müller) and *Fundamental Philosophy* (Prof. Van Haute).

Programme 2: Cognitive Humanities

Culture – which includes language and religion – and the human cognitive system are inextricably intertwined. On the one hand, language, religion and other cultural artefacts are products of the

human mind. On the other hand, they provide a unique cognitive niche within which the human mind can function and flourish. Researchers working in the Cognitive Humanities programme investigate language and religion by using existing knowledge of the human cognitive system. Conversely, they investigate the human cognitive system through insights into language and religion. The programme involves collaboration between researchers working on *Comparative Religious Studies* (Prof. Venbrux), *Empirical and Practical Religious Studies* (Prof. Hermans), *Textual Sources of Judaism and Christianity* (Prof. van Wolde) and *Philosophy of Mind and Language* (Prof. Slors).

Programme 3: Modernity Contested

Modernity encompasses the impact of science and technology as well as the rationalization and individualization of society. It questions and reshapes religious identities and puts community ideals under pressure. The process of modernization is therefore highly contested – both from the inside by Western criticism and from the outside perspective of non-Western societies. Researchers working in this programme investigate the status and legitimacy of various contestations of the modernity process. The programme also focuses on concepts of citizenship emerging after the Arab Spring ‘revolutions’. It involves collaboration between researchers in *Islam Studies* (Prof. van Nieuwkerk) and *Practical Philosophy* (Prof. Wils)

In 2013, the PTR Research Institute was assessed by a committee of internationally renowned researchers in philosophy, theology and religious studies. The committee’s report highlights the areas in which the Institute is excellent and constructively identifies opportunities for improvement. The Institute’s research is assessed overall as being ‘very good’ – as reflected in a solid grade of 4 (the maximum is 5).

Research facilities

The faculty library, which is integrated in the central humanities library, has excellent collections of books and journals on philosophy, theology and religious studies. It houses one of the world’s largest microfilm collection of medieval and Renaissance manuscripts on logic, semantics, natural philosophy, metaphysics and theology. The library also contains several special collections and includes the Catholic Documentation Centre – a unique source for anthropological and missiological research.

Collaboration

Researchers in the PTR Research Institute collaborate intensively with colleagues, locally, nationally and internationally. Locally collaboration consists in joint research groups with other faculties and joint conferences such as the the 2013 Europe and its Worlds conference, a joint project of the Arts faculty and PTR. Nationally, they participate in accredited (Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences; KNAW) research schools. The newly founded Research School for Philosophy offers philosophers new options for

Staff

Prof. P.J.J.M. Bakker (p)
 Prof. J.A.M. Bransen (o)
 Prof. B. Geurts (o)
 Prof. M.A.C. de Haardt (p)
 Prof. P.I.M.M. van Haute (o)
 Prof. G.J. van der Heiden (o)
 Prof. C.A.M. Hermans (o)
 Prof. C.H. Hübenthal (o)
 Prof. C.H. Lüthy (o)
 Prof. D.A.T. Müller (o)
 Prof. K. van Nieuwkerk (o)
 Prof. P.J.A. Nissen (p)
 Prof. J. van Oort (p)
 Prof. J.B.A.M. Schilderman (p)
 Prof. M.V.P. Slors (o)
 Prof. H.G.B. Teule (p)
 Prof. J.M.M.H. Thijssen (o)
 Prof. P.J.M. van Tongeren (o)
 Prof. P.J.C.L. van der Velde (p)
 Prof. H.J.M. Venbrux (o)
 Prof. J.G. van der Watt (o)
 Prof. F.J.S. Wijzen (o)
 Prof. J.-P. Wils (o)
 Prof. E.J. van Wolde (o)
 Prof. E. van der Zweerde (p)

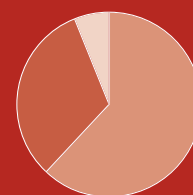
Tenured

Full Professors	9.0 FTE
Associate Professors	1.4 FTE
Assistant Professors	6.8 FTE
Researchers	1.8 FTE

Non-tenured

Researchers	4.2 FTE
Doctoral candidates	13.0 FTE

Research funding



■ Core ■ Grants ■ Contracts

(o), (e) and (p) see Glossary

joint projects and PhD training. Other PTR researchers participate in the Netherlands School for Advanced Studies in Theology and Religion, in the Netherlands Interuniversity School for Islamic Studies and in the Research School for Medieval Studies. Internationally, researchers collaborate extensively with colleagues from numerous, often well-known academic institutions.

