



## PROPOSAL FOR THEMATIC VOLUMES TO CELEBRATE ST ANTONY'S SCHOLARS

St Antony's College is home to a number of senior and emeriti scholars who have built extensive academic networks and laid the foundations for important explorations in international studies in the social sciences and humanities. The initiative set out in this document intends to leverage the Palgrave St Antony's series as a vehicle for highlighting the work of senior College Fellows. An advantage of the series is that we are able to propose for publication edited collections of essays so long as they are united by genuinely timely academic themes and issues. This advantage can be adapted to the concept of a Festschrift-like volume, without the downfalls of that genre.

The principal difference between a traditional Festschrift and the St Antony's version (which we are referring to as a "fresh riff") is that we would broaden the typical circle of contributors and insist that the volume take a critical perspective on the scholarly themes it addresses. Normally the traditional model is composed of compositions provided by former (doctoral) students of the great scholar. Often the contributions may be quite random, 'pulled from the desk drawer', with little thematic unity. Such disjointed vanity projects are still upheld as a scholarly tradition in some Continental academic environments. A recent critic of the genre comments:

The moment communities pay tribute to foundational figures, the relation between individuals and society is laid bare. When the celebratory mood kicks in, a narrative of institutional history takes over from daily social intercourse. Self-congratulatory and rather complacent cultural practices highlight the mutual benefit of working together.<sup>1</sup>

An obvious weakness for the ordinary Festschrift, based on the students paying tribute to the master, is that it can suffer from complacency and self-congratulation, to say nothing of a hagiographic approach to the focal scholar.

The St Antony's non-Festschrift – fresh riff -- model takes a different approach

- Draw on a range of contributors who represent not merely the celebrated scholar's students but colleagues, collaborators, and if appropriate, critics.
- Find contributors from diverse generations, genders, viewpoints, and national epistemologies where possible.
- Focus on a central theme or issue that has dominated the celebrated scholar's academic career; or is organized around clusters of issues/questions that are relevant and currently urgent in the field.
- Include (if appropriate) an 'intellectual biography' of the scholar that is critical, comprehensive, and tied to the focal themes of the wider volume. This could be the introduction to the volume.
- Include (if desired) a contribution of commensurate academic quality by the scholar being celebrated.

Such volumes could emerge from a conference or drawn together remotely. They may begin on the initiative of the Palgrave St Antony's series editors, in cooperation with a lead editor, or be the result of proposals from the College's research centres. In every case a lead editor committed to seeing the project through to publication is required.

While these could be standard (60,000-120,000 word) volumes, we would encourage Centres to consider the pivot format (30,000-60,000 word) to expedite production to coincide with the College's anniversary in two years.

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<sup>1</sup> Colăcel, Onoriu. "The Festschrift: Typicalities of the Genre." *Messages, Sages and Ages* 6, no. 2 (2019): 38-40.