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Authors: Sarah Jane Boss and Chris Maunder

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From the editors of *Maria*, Sarah Jane Boss and Chris Maunder

The Centre for Marian Studies conference held between July 8th and 10th 2021, on the theme 'Bridges and Boundaries: The Role of the Virgin Mary in Faith and Culture', provided an example of how the boundaries of distance during a pandemic can be bridged by the technology of modern media. While face to face contact over some shared refreshments is always the most enjoyable and productive means of scholars meeting together, internet communication technologies have shown us that when travel is impossible, too expensive, or too great a carbon footprint, successful conferences are still possible, although it can feel odd meeting a range of international colleagues while sitting in your front room, wearing indoor clothing, and sipping a hot drink or munching on snacks that you can't offer to anyone else! Nevertheless, one suspects that the sheer convenience of this mode of coming together will endure beyond the pandemic.

The conference has provided us with three of the articles for this issue of *Maria*. Patrizia Granziera has provided us with the copy and illustrations for her paper on Mary and images of the divine feminine in colonial Mexico. Rita George-Tvrtković's article derives from her conference paper on Mary in Islam and how this has informed Catholic writing on the Immaculate Conception. Andrew Unsworth's paper could not be presented at the conference due to family illness, and so it is good that the journal now gives him the chance to air his research on Swinburne's Orthodox apologetics and the Virgin Birth. All these excellent papers will give the reader a range of insights into the interfaces between religions and cultures where the Marian image plays an important role.

The remaining article, although not presented at the conference, provides another instance of bridges across boundaries. Marija Pehar's insightful work on devotion to the Immaculate Heart was originally published in Croatian, in *Bogoslovska smotra (Theological Review)*. It is part of *Maria's* mission to share ideas on Mary translated from other languages. Another project dear to the editors, and to which Marija's research belongs, is an interpretation of traditional Marian devotions in a way that transcends assumptions and stereotypes, and unearths their riches for a twenty-first century world.

There are two book reviews in this issue, both on volumes published in 2021. Sister Cathy Jones has provided a helpful overview of the Marian material present in *The Oxford Handbook of Divine Revelation*. Chris Maunder has reviewed an English translation of Manfred Hauke's *Introduction to Mariology*, originally published in Italian in 2008. Both of these books are reference works for ongoing consultation rather than one-off reads. Reference works, while costly, create a really useful library. These are, as you might expect, also available as e-books.

Sarah Jane Boss is still working on the completion of the translation of the early twelfth century Eadmer tract on the conception of Mary and this will appear in Vol. 2 No. 2 (July 2022).



The editors wish you well in this third year of the pandemic which we very much hope will see an end to its more terrible effects and a return to some kind of 'normal'. We continue to welcome your contributions and the sharing of ideas in Marian Studies. Perhaps someone will consider writing something on Mary and the pandemic, on how Mary has maintained hope and meaning during the various lockdowns. Most of us, before 2020, will have associated the Latin word *corona*, crown, with the crown of Mary, Queen of Heaven in Christian tradition. Those of you who noticed that link might have seen it as a sign for hope for a victory for human science over the pandemic. Papers on Mary and the environment, that other great (greater?) challenge for the global community would also be interesting to receive.