There is collaboration with various international research groups, including those working in high-ranking institutes such as the Universities of Edinburgh, Berlin and Paris IV (la Sorbonne). or instance, the *Centre for the History of Philosophy and Science* collaborates, via a series of joint-degree PhD projects, with the University of Bucharest, the Free University of Brussels, the Innovationszentrum Wissensforschung, Freie Universität in Berlin, and the École normale supérieure in Paris. These collaborative projects are not only funded by the respective universities, but also by the EU or the Max Planck Gesellschaft. The political philosophy research groups at Radboud University Nijmegen and the Catholic

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University of Leuven collaborate on the basis of an agreement between the two universities that is currently being renegotiated. And the comparative religious studies chair cooperates with the Universities of Hull and Sheffield in the AHRC-funded network *Crossing Over: New Narratives of Death*. The Institute's three research programmes allow for programme-based cooperation with existing research institutes.

Researchers working in Programme 1 are forming a consortium with the *École normale supérieure* (Paris) and a number of West and East European universities. They also continued interdisciplinary collaboration on the history of Christian eschatological movements with the international research group CIRCAED. Programme 2 is in the process of acquiring Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) funding for collaboration with the Religion, Cognition and Culture MINDlab of the University of Aarhus, Denmark. Those involved in programme 3 collaborate with The Freiburg Institute of Advanced Studies, the Geneva Institute of Social Studies as well as with the RGGU (Moscow), the Arizona State University, and the University of the West of England/Bristol.

Research results

Programme 1: Competing Worldviews

Prof. Bakker was the first to produce an overview of Aristotelian philosophy in the late 15th century, a period characterised by the transition from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance. Prof. Lüthy, Dr Hirai, Dr Sakamoto, Dr Bakker and Dr Palmerino conceived an ambitious NWO-funded project on 16th-century atomism, providing a deeper understanding of early scientific conceptions of matter. Prof. Müller charted the transition from the Roman religion to Christianity, focusing on the development of the concept of the *paganus*. Examining the practice of canon law over the past two centuries, Dr Ackermans prepared an edition of Prof. Pieter Smulder's diary during the Second Vatican Council.

There is a new research line under the leadership of Prof. Hübenthal (Public Theology), which is part of the systematic religious studies group. Dr van Erp developed a project that gauged the impact of Schillebeeckx' theology on the evolution of public theology and Prof. De Haardt presented novel insights into the theology of cities and public spaces. In the fundamental philosophy group, Prof. van der Heiden finished a book on *Ontology after Onto-theology: Plurality, Event and Contingency in Contemporary Philosophy*. Prof. Van Haute and Dr Westerink worked on an edition of Freud's 1905 *Drei Abhandlungen zur Sexualtheorie (Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality)*. Dr Vasterling prepared a book on Hannah Arendt (to be published in 2014).

Programme 2: Cognitive Humanities

Dr Bary has set up a multi-disciplinary project on the ways in which the perspective of, for example, the author or protagonist of a story is represented in ancient Greek language and has produced

initial results. Prof. van Wolde and R. Vardi (MA) analysed the meaning of words in the minds of Biblical Hebrew language users by studying patterns of associations between words, collocations and larger constructions in their contexts of use. This approach enables them to access the ancient human mind through the study of language.

Prof. Geurts co-authored a high-impact paper on the development of infants' understanding of others, showing that the conventional wisdom on this topic needs serious adjustment. Dr Buskes demonstrated that the growth of human culture is the result of cumulative processes of selection. Prof. Slors published a new model of effective conscious intentions and Dr de Bruin developed an account of our ability to understand the emotions of others based on the 'situated cognition' paradigm.

Prof. Wijzen analysed the discourse on Islamic extremism in Tanzania and Indonesia, showing how participants position themselves as 'normal' believers by silencing and ridiculing 'extremist' Muslims. Prof. Hermans tested and validated a new means of measuring the spiritual transformation of Christian school leaders in South Africa.

Prof. Venbrux, Dr Quartier, Dr Venhorst and B. Mathijssen (MA) developed a framework that unifies a range of case studies on European ways of dealing with death. A series of studies published by Dr Hense, Dr Jespers, Profs. Nissen and Van der Velde illuminated the lure of Catholic monastic spirituality, Buddhist practices and imagery, and the process of religious transformation among immigrant Muslims.

