



## RaT-Newsletter



### Dear members and friends of RaT,

With this issue of our newsletter, **the current term of RaT (1 April 2022–31 March 2026) comes to a close**. We therefore take this opportunity for a brief look back – and to say thank you.

Among the many highlights of the past four years, only a few can be mentioned here: These include the successful organization of the [European Academy of Religion \(EuARe\) 2025](#), which brought together over a thousand participants from around the world, as well as the [Q1 ranking in SCImago's Religious Studies category for two consecutive years](#) achieved by our open-access peer-reviewed **Journal for Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society (JRAT)**. We were also able to significantly increase both the number of our publications and the number of our members, uniting an ever broader and more excellent range of perspectives under our roof.

Our deepest gratitude goes to all [members](#) and to our [staff](#) – without the hard work and scientific excellence of all of you, none of this would have been possible. We want to extend our gratitude to all of our former and current [speakers](#) and to the members of our [Scientific Advisory Board](#) – **Carl Raschke**, **Cornelia Richter**, and **Bettina Schmidt** – to whom we now also bid farewell, as the board's term concludes with the end of this month. Their counsel over the last four years has been invaluable!

Following our successful evaluation, **the next term will begin on 1 April 2026**. We are pleased to share a few of the **changes** it will bring:

- The Centre will be **renamed "Religion and Transformation,"** with the phrase "in

Contemporary Society” dropped to reflect that our members’ research spans not only contemporary issues but also the historical dimensions of religious transformation.

- Starting with the new term, **the publication frequency of JRAT will be increased.** This will allow us to publish even more excellent research on religion and to further strengthen the international visibility of the journal. Further details will be announced in upcoming newsletters.
- We have succeeded in securing **permanent posts for the Centre’s administration and publications management.** This continuity will enable us to plan and deliver our long-term strategies more effectively and enhance the quality of support offered to our members.

**We look forward to continuing our collaboration with our members in the years ahead** and to supporting innovative research on religion and transformation in an ever-changing world that is, perhaps, more than ever in need of rigorous scholarship and reflection.

In the meantime, we invite you to explore the latest newsletter, packed with information on new publications and upcoming events. To mention just one highlight, we are pleased to welcome four new members to our centre: **Erdal Kalayci, Franz Kerschbaum, Katharina Kraus, Sigrid Müller, and Nickolas Roubekas.** You can find their introductions and much more below!

*Kurt Appel, Noemi Call, Jakob Deibl, Sofija-Olga Kungurtseva, Daniel Kuran, Astrid Mattes, Andreas Telser, and Marian Weingartshofer*

PS: Please consider forwarding our newsletter to those interested in the topics we work on! If you are not subscribed yet, just click [here](#).

To download a pdf.-version of this newsletter, [click here](#).

## NEW MEMBERS: Welcome to RaT!

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### **Mag. Dr. Erdal Kalayci, MA**

*Faculty of Catholic Theology  
Department of Islamic-Theological Studies*

I studied Political Science and Public Communication at the University of Vienna. My doctoral thesis focused on migration, integration and education policies of migrants. From 2016 to 2022, I worked as an Alevi religious education teacher. From 2019 to 2025, I was a lecturer at the Institute for Alevi Religion at the University College of Teacher Education of Christian Churches Vienna/Lower Austria (KPH Wien/Niederösterreich).

Since 2025, I have been a post-doc research associate in the Department of Alevi Theological Studies at the Institute for Islamic Theological Studies at the University of Vienna. My research focuses on Alevi religious education (alevitische Religionspädagogik und -didaktik), community education (Gemeindepädagogik) and Anti-Alevism Studies (Antialevitismusforschung).

Alevi religious education (ARE) in schools has been offered in Austria since 2013. I am working on establishing the foundations of Alevi religious education and its didactics. I investigate the performances that occur and the rituals that are

practiced. This is connected to research on the transformation of Alevi rituals in the context of migration. Another focus is on community education and research about children's, youth and adult education in Alevi communities in German-speaking countries. Anti-Alevism research is a very young discipline and examines the mechanisms of hostility and exclusion faced by Alevis due to their religious affiliation.

To learn more about Erdal Kalayci's research, [click here](#).



### **Univ.-Prof. Mag. Dr. Franz Kerschbaum**

*Vice Dean at the Faculty of Earth Sciences,  
Geography and Astronomy  
Department of Astrophysics*

Born 1963, I teach Observational Astrophysics at the Department for Astrophysics of the University of Vienna since 2001. Main research areas cover late stages of stellar evolution, space instrumentation and the history of science. I am/was engaged in several international and national organisations - the European Science Directorate, ESAs Astronomy Working Group, ESOs Science technology Committee, the Austrian Society for Astronomy and Astrophysics, to name a few. Outreach, public understanding of science and interdisciplinary projects play an important part in my work, too. Working at and directing the historical Vienna University observatory, housing an exceptional rare book and astronomical instrument collection allowed me to develop a substantial interest in this very field.

My studies cover influential correspondence during WW2 (on e.g. the Einstein debate and Bruno Thüring), instrumental developments in the 19th century (e.g. development of the Littrow spectrograph) back to the founders of mathematical astronomy like Peurbach and Regiomontanus using their original works we own. My interdisciplinary engagement with the arts, philosophy and religion is based on the most influential role celestial events, cosmology and astronomy as a whole played for the *conditio humana* during the whole history of mankind.

*Photocredit: (C) Karl Leitner*

To learn more about Franz Kerschbaum's research, [click here](#).



### **Univ.-Prof. Katharina Kraus, PhD**

*Faculty of Philosophy and Education  
Department of Philosophy*

With its values of freedom, equality, reason, and human dignity, philosophy of the Enlightenment has decisively shaped the present world and our contemporary societies. In my philosophical research and teaching, I seek to develop new interpretations and justifications of these values on the basis of their historical sources and in light of the challenges of our



present day. My most important source of ideas is Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) and his reception in the 19th and 20th centuries. At the same time, it is very important to me to give recognition to marginalised voices in the history of philosophy such as women philosophers (e.g., Edith Stein) and to understand the dialectic of the Enlightenment with its contradictions and paradoxes.

The question of reconciling faith and