



**Research Platform  
Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society**

[www.religionandtransformation.at](http://www.religionandtransformation.at)



# RaT Newsletter

Number X

February 2017

---

## 1. PERSONNEL MATTERS

- Staff
- Members

## 2. PUBLICATIONS

- Interdisciplinary Journal for Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society
- Recent monographs and edited volumes published by RaT members (selection)
- Recent articles published by RaT members in edited volumes and journals (selection)

## 3. PREVIEW

## 4. REVIEW

## 5. THIRD-PARTY FUNDED RESEARCH PROJECTS

- Newly approved projects
- Project applications (selection)
- Completed projects



# 1. PERSONNEL MATTERS

## Staff

We are happy to announce (although we will miss her badly) that **Isabella Gunazini**, former manager of the research platform Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society (RaT), has been appointed Professor for Fundamental Theology at the University of Graz by October 1st, 2016. We wish Isabella best of luck for her new job!



Since November 1st the team of the platform is supported by **Michaela Richter**, responsible for fundraising and public relations. Dr. Richter studied Commercial Science at Vienna University of Economics and Business and wrote her Dissertation on the issue of strategic introduction of Computer Integrated Manufacturing (CIM). After holding jobs in consulting and industry, she managed the corporate fundraising of the Austrian Diakonie for seven years. Most recently she managed the establishment of a new structure for 80 asylum seekers on behalf of the Diakonie Refugee Services. In addition, Michaela Richter studied Theology (2006-2013) and wrote her Master's thesis about Meister Eckhart. Currently she is working on her theological Dissertation on Christian de Chergés, Prior of Tibhirine (Algeria). Michaela

Richter will bring in her expertise to reach a professionalization of the platform's public appearance and takes care of fundraising and third-party funding.

Since January, **Astrid Mattes** is part of the platform's management team. She received Master's degrees in Political Science and Comparative Religious Studies, studying at the University of Vienna and the University of Limerick. Her recently completed Dissertation in Political Science is entitled "Integrating religion: The roles of religion in Austrian, German and Swiss immigrant integration policies" and investigates how and why religion is increasingly addressed in the field of immigrant integration. In the platform's context she worked for the research project "Mapping Religions in Vienna" and is a member of the research group INEX. Furthermore, in collaboration with Kristina Stoeckl und Julia Mourão Permoser, she edited a special issue of J-RaT on „Institutional Responses to Religious Diversity“.



## Members



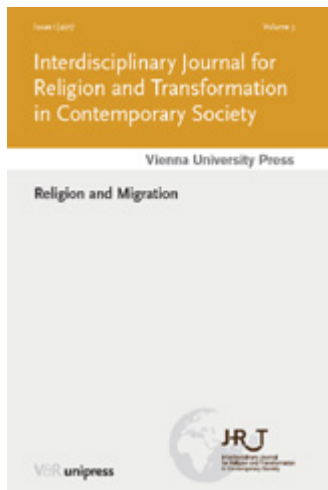
We are happy to welcome ao. Univ.-Prof. **Stefan Hammer** from the Department of Legal Philosophy as a new member of the research platform. His guest professorships and research fellowships brought him amongst other places to the University of Kansas' School of Law, the Bratislava University of Law, the University of Dakar (Senegal), the University of Mekelle (Ethiopia) and the University Paris Descartes - Paris V. Central issues of his research are Human Rights and constitutionalism with a focus on comparative, intercultural perspectives. For many years he has been involved in interreligious exchange with Iran and Indonesia and a member of Vienna University's Research Centre "Human Rights". He published an article on public religion and reasoning in the 10th volume of the RaT book series on "Europe with(out) Religion".

## 2. PUBLICATIONS

### Interdisciplinary Journal for Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society

#### VOLUME 4: RELIGION AND MIGRATION

Date of release: January 2017



In recent years, the topic of religion in the context of migration has become a major issue in society and politics. Since autumn 2015, the beginning of the so called „migration-crisis“ in Europe, also European academic discourse intensifies its research on this highly controversial topic. The 4th issue of the „Interdisciplinary Journal for Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society“ discusses diverse occurring phenomena within this area from an interdisciplinary perspective. Experts on religious, political and educational science – from demography and theology as well as representatives from Christianity and Islam – reflect transformation-processes on diaspora communities and subjective religiosities, the discourse on religion and migration in political science and the contribution of theology and religious institutions to the challenges of flight and migration. The contributions offer empirical insights into the plural religious field of Europe, which is being transformed intensively by migration.