Programme 3: Modernity Contested

Dr Borg has successfully used poetry as a source for interpreting historical transformations in Islam. This approach also proved fruitful for the study of new Muslim identities. Dr Meijer analysed the use of the term 'citizen' by Arab Spring activists and discovered a serious lack of knowledge among such activists about political developments in the Middle East. Dr Becker has identified and analysed the main networks of public Muslim *da'wa* activism in Germany and its new logic of 'connective activism' involving the use of social media. Dr Wagemakers investigated the role of the Palestinian question in the development and ideology of radical Islam. He discovered that Palestinians are not widely represented among radical Muslims and that Palestinian issues are not always at the top of lists of grievances.

Prof. van der Zweerde investigated democracy, human rights, religion and national identity in the South Caucasus. His studies provided significant new insights into the problems that emerge when modernity meets non-Western regions. In collaboration with Dr Becker, Van der Zweerde also edited a special issue of *Religion, State and Society* on Christian Social Thought. Dr Terpstra published



Dr Delphine Bellis (postdoc at the Department of History of Philosophy) received an NWO Veni grant. The aim of her research project is to study the impact of Gassendi's philosophy on the scientific revolution, particularly in England, including his influence on Isaac Newton.

on 'political theology', concluding that the Roman Catholic Church accepts liberal democracy precisely because it is implicitly committed to the idea that politics is based on fundamental values. Prof. Wils published a book on the future and the political shape of health-care systems in Europe which argues that, although the market-economy model is still dominant in politics, an alternative model is starting to appear. Prof. van Tongeren published on the good life, friendship, forgiving and retribution, and human dignity.

Awards and grants

- Dr Bary has acquired a prestigious ERC starting grant for her project on the Language of Perspective.
- Prof. van Tongeren received the 2013 Socrates award for best Dutch philosophy book for his book *Leven is een kunst. Over morele ervaring, deugdethiek en levenskunst* (Zoetermeer 2012).
- Prof. Lüthy was elected to the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW); he also obtained one of the three 2013 Radboud Science Awards for his book on David Gorlaeus (2012).
- Dr Bellis acquired a Veni postdoc grant from NWO.
- Dr Cimino received a grant from the Fritz Thyssen Foundation for the publication of his book on Heidegger.
- Prof. van Wolde was elected as a member of the *Academia Europaea*, 'The Academy of Europe'.
- Dr Spruit has been elected Visiting Prof. for 2014 by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW).
- S. Bultman (MA) received a Frye Stipend.

Societal impact

The societal impact of PTR research has three strands. Firstly, many researchers contribute to societal debate via public lectures and discussions, contributions to newspapers and publications for wider audiences. The Soeterbeeck Programme is an important platform for dissemination of research through debates and lectures. Many PTR researchers contributed to this programme via lectures, as interviewers or as advisors. In addition, researchers contributed

to public events throughout the Netherlands and abroad. For instance, Prof. van Wolde was interviewed in front of a live audience by Wim Brands and Prof. Slors was interviewed twice for Dutch TV channel VPRO's programme *Labyrinth*; he also spoke at, for example, the Radboud TEDx conference, the Oerol festival and Lowlands. Dr Palmerino engaged with eminent academics such as Profs. Hans Clevers, Erik Verlinde and Willem Knoop in a discussion on the nature of thought experiments (*NRC Handelsblad*, 31 August 2013). Dr Spruit and Prof. Lüthy both wrote for important daily newspapers (*Trouw*, supplement 'Letter and Geest'; and *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, supplement 'Feuilleton'). Dr Bax participated in a dossier on the future of the humanities for *De Groene Amsterdammer* (31 October 2013). Prof. Bransen published a widely discussed book on the influence of 'experts' on public opinion.

A second strand consists of contributions to sustaining cultural heritage and cultural memory. Thus, for instance, the new research line of the chair of systematic religious studies on Public Theology immediately generated interest and collaboration from the 'Thijmgenootschap' and 'Justitia et Pax Nederland', organizations which are interested in new accounts of how they can enter into a theologically informed dialogue with a secularized society. Prof. van Wolde participated in the University's Lustrum Programme *Radboud Kids*.

Thirdly, PTR researchers frequently provide advice to arrange of organizations and authorities, including the Dutch national coordinator for terrorism and security (NCTV). The PIM project (*publiek Islamitische Missiewerking*) is financed by the Ministry of Justice. A report for the Norwegian NGO NOREF, *Explaining the Arab Uprisings. Citizenship as Agency of Change*, has been published. The project *The diversity of Islamic finance in a comparative perspective* has facilitated contacts between Islamic and conventional financial systems. Advice has been given to the Ministry of Finance, Holland Financial Centre, Sustainable Finance Lab and The OIKOS Foundation. The project on *Comparing European Death Ways* is in the process

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Key publications

Abram, M.L. & Bakker, P.J.J.M. (2013). Der reale Unterschied zwischen dem aktiven und möglichen Intellekt. Pietro Pomponazzi's quaestio 'Utrum intellectus agens et possibilis sint duae realiter distinctae et quid sint'. In J.M. Counet & R.L. Friedman (Eds.), *Medieval Perspectives on Aristotle's 'De anima'* (pp. 297-358). Louvain-la-Neuve: Peeters.

