

Conference in Salamanca

I was worried for my trip to Salamanca, because there is no easy way to get there from Iceland. After a flight to Gatwick, one night at the airport, early morning flight to Madrid, a crazy run through Barajas to buy a ticket to Salamanca and a pleasant bus drive through the Castilian highlands I finally arrived. The registration went well and the organizers were pleasant and helpful. Since I was tired after the 24 hours journey I was grateful for the nice and a hospitable smile that I received at the end of the journey. The conference as a whole was deeply inspiring to me. The title of it was "Listening, understanding and giving answer" and the three related themes were distributed evenly through the conference, first day for listening, second day for understanding and the third for giving answer. Some of the papers were deeply contextual, others more theoretical, and I liked this strong mixture of practicality and theory. This was my third ESWTR conference. I went as the representative of Iceland to a small conference in Graz to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the ESWTR and then I attended the XIII international conference in Winchester in 2009. Very little translation went on in Graz, and I remember that I also had difficulties grasping what was going on in Winchester, even with all the translations. This time it all felt very comfortable to hear German, Spanish and English spoken together. I think this is one of the greatest assets of the International ESWTR conference to be able to bring together researchers of different linguistic worlds, who are able to share their research with others without being lost in translation. I look forward to reading the papers in the Journal next year, knowing that if it had not been for the translations, I would probably have missed out on the majority of them. We went to see Salamanca by night and it was wonderful to walk those ancient and beautiful streets with a knowledgeable guide. I also liked the conference book with all the contact information and picture of the participants. I did not keep the Winchester book, but I will keep this one. If one of the big reasons for going to conferences is listening to inspiring papers, another good reason is to network and make contacts throughout Europe, and it is helpful to be able to look people up in the book. I thought that I would only know two or three people, but in fact I knew much more and my circle of acquaintances grew a lot. I shared a room with Isa Breitmaier whom I had never met before. It was a challenge at first because we only had one key to the room, but after we got separate keys we became much happier. I recommend sharing a room with another ESWTR member, it is the perfect way of getting to know each other and share research interests and other interests. The house where the conference was held was a bit far away for going down town, and I wish that we would have had opportunity to socialize during the evenings over beer or a glass of wine. This year the conference was accompanied by an art exhibition, where ESWTR members showed their paintings and sculptures. The artwork was amazing and helped to make intuition and reflection during the conference as harmonious as possible. This was my first visit to northern Spain and I wish I had had more time to explore it. I flew back home to Iceland on Saturday night, happy and energetic over all the new inspirations that I had received from my fellow ESWTR sisters.

Sigrídur Guðmarsdóttir, Pastor and researcher Guðrídarkirkja, Grafarholt, Reykjavík
www.abyssofgod.wordpress.com