



RaT-Newsletter



Dear members and friends of RaT,

An unconventional semester is slowly ending and we hope that you were able to find some positive aspects in this challenging time as well.

With this last newsletter of the current semester, we would like to inform you about recent publications, research projects and upcoming events by RaT members. We asked the speakers of RaT about their experiences of the last few weeks and created a small blog post over on our RaT blog to give some insight into their work. The link to the article can be found towards the end of this newsletter. Furthermore, we are more than happy to welcome Prof. Andreas Kowatsch, chairholder and professor at the Department of Canon Law and Law on Religion, and Dr. Eduard Prenga, post doc research assistant, as RaT members and are very much looking forward to working with them!

We wish you an enjoyable read and a relaxing summer,

J-RAT

The newest issue of our Open-Access Journal J-RAT will be published in the coming days:

J-RAT 6 (1/2020): "Exploring Human Dignity. Foundations and Applications that Transform Contemporary Society", edited by Sigrid Müller, Todd Salzman, Nenad Polgar, Katharina Mairinger

Two generations after the proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, there is a need to evaluate what has been achieved when it comes to discussions on human dignity and human rights in terms of their foundations and applications. This issue of the Interdisciplinary Journal for Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society addresses this task from the point of view of theological ethics and religious studies. Part One of this collection provides a solid foundation for defining human dignity and promoting human rights. Part Two demonstrates how this foundation can be applied to current and pressing ethical, legal, and theological issues confronting humanity, by addressing four exemplary issues (homosexuality, gender, migrants, and climate change). Combined, these essays point a way forward for the ongoing development of a comprehensive, comprehensible, consistent, and credible definition of human dignity and human rights and their role in addressing ongoing ethical, legal, and theological issues.

[Access the new issue here.](#)

CALL FOR PAPERS: "Religion and Disease", edited by Rüdiger Lohker

In this issue, we bring together the historical and contemporary experience of religion with epidemic and pandemic diseases. The historical dimension includes cases like ancient plagues and other epidemic diseases, while the contemporary dimension includes the Spanish flu and HIV/AIDS. The traditions may comprise East Asian, South Asian, Islamic, Christian, African and American religions. A special focus should be on the current COVID-19 pandemic and the global reactions to it by different religious traditions.

[Find more detailed information on our website](#)

CALL FOR PAPERS: "From Syncretism to Hybridity: Transformations in African-derived American Religions", edited by Hans Gerald Hödl and Bettina Schmidt

Many works have been published in the wide field of research on African derived religions in the Americas. Nevertheless, the whole spectrum (South America, Caribbean, USA and “exports” to other parts of the world) is rarely covered in one volume. Thus, we want to bring together the discourse on African-American Religions (Black Hebrews, Black Muslims, Hoodoo and Voodoo in the South, amongst others) with the discussion of African-derived religions like Candomblé, Santería, Haitian Vodou and so on.

[Find more detailed information on our website.](#)

FEATURED PUBLICATIONS

Heller, Birgit. "Warum Unreinheit stigmatisiert wird. Blasen-, Darm- und Sexualstörungen aus kulturell-religiöser Perspektive". In: Journal für Urologie und Urogynäkologie/Österreich, 27 (1).

This article looks at bladder, bowel and sexual disorders from a cultural–religious perspective, discusses views on purity and impurity and the meaning of hygiene regulations for societies, gender roles and hierarchies.

[Link to the publication](#)

Polak, Regina. "Israel's 70th Anniversary: Insights and Perspectives. Politics - Culture - Religion". RaT series volume 17, (forthcoming).

This volume discusses political, cultural and religious issues concerning the society living in the State of Israel from an interdisciplinary perspective. It offers insights unknown to many into the interior of the religious, cultural and political laboratory that is Israel.

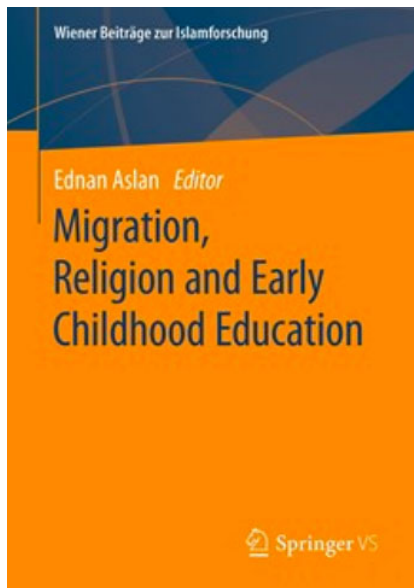


Klissenbauer/Gassner/Steinmair-Pösel/Kirchschläger (eds.). "Menschenrechte und Gerechtigkeit als bleibende Aufgaben".