Articles of the fourth volume:

#### 1. Klaus Hock / Martin Baumann / Wolfram Reiss

**Tragende Netze und schwankende Böden: Neue Herausforderungen für Religionsgemeinschaften in der Migrationsgesellschaft**

#### 2. Heinz Fassmann

**Religiosität und Integration: drei Bemerkungen zu einer ambivalenten Beziehung**

### 3. Farid Hafez

Thematisierung von „Religion“ in der österreichischen Politikwissenschaft. Status Quo, Tendenzen und kritische Anmerkungen

### 4. Thomas Eppenstein

(Inter)religiöse Erziehung in der Migrationsgesellschaft

### 5. Guido Boffi

Without mapping. Una rilettura di Gn 10,1-32 - 11,1-9 in prospettiva geoestetica

### 6. Sule Dursun

„... Da kenn ich eine kleine Kirche ... da gehe ich rein ... bete ich türkisch ...“. Modifikationen religiöser Identitäten bei Akademikerinnen türkischer Herkunft in Wien

### 7. Justice Richard Kwabena Owusu Kyei / Mary Boatemaa Setrana / Rafal Smoczyński

Practicing Religion across national borders: A study of Ghanaian Christian Churches in Amsterdam

### 8. Michael Bünker

Jeden Sonntag Pfingsten? Evangelische Kirche - Vielfalt durch Migration

### 9. Amena Shakir

Islam in Europa – europäischer Islam?

### 10. Michael Nausner

Changing Identities, Changing Narratives: Can Theology Contribute to a New Cultural Imagination of Migration?

### 11. Regina Polak

Trauer und Angst in Freude und Hoffnung transformieren. Zum Beitrag der Praktischen Theologie im Kontext von Flucht und Migration

## Open Section

### 12. Thomas Auinger

Die fünf Daseinsgruppen (skandhas) in Abhebung zu Platons Auffassung der Sinnes- und Seelentätigkeit

## Recent monographs and edited volumes published by RaT members (selection)

**Deibl, Jakob H.:** Poetica del congedo. Hölderlin e la nominazione del divino (=PerConoscenza). Translated by Mattia Coser. Bologna: Edizioni Dehoniane 2016.



Hölderlin's work was almost forgotten for about a century but gathered broad attention in 1914, when the old European order came to an end and remained topical ever since. The publication of until then unpublished poems, written between 1800 and 1806, contributed to this increased attention. The present book starts from the assumption that there is a successive loss of all ideas that coined occidental history. The dismissal of these motives is most extensively expressed in the image of the separation of the divine from the human world and language. At this point, the Christian narration regains importance, namely in the search for a new way to name the divine. Hölderlin's topicality lies in the dismissal of formative occidental narratives and the search for a new linguistic horizon.

**Langer, Gerhard:** Midrasch (Lehrbuchreihe Jüdische Studien; UTB 4675). Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2016.



The term “Midrash” is used to describe both the biblical research by Jewish scholars and the literary genre of the same name. Midrash also stands for proclamation, teaching and transmission. Gerhard Langer investigates the phenomenon of Midrash from its beginnings in inner-biblical interpretation to the present. He shows which means and methods Jewish scholars used to access scriptures and to keep them alive. The author discusses the most important Midrash works and presents central issues using manifold examples. With a view on Jewish religion, Midrash is about nothing less than the understanding of the word of God, the transmission of his message, which is in constant need of interpretation, and the aim to thereby get closer to him.

**Lohlker, Rüdiger** (ed.): Der Buchstabe bā’ – Texte zur Einsheit des Seins in der Tradition Ibn ‘Arabīs (Licht der Weisheit. Interdisziplinäre Schriftenreihe zur Islamwissenschaft 12). Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovač 2016.

The Sufi tradition founded by Ibn al ‘Arabī, later on known as the „Oneness of Being“, is up until today one of the most important strands of Islamic mysticism. The present edited volume collects articles about this tradition, aiming to take the Oneness of Being as a starting point and think ahead from here. The book also includes translated texts from this important Sufi tradition.



**Rothgangel, Martin** et al. (eds.): Religious Education at Schools in Europe. Part 1: Central Europe (=Wiener Forum für Theologie und Religionswissenschaft). Göttingen: V&R unipress 2016.



The project “Religious Education at Schools in Europe” (REL-EDU), which is divided up into six volumes (Central Europe, Western Europe, Northern Europe, Southern Europe, South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe), aims to research the situation with regard to religious education in Europe. This volume outlines the organisational form of religious education in the countries of Central Europe (Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Poland, the Principality of Liechtenstein, Slovakia, Slovenia and Switzerland). This is done on the basis of thirteen key issues, which allows specific points of comparison between different countries in Europe. Thereby the volume focuses the comparative approach and facilitates further research into specific aspects of the comparison.