Bax, C. (2013). Reading On Certainty through the Lens of Cavell: Scepticism, Dogmatism and the 'Groundlessness of our Believing'. *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, 21(4), 515-533.

Buskes, C.J.J. (2013). Darwinism Extended - A Survey of How the Idea of Cultural Evolution Evolved. *Philosophia*, 41(3), 661-691.

Cimino, A. (2013). *Phänomenologie und Vollzug. Heideggers performative Philosophie des faktischen Lebens* (Heidegger Forum, 9). Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann.

Heiden, G.J. van der (2013). Reading Bartleby, Reading Ion: On a Difference between Agamben and Nancy. *International Yearbook for Hermeneutics*, 12, 92-108.

Koning, M.J.M. de (2013). The Moral Maze. Dutch Salafis and the Construction of a Moral Community of the Faithful. *Contemporary Islam*, 7, 71-83.

Nieuwkerk, K. van (2013). *Performing Piety. Singers and Actors in Egypt's Islamic Revival*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Rubio-Fernández, P. & Geurts, B. (2013). How to pass the false-belief task before your fourth birthday? *Psychological Science*, 24, 27-33.

Slors, M.V.P. (2013). Conscious Intending as Self-Programming. *Philosophical Psychology*, 1-20.

Terpstra, M.J. (2013). The Political Theology of a Potestas Indirecta. *Religion, State & Society*, 41(2), 133-151.

Venbrux, H.J.M., Quartier, T., Venhorst, C.J.H. & Mathijssen, B.M.H.P. (Eds.). (2013). *Changing European Death Ways*. Münster: Lit Verlag.

Wagemakers, J. (2013). In Search of 'Lions and Hawks': Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi's Palestinian Identity. *Die Welt des Islams*, 53(3-4), 388-415.

Wijsen, F.J.S. (2013). 'There are radical Muslims and normal Muslims': an analysis of the discourse on Islamic extremism. *Religion*, 43(1), 70-88.

Wils, J.-P. & Baumann-Hölzle, R. (2013). *Sinn und Zukunft des Gesundheitswesens. Wege aus der Vertrauenskrise. Ein philosophischer Kommentar in praktischer Absicht*. Zürich/Basel/Genf: Schulthess Juristische Medien.

Wolde, E.J. van (2013). One Bow or Another? A Study of the Bow in Genesis 9:8-17. *Vetus Testamentum*, 63, 124-149.

Dissertations:	12
Scientific publications:	234
Professional publications:	105

Director: Prof. Marc Slors

Since November 2005, Marc Slors has been Professor of Philosophy of Mind and Cognition at Radboud University Nijmegen. He got his PhD in philosophy from the University of Utrecht in 1997 (his supervisor was at the University of Illinois in Chicago). He then worked as an NWO postdoc and later as a KNAW research fellow at Radboud University Nijmegen and the Australian National University. He has published widely on problems connected to the mind-brain relationship, mostly in international scholarly journals, but recently also for wider audiences. He is associate editor of *Philosophical Explorations*.



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of setting up a funerary academy with stakeholders such as DELA. Finally, a tool-kit on civic virtue and ethical education was developed by PTR researchers and presented at a conference with school leaders (25 September 2013).

Future research

In programme 1 new lines of research, for example, on the Humanist revival of pre-Socratic philosophy and atomism, will be initiated, while various book projects will be completed. The NWO project on 16th-century atomism will continue. In programme 2 an Ety Hillesum project will start in the memorial year 2014, as well as a project on the lure of monastic spirituality. Cognitive linguistic studies of Biblical Hebrew will focus on the categories of emotion and motion, deepening our knowledge of ancient cognition. The more general interdependence of language, culture and cognition will become a unifying line of inquiry. Furthermore, NWO-funded projects on eschatology and spiritual care for cancer patients will commence. In programme 3 a joint research project with the Norwegian NGO NOREF on the reawakening of citizens after the Arab uprisings will start. An EU-funded COST project, involving 29 researchers, all from different universities, will work on forming a large research consortium for the purpose of preparing further European grant proposals. Current research on future concepts and models of democracy – as well as on the problematic relationship between both Western and non-Western religions and modernization processes – will be continued.