Following the research approach by Ingeborg G. Gabriel, current challenges are analyzed in the commemorative publication dedicated to her and possible future perspectives from different disciplines are examined. The book is an invitation to interdisciplinary, interreligious and ecumenical thinking, in order to together make the world a more just and peaceful place. With contributions by RaT members Kurt Appel, Jakob Deibl, Hans Gerald Hödl, Stefan Hammer, Irene Klissenbauer, Rüdiger Lohker, Richard Potz, Jan-Heiner Tück and

Ulrich Körtner.

[Link to the Open Access publication](#)



Aslan, Ednan (ed.) (2020): "Migration, Religion and Early Childhood Education".

Early childhood education is hardly ever part of scholarly or political debates. However, it plays an essential role in the integration process of young immigrants in Europe since it not only enables children to integrate into society, both linguistically and culturally, but it also helps their parents to view society more directly and to reflect on their own values in the encounter. The quality of young migrants' educational achievements should not be considered independently of elementary education measures since they are very closely related.

[Link to the publication](#)



Tück, Jan-Heiner (ed.) (2020): "Die Beschneidung Jesu. Was sie Juden und Christen heute bedeutet".

Circumcision is a controversial topic: Some see it as an act of bodily injury, to others it is an indispensable ritual of religious tradition. This volume approaches the topic from perspectives of Jewish studies, theology, history of art, legal studies and medicine. It eventually seeks to find possibilities to counteract a revived antisemitism in society.

[Link to the publication](#)



Tück, Jan-Heiner (2020): "Gelobt seist Du, Niemand. Paul Celans Dichtung – eine theologische Provokation".

Recent publications about Celan hardly ever focus on the question concerning the fight for his religious legacy. Following the perspectives of the publicist and rhetorician Walter Jens on Celan's poetry, this book aims at cautiously following the religious footprints of Celan's poems and reads his poetry as an impulse for a theology after Auschwitz.



[Link to the publication](#)

[DISCOVER MORE PUBLICATIONS BY OUR MEMBERS](#)

RESEARCH

Research project on the influence of the portrayal of Islam transmitted through media on religious orientation of Muslim students in Austria, 2020-2022.

The increasing pluralization of society leads to dynamic processes that influence religious orientation and affiliations. When one looks at the portrayal of Islam in the media, it becomes clear that only a highly restricted perspective on everyday Islamic religious practices is being transmitted. The project by Prof. Ednan Aslan and Prof. Erol Yildiz seeks to research the influence that these media images have on Muslim students in Austria and their individual religious orientation.

[READ MORE ON THE PROJECT HERE](#)

THIRD MISSION ACTIVITIES

RaT members contribute to public discourse by writing in newspapers, giving statements in television and podcasts, and by publishing on our blog.

RaT BLOG

COVID-19, the public-less space and science. An outlook on summer.

We asked the speakers of research centre about their experiences and observations of the last few weeks and what questions they gathered during the pandemic. Head over to the RaT blog to read the brief interviews.

[LEARN MORE](#)

PRESS FEATURES

Online Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting

OSCE: Scapegoating of minorities during pandemic increases need for targeted action to combat intolerance and discrimination

On May 25 and 26, Regina Polak, in her role as CiO-Representative der OSCE for combating Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination, also focusing on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians and Members of Other Religions, stressed the responsibility of state authorities to strengthen tolerance towards diverse cultural, religious, and ethnic backgrounds and worldviews through dialogue initiatives, education, and cooperation with civil society.

[Read more about the event here](#)

Interview with ORF 2

In the interview with ORF 2 and the team from "Guten Morgen Österreich", Irene Klissenbauer spoke about women, research in theology and the Catholic church.

Interview with Ö1

Astrid Mattes talked in Ö1 Lebenskunst about gardens and paradises from the perspectives of religious studies.

[Listen to the interview here](#)

Expert report for SOS mit Mensch

Astrid Mattes analysed governmental policy measures on diversity and religion for the SOS-Mitmensch expert report on integration politics.