**Tück, Jan-Heiner / Langthaler, Rudolf** (eds.): „Es strebe von euch jeder um die Wette“. Lessings Ringparabel - Paradigma für die Verständigung der Religionen heute? Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder 2016.



In an increasingly heated climate regarding the politics of religion, the question of a peaceful co-existence of religions has acquired a new significance and urgency. Lessing's Ring Parable is known as a text about tolerance and understanding between Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Lessing transfers the dispute over the true religion to a competition about the good. The present edited volume sheds light on precursors of the story of the three rings, which reaches back to Boccaccio's "Decamerone" and shows, how Lessing's "Nathan the Wise" creatively perpetuates medieval conversations about religion. Lessing was in close contact with the Jewish thinker Moses Mendelssohn and conducted intensive studies on Islam. Within the articles of the book, he is analysed and located as an intellectual in an enlightenment context. Finally, the contemporary meaning of Lessing's Ring Parable is discussed. Can we understand the three revealed religions as sources of a humane practice –

including their competing claims for truth? This and other questions are discussed in contributions by Jan Assmann, Micha Brumlik, Christian Danz, Walter Andreas Euler, Marc Föcking, Reinhold Grimm, Ahmad Milad Karimi, Hans-Dieter Klein, Karl-Josef Kuschel, Christoph Schulte, Jan-Heiner Tück, and Friedrich Vollhardt.

### Recent articles published by RaT members in edited volumes and journals (selection)

Appel, Kurt: "Nach Europa zwischen Philosophie und Gebet", in: H.-B. Gerl-Falkovitz (ed.): Europa eine Seele geben. Ambo 2016.

Appel, Kurt: "The Essence of Europe Consists in Pointing Beyond Itself", in: International Journal of Philosophy and Theology (RJPT) 2016.

Berghammer, Caroline et al.: "More than church taxes: Families shape disaffiliation of Austrian Roman Catholics", in: Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 23.06.2016.

Guanzini, Isabella: "L'esperienza moderna della libertà fra communitas e immunitas", in: A. Montanari (ed.): Chiamati a libertà: L'idea cristiana e le sue contraffazioni. Milano: Glossa Editrice 2016. p. 27-76.

Holzleithner, Elisabeth: "Paradigmen des Rechts", in: P. Koller / C. Hiebaum (ed.): Faktizität und Geltung (Klassiker Auslegen 62). De Gruyter 2016. p. 153-168.

Langer, Gerhard: "Eigentlich sollte es bei dir keine Armen geben: Schlaglichter auf das Thema Armut(sbekämpfung) in der rabbinischen Literatur", in: Münchner Beiträge zur Jüdischen Geschichte und Kultur, Vol. 10, No. 1, 2016, p. 9-18.

Lohlker, Rüdiger: "Dschihadismus im Internet: Gespräche aus Österreich", in: Journal for Intelligence, Propaganda and Security Studies, 2016, p. 103-108.

Lohlker, Rüdiger: "Friede. Islamische Perspektiven", in: Frieden: Vom Wert der Koexistenz. Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft 2016.

Polak, Regina et al.: "Religion and Values in Central and Eastern Europe", in: András Máté-Tóth et al. (eds.): Focus on Religion in Central and Eastern Europe: A Regional View (Religion and Society 68). De Gruyter 2016, p. 33-73.

Polak, Regina: "Wertegemeinschaft Europa? Eine Skizze der Wertelandschaft (West)Europas", in: Quart: Zeitschrift des Forums Kunst, Wissenschaft, Medien der Katholischen Aktion Österreichs, No. 1, 2016, p. 10-14.

Potz, Richard: "Die orthodoxe Kirche in der zweiten Republik", in: H. Paarhammer / A. Rinnerthaler (eds.): Kirchlicher Wiederaufbau in Österreich. Verlag Peter Lang AG 2016. p. 849-877.

Rosenberger, Sieglinde / Stöckl, Iris: "The politics of categorization – political representatives with immigrant background between ‚the other‘ and ‚standing for‘", in: Politics, Groups, and Identities, 06.2016, DOI: 10.1080/21565503.2016.1194764.

Schelkshorn, Johann: "Warum heute noch religiöse Bildung? Eine geschichtsphilosophische Skizze", in: Österreichisches Religionspädagogisches Forum (ÖRF), No. 24.1, 06.2016, p. 11-19.

### 3. PREVIEW

#### **Symposium "Learning to be Human for Global Times: Current Challenges from the Perspective of Contemporary Philosophy of Religion", April 7th-8th, 2017**

The symposium's topic refers to the XXIV World Congress of Philosophy, which will take place in Beijing in August 2018 (13th-20th), entitled "Learning to be Human". Presenters from five countries will engage with problems of eroding solidarity and increasing violence in conflicts. The rapidly growing results of some disciplines (Neuro-Sciences, Robotics, Techno-Sciences) along with deep socio-economic changes require a new philosophical exploration of the term human and a reflection of human self-understanding, respectively. Relations with non-human nature need to be reconsidered. Thereby it is crucial to investigate the self-understanding of religions under present circumstances. The publication of contributions to the Viennese symposium will be presented at the XXIV World Congress of Philosophy. The edited volume will be published in a book series by the Catholic University, Washington, D.C., which documents analogous symposia around the world.

Organisation: Mag. Dr. Brigitte Buchhammer and Univ.-Prof. i.R. Dr. Herta Nagl-Docekal (both Department of Philosophy, University of Vienna).

Cooperation: RaT

Location: Seminary room of the Institute for Ethics and Law in Medicine (Ethik und Recht in der Medizin) (=Old Chapel at the Campus of the University of Vienna), court 2.8, Spitalgasse 2–4, 1090 Vienna

Registration: [brigitte.buchhammer@a1.net](mailto:brigitte.buchhammer@a1.net)

## **Conference “Religion, Immigration and the Crisis of Symbolic Representation”, June 26th-27th, 2017**

Massive migration movements brought up multiple political, social and economic crises inherent to the occidental model of democracy and society. Together with the US-American Philosopher Carl Raschke, we will discuss related phenomena as a “Crisis of Representation”. This term refers to the increasing inability of contemporary global society’s institutional, political and symbolic systems to represent dynamic societal processes. This also concerns religions as intermediaries of symbolic order and tradition. Therefore, it is crucial to ask, which new possibilities of representation evolve in current culture, and which contribution religion, philosophy and politics can make.

Location: Stift Melk, Abt-Berthold-Dietmayr-Straße 1, 3390 Melk

## ***Congress of the European Society of Women in Theological Research (ESWTR) “Translation - Transgression - Transformation”, August 23rd-26th, 2017***

The “European Society of Women in Theological Research” (ESWTR) explores borderline situations in biblical, ethical and interreligious terrain. Women in Europe have been and continue to be border crossers concerning religion. Voluntarily or involuntarily they leave their familiar environment and dare to venture into the unknown. These border crossings by female migrants (wanderers) are an impulse for movement and change of traditional thinking patterns and habits within the European societies and among religions. To “translate” something from one time and culture into another means to widen horizons and that contains undreamt potentials of hope. But “translation” is also risky: Borderlands can become a place for the experience of God as well as for the remoteness of God.

The ESWTR’s (“European Society of Women in Theological Research”) congress questions the inclusions and exclusions that are connected to the transformation processes in a religiously plural Europe. With its deliberately theological perspective it wants to make a contribution to the public debate on migration in Europe.

Within the process it marks three borderlands, which are to be sounded out and explored through border crossings:

- 1.) Biblical border crossings: Translation as bridge building between the familiar and the foreign.
- 2.) Ethical border crossings: Migration as a borderline experience.
- 3.) Interreligious/interdenominational border crossings: Dialogue between the religions and denominations as impulse for change.

Location: Vienna, Kardinal-König-Haus

Coordination: Ao. Univ. Prof. Dr. Agnethe Siquans, Department of Biblical Studies, University of Vienna (agnethe.siquans@univie.ac.at)

## **Workshop “,...Is There Anything New under the Sun in Polemics? Change and Continuity in Jewish–Christian polemics from Late Antiquity to Modernity”, November 14th–15th, 2017**

Jewish-Christian controversy is contemporaneous with the separation of the nascent Christian community from its Jewish background. From the moment of its birth, polemical discourse exhibited great diversity both in the method of argumentation as well as in style and form. Polemical “encounters,” in the widest sense of the word, manifested themselves in variegated forms such as biblical interpretations, philo-



sophical treatises, liturgy, sermons, stories, descriptions of real or imaginative disputations, chronicles, legal works, poetry, mystical works, and quite often they were written in separate treatises. In addition, the polemical intention often expressed itself in non-verbal forms, e.g. in wall paintings or illustrations of manuscripts or books. In the long history of Jewish-Christian controversy the actual forms and “norms” of polemical literature always arose from prevailing circumstances. The workshop aims at filling a historiographical gap and shedding new light on the phenomenon of change and continuity in the history of Jewish-Christian polemical encounters.

Organization: Research Platform RaT, Institute of Jewish Studies (University of Vienna), Department of the History of Jewish People (Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

### **Conference “Religious Experience, Secular Reason and Politics around 1900”, November 16th-17th, 2017 (Origin.: “Religiöse Erfahrung, säkulare Vernunft und Politik um 1900”)**

Between 1870 and 1930, different regions of the world experienced religious awakenings that engaged with secular reason in two forms, namely Historicism and Positivism (or Evolutionism). Around 1900, a broad spectrum of theological and philosophical approaches to religious experience and mysticism emerged, which was closely connected to ideological and political struggles. The conference exemplarily investigates selected paradigmatic approaches to religious experience, secular reason and politics.

Location: University of Vienna

Coordination: Hans Schelkshorn, Herman Westerink

Organisation: RaT, Department of Christian Philosophy/ University of Vienna, Titus-Brandsma-Institut/ Nijmegen

## **4. REVIEW**

### **Lecture by Siti Syamsiyatun “Politics and Religion in Indonesia: Conversation on Islam and Gender with special reference to Aisyiyah’s Imaginaries of Womanhood”, June 16th, 2016**



Siti Syamsiyatun with the students

Indonesia is known to become the fourth major democratic country and home to Muslim majority population. Although Islam is formally adhered to by most Indonesians, this does not mean that Middle East Culture dominates the daily life of the people. In fact, other influential axial civilizations, i.e. Europe,

India and China, have left their substantial imprints in Indonesian land-water and culture. Thus the idea and practice of gender status, role and relations in today's Indonesia have also been influenced by these afore mentioned civilizations, in addition to social changes took place in the region. In her presentation Siti Syamsiyatun highlighted a particular case of a Muslim women organization, named *Aisyiyah*, in their struggle to promote "Perempuan Islam Berkemajuan" (Progressive Muslim Women).

Since its inception in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Aisyiyah has propagated to moderate Islam that brings joy, life and meaning for its adherents and community, and in active conversation with the current development of sciences. Aisyiyah has applied various methods to carry out its vision of Progressive Muslim Women, varying from education to economic empowerment, and from a cultural revolution to become political interest group.

The students who participated at the guest lecture were impressed by the engagement of those courageous women in the religiously and politically difficult Indonesian context.

The presentation was organized by the Department of Political Sciences in the course of the INEX-lectures.

### Lecture by Natalya I. Maslakova-Klauberg "The Holy Alliance. An Ecumenical Concept of the 19th Century?", June 17th, 2016



Natalya I. Maslakova-Klauberg

In her very enriching lecture the professor of the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Dr. Natalya I. Maslakova-Klauberg elucidated Europe's political situation during the 19th century, especially the interrelations of France and Russia before and after the Congress of Vienna, for the students of the University of Vienna. She focused particularly on the description of Alexander I who is still until today shrouded in myth. In the subsequent discussion, not only historical but also current issues were addressed, with special attention to religion-related politics. The guest lecture was organized by the research platform RaT in collaboration with the Research Center for Eurasian Studies (EURAS).

### Study day with Patrice Brodeur "Dialogues for Human Sustainability: An Inter-Worldview Approach based on Multiple Identities and Power Dynamics", June 25th, 2016

Patrice Brodeur is a professor of the Canada Research Chair on Islam, Pluralism and Globalization at the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies at the University of Montreal. One of the main areas of his work lies in the coordination and supervision of international, interethnic, intercultural and interreligious dialogue initiatives. Currently he aims at writing down his manifold experiences in this area in order to reflect on the fundamental conceptual prerequisites of such a dialogue as the theoretical groundwork for further projects. In this context, the necessity of understanding identity not as a rigid but as a dynamic and above all plural parameter whose different aspects can either be stressed or retreat into the background dependent on the context and situation. However, the fundamental aim of such conversations is not only to get to know the other and unfamiliar, but also to develop reciprocal respect and recognition with a view to peaceful coexistence.



Patrice Brodeur

During the study day at Melk Abbey, Brodeur put the current status of his reflections up for discussion. This was interesting not least because more than ten nations were represented among the roughly 25 participants. The study day was hosted by the research platform RaT and the department of Fundamental Theology of the Faculty of Catholic Theology.

### Workshop “God’s double mission – Jesus and the Koran”, July 24th and 25th, 2016

On July 24th and 25th, 2016, a workshop themed “God’s double mission – Jesus and the Koran” (“Gottes doppelte Sendung – Jesus und Koran”) and organised jointly by the Centre for Islamic Theology at Münster University, the department of Fundamental Theology (Institute of Systematic Theology) and the research platform Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society took place at Melk Abbey. In the course of the first meetings in February 2016 in Münster Mouhanad Khorchide, Dina El Omari, Kurt Appel, Isabella Guanzini and Jakob Deibl discussed the understanding of Revelation and Mission respectively within Muslim and Christian theology. The debate mainly revolved around the significance of the Koran from a Christian perspective and the question of the falsification of the Scriptures (tahrif). In the last meeting, the main aim was to build a bridge between both traditions through an interpretative approach of central biblical texts from a Muslim perspective and of select Islamic texts from a Christian point of view.