[Read more here](#)

Portrait of the writer Hamed Abboud for 041

Katharina Limacher wrote about the Viennese-Syrian writer Hamed Abboud for the Swiss culture magazine 041 in the article titled "'Gibt's nicht' gibt es nicht im Arabischen".

[Link to the magazine](#)

Article in Neue Zürcher Zeitung

Jan-Heiner Tück wrote about what the world can learn from Pope John Paul II in his article for Neue Zürcher Zeitung.

[Link to the article](#)

[LEARN MORE](#)

A NOTE ON UNIVERSITY LIFE IN THE COMING MONTHS

We are happy to inform you that, as of July 1, restrictions with regard to university life are eased. Employees, students and third parties will be able to enter the buildings without restrictions. As far as we know now, the requirement of keeping a minimum distance will still be important in the winter semester. It is therefore likely that larger events might still not be able to take place in their usual form or might be restricted in one way or the other.

For more detailed and updated information, please visit the websites of the University of Vienna and of the Vienna University Library.

[WEBSITE OF THE UNIVERSITY](#)

Conference on Jürgen Habermas postponed to 2021

Due to the current situation, the conference on Jürgen Habermas, organized by the Department of Christian Philosophy and RaT, will now take place from September 22 to September 24, 2021.

SAVE THE DATE

The YouBeOn Kick-Off Event will take place in Vienna on January 1, 2021

YouBeOn is an interdisciplinary, explorative research project interested in the conceptualization and visualization of on- and offline identifications of urban religious youth. Although growing awareness of their own diversity in terms of religion, ethnicity and language has become a characteristic feature of many European societies, political responses to this superdiversity are often one-dimensional attempts to pin down a collective identity. In stark contrast, we see that young people growing up in diverse urban areas make identifications in multiple, flexible ways, both in their physical surroundings and in digital spaces. YouBeOn asks how young religious people in superdiverse urban settings negotiate their multiple belonging on- and offline, and uses innovative methods and digital tools to answer this question.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Podcast on International Research on Religious Education and its Relevance for Society

Starting in September 2020, international scholars will discuss religious education in their new podcast to make their insights and experiences accessible to the general public. The website with further information will be launched in August.

[WEBSITE OF THE PODCAST](#)

AVISO winter semester 2020

Lecture Project “Judaism – Christianity – Islam: Inter- and Transdisciplinary Perspectives on Interreligious Dialogue of the

Three Abrahamic Religions”

In the winter semester 2020, interreligious dialogue will be the main focus of the cooperation between the Faculty of Catholic Theology, the Faculty of Protestant Theology, the Institute for Jewish Studies, the Department of Islamic-Theological Studies, the Research Centre “Religion and Transformation”, and the Kardinal König Foundation.

The lecture series “Judaism – Christianity – Islam: inter- and transdisciplinary perspectives on interreligious dialogue of the three Abrahamic religions” constitutes the core of this project. It will take place between **October 6, 2020 and January 26, 2021 on Tuesdays, 6:30pm-8pm** in lecture hall 6 at the University of Vienna.

The student initiative “Café Abraham“ furthermore offers guest lectures, movie screenings and more as supplementary program.

For more detailed information, you are welcome to contact Regina Polak, organizer of the project, via regina.polak@univie.ac.at.

LEARN MORE

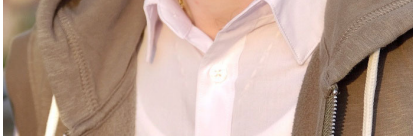
NEW MEMBERS



We are very happy to introduce Prof. Andreas Kowatsch as a new RaT member today and welcome him into the team of scholars at RaT. Prof. Kowatsch is chairholder and professor at the Department of Canon Law and Law on Religion at the Faculty of Catholic Theology at the University of Vienna. His main research areas are Austrian religious constitutional law, "Europeanization" of the law on religions, Church constitutional law, and Church civil status law. We are very much looking forward to working with him!



We would like to welcome Dr. Eduard Prenga at RaT and are very happy to introduce him today as a post doc research assistant in the project titled *Phenomenology of Belonging*. After studying philosophy and theology, he obtained a Licentiate and Doctorate degree in Systematic Theology from Pontifical Lateran University in Rome. During his habilitation, he focused on the topic of *Phenomenology of the*



Intersubjectivity in a dialogical perspective between phenomenology and theology – a research area he wishes to work on in the future.

Impressum

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