Mouhanad Khorchide, Isabella Guanzini, Dina El Omari, Kurt Appel, Jakob Deibl

### Workshop with Carl Raschke: “Western Society, Globalization, and the Crisis of Representation”, July 26th, 2016

The department of Fundamental Theology and the research platform Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society were pleased to welcome Carl Raschke for a workshop under the title “Western Society, Globalization, and the Crisis of Representation” at Melk Abbey on July 26th, 2016. Raschke is an internationally renowned philosopher and theologian and teaches Religious Studies at the University of Denver. Raschke’s main research areas are the threshold between postmodern Philosophy and Theology, political Theology and Theory of Religion as well as popular religious phenomena. One of his larger publications that also formed the prelude to the discussion is Force of God: Political Theology and the Crisis of Liberal Democracy



Carl Raschke



(New York: Columbia University Press 2015). The starting point of the reflection is that the traditional political, religious and symbolic systems of representation considering that the economic (rampant capitalism), demographic (global migration) and political developments (increasing erosion of the traditional forms of government) have lost their efficacy. The question is whether there still can be narratives and institutionalisations that display new forms of representation.

In the context of the workshop at Melk Abbey that was hosted by the research platform RaT in collaboration with the department of Fundamental Theology at the Faculty of Catholic Theology different topics linked to this issue could be discussed.

Many graduating and doctoral students of the department accepted the invitation to the workshop. What was most intensely discussed was the significance of the virtualisation of values in the context of the prevailing crisis.

### Lecture by Christopher Brittain: “Speaking of God in a Time of Crisis: Religion as Ground Cero”, October 19th, 2016

Not long after the terrible earthquakes and tsunamis that shook Japan in March 2011, the mayor of Tōkyō made a public statement in which he said that, because „Japanese politics is tainted with



Christopher Brittain

egoism“, a tsunami had been needed „to wipe out egoism“. He thus described the disaster as „divine punishment“. As such, this political leader repeated a pattern frequently repeated in the wake of a natural disaster, terrorist attack, or other human tragedy. Such examples highlight the perils of reading meaning into situations of human suffering, as well as of speaking of God in an age when many suspect that religion is inherently violent. The lecture explored the work of theologians and philosophers, who had wrestled with that challenge, including Karl Barth, Emil Fackenheim, Johann Baptist Metz, Rowan Williams and Theodor W. Adorno. The discussion analysed ways to display some similar sensitivities to the problem in the theological speech of those thinkers, and how each of them offered instructive warnings to consider when speaking of God in delicate and critical situations.

### Lecture by Philip Cunningham: “Christian-Jewish Dialogue: Theological and Practical Challenges”, November 14th, 2016

Philip Cunningham teaches at Saint Joseph’s University in Philadelphia and is president of the International Council of Christians and Jews. He approached the topic from a practical theological perspective, whereby starting from the Jewish concept of Shalom he opened up a perspective on the alliance that enables Jews and Christians to acknowledge the alliance of the respective other with God and to support each other in the realization of their own alliance. In addition, Cunningham identified the tasks that will be pending in the domains of research and practice in the coming years in the Christian churches, the Catholic Church in particular. The themes that fall into that category



Philip Cunningham

ry are the role of messianic Jews in Christianity as well as the touchy topic of the nation state of Israel amongst others.

Besides the many students there were also members of the Coordination Committee on Christian-Jewish Collaboration (Koordinierungsausschuss für Christlich-Jüdische Zusammenarbeit) present during this lecture based on in-depth experience, which afterwards led to a varied discussion.

### **Lecture by Peter Zeillinger: “The Emergence of the Koranic Message. Revelation and History in Early Islam”, December 14th, 2016**

Peter Zeillinger, a long-standing collaborator at the department of Fundamental Theology (“Theologische Grundlagenforschung”) held a lecture and a subsequent workshop on December 14th, 2016, in the context of the course “Revelation and History”.

The central question was what constitutes the Koran as a text: what is that what we call “Koran” about? How is revelation presented? How and in what context could that which we call Koran today emerge? This is not about the book called Koran, but about the Koranic message as such. In this examination it became evident (especially following Angelika Neuwirth’s research) that the Koran developed in a culture that in late Antiquity used to belong to what we call our tradition. The Koranic message reacts in various ways to the church fathers, the Apocrypha, the Bible. The Koran therefore also has to be read as part of that culture which we call European today.

Besides many allusions to connections with ancient Arab poetry, in comparison to which the Koran represents a break, Peter Zeillinger puts the main focus on the central meaning of liturgy as the context of the development and of a possible understanding of the Koran (cf. Surah 93). Other important questions concern the theme of orality, writing and the performativity of the text as well as the questions linked to a theology of the signs and the meaning of history.



Peter Zeillinger

### **Lecture by Sergei Chapnin: “The Russian Orthodox Church and the Council”, January 13th, 2017**

In his lecture Sergei Chapnin elucidated recent developments in the Russian Orthodox Church, especially in view of the pan-orthodox synod that took place in 2016 and its reception. The invitation occurred in the context of the seminar “Recht des christlichen Ostens. Orthodoxe Kirche in Europa” (“Law of the Christian East. The Orthodox Church in Europe”) held by Eva Synek and Richard Potz. Sergei Chapnin was editor of the Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate until December 2015. From 2010 to 2014 he officiated as secretary of the Commission of the Moscow Patriarchate for Church, State and Society.

### **Lecture by Martin Kočí: “The Un-thought of Christianity in Jan Patočka”, January 21st, 2017**

In the course of a study day of the Department of Fundamental Theology in Melk Martin Kočí presented his research on the Czech philosopher, who is considered one of the most important Central European thinkers of the 20th century and who has done significant reflections on Europe and Modernity at the Institute for Human Sciences (IWM - Institut für die Wissenschaft am Menschen).

The Czech Phenomenologist Jan Patočka, who can hardly be considered as a philosopher of religion or even a theologian, in his *Heretical Essays in the Philosophy of History* strikingly remarks that “Christianity remains thus far the greatest, unsurpassed but also unthought-through” phenomenon. Focusing mainly on the enigmatic idea of the un-thought of Christianity, Kočí argued that Patočka helps us to emancipate Christianity from both the form of mythical religion as well as modern rationalist and moral theology. In fact, the idea of the un-thought opens the possibility of developing the interpretation of Christianity that comes after (the end of) Christianity as something still arriving and unfolding its indeterminate future potential.



Martin Kočí

Martin Kočí studied and then worked as a research assistant at KU Leuven (Faculty of Theology, Research Group “Theology in a Postmodern Context”) from 2011 to 2016. In 2016, he was granted a Junior Patočka Fellowship at the IWM. Martin Kočí is a co-founder and the current co-ordinator of the Centre of Theology, Philosophy and Media Theory at Catholic Theological Faculty, Charles University in Prague ([www.theo-centre.cz](http://www.theo-centre.cz)).

### Lecture by Andreas Arndt: “Bürgerliche Gesellschaft, Religion and State in the writings of Hegel and Marx”, January 25th, 2017

In his lecture the longstanding chairman of the International Hegel-Society (Internationale Hegel-Gesellschaft) and Professor of Philosophy at Humboldt Universität (Berlin) elaborated on the connections between Hegel and Marx. Starting from Hegel’s central motif of a history of freedom it was shown that in Hegel’s philosophy there never is a one-to-one transmission from the dialectical method in the sense of the absolute idea of the Hegelian logic to the context of Realphilosophie.



Andreas Arndt and Kurt Appel

Despite the misjudgement of the difference between logic and Realphilosophie by Marx, his programme can be understood as a reformulation of the philosophy of the objective spirit according to Arndt. In this context Marx examines the immanent contradiction of civil society in a new way: The worker’s lack of means of production is not, as it is for Hegel, the result of a historical development of civil society, but is already the premise without which its system would not be possible. However, this alternative approach to this problem identified by Hegel can be described in the terms of the Hegelian strategies to contain civil society by accentuating individual rights and liberties behind which one cannot step back according to Hegel. With Marx Hegel’s approach is supplemented with the dimension of social freedom.

Andreas Arndt is Professor of Philosophy at the Faculty of Theology of the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and head of the Schleiermacherforschungsstelle at the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities.

Andreas Arndt is Professor of Philosophy at the Faculty of Theology of the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and head of the Schleiermacherforschungsstelle at the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities.



## 5. THIRD-PARTY FUNDED RESEARCH PROJECTS

### Newly approved projects

#### **The Visual Culture of Sufism in Vienna: Insights into the Culture of the Sight of Mystical Islam Illustrated by the Example of the Halveti-Dscherrahi and the Chisht (Origin.: Die visuelle Kultur des Sufismus in Wien: Einblicke in die Blickkultur des mystischen Islam am Beispiel der Halveti-Dscherrahi und der Chishti)**

Runtime: 01/2017–06/2017

Funding: Kulturabteilung der Stadt Wien, Wissenschafts- und Forschungsförderung (MA7)

Management: Lukas Pokorny

Assistance: Sara Kuehn

Even though Islam, as well as Judaism and Christianity, has a tradition of prohibiting and destroying images, images play an essential role in the religious praxis of coping with life's difficulties. In relation with the social debate on the Muhammed caricatures and the destruction of precious cultural assets by the terror organization Islamic State in the Middle East it is important to make the visual and material culture of the mystic elements of the Muslim milieu accessible to an interested public. This is why the project aims at providing an insight into an important domain of the imageology of mystical Islam in Vienna. This is supposed to occur exemplarily through the examination of the visual culture in the praxis of the two Sufi groups based in Vienna, the Halveti-Dscherrahi Brotherhood and the Chishti Order. In this context, one central working hypothesis of the research is that visual culture and religious practice represent a counter-movement to religious fundamentalism and a motor of religious pluralisation.

#### **Religion and Diaspora - The Korean Community in Austria**

Runtime: 10/2016–02/2017

Funding: Baijin Trading (Seoul)

Management: Lukas Pokorny

Assistance: Sang-Yeon Loise Sung

This project is an ethnographic research exploring Korean diasporic religion in Austria. Specifically, it studies the currently active Christian Protestant (Korean Methodist Church; Korean Vienna Gospel Congregation; Korean Presbyterian Church; Protestant Jungdong Church; Full Gospel Church; Korean Protestant Church [Vienna, Salzburg/Linz, Innsbruck, Graz]) and Catholic Korean churches in Austria, examining their role in Korean community building and construction of an ethnic identity, as well as their impact on and accommodation within the host society.

### Project applications (selection)

#### **Magomed al-Shishani - Escaping Extremism and Possibilities of Prevention (Origin.: Magomed al-Shishani - Wege aus der Extremismusfalle und Möglichkeiten der Prävention)**

Submitted to: Zukunftsfonds der Republik Österreich

Management: Rüdiger Lohlker

## **Preventing Dismissive Attitudes, Radicalisation and Extremism in Schools (Origin.: Prävention von Abwertungs-Ideologien, Radikalisierung und Extremismus im schulischen und pädagogischen Umfeld)**

Submitted to: FFG (Section KIRAS)  
Management: Rüdiger Lohlker

### **Completed projects**

## **Liberal Tolerance? On the Political Dealings with Freedom of Opinion, Press and Religion in the Context of the Shock of Religiously Motivated Violence (Origin.: Liberale Toleranz? Zum politischen Umgang mit Meinungs-, Presse- und Religionsfreiheit im Schock religiös motivierter Gewalt)**

Runtime: 02/2016-12/2016  
Funding: Zukunftsfonds der Republik Österreich  
Management: Sieglinde Rosenberger  
Assistance: Katharina Götsch, Astrid Mattes

The two terrorist attacks in Paris in 2015 – on the one hand on the French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo and the Hyper Casher supermarket and on the other hand on the concert hall Bataclan, the Stade de France as well as multiple cafés, restaurants and bars – have put Europe in a state of shock. Hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets. In the political public reactions of politicians, intellectuals and religious communities many appealed to “European values” such as freedom and tolerance in particular – as emotionally charged and empty words but also as concepts that have been filled, negotiated and interpreted content-wise.

The project team has examined public statements and media reports on both attacks in a comparative case study and has analyzed the formulated research questions in the national context of Austria:

- How are European values – especially tolerance – discussed publicly in the aftermath of religiously motivated violent occurrences?
- Are there semantical fillings of the concepts “European values” and “tolerance”? And in what different ways do they occur in those two cases?
- How can the differences among the sociopolitical reactions to those two incidences be better understood?

On September 12th, 2016, the project assistant Katharina Götsch presented the first preliminary results of the investigation at the 4th Annual Conference of the Research on Migration and Integration in Austria, which was hosted by the ÖAW (Austrian Academy of Sciences).

Furthermore, a policy letter for the Österreichische Gesellschaft für Europapolitik (ÖGfE) (<http://oegfe.at/wordpress/>) was composed that was directed at political decision-makers, the media and the interested public and was published in the middle of November 2016 (around the anniversary of the devastating terror attacks that took place in Paris on November 13th, 2015). In it several recommended actions were formulated under the title “European Values against Radicalization and Violence? Political Reactions on Religiously Motivated Terrorist Attacks”.

At last, a paper headed “Religion, Violence and Concept(s) of Tolerance. Political Reactions on Terrorist Attacks” was submitted for a peer-review procedure at the open access journal Politics, Religion & Ideology. The article is currently being assessed.



Research Platform of the University of Vienna  
“Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society”

Management of the platform:

Schenkenstraße 8-10, 2nd floor, room 53, 1010 Wien

+43-1-4277-238-03

[www.religionandtransformation.at](http://www.religionandtransformation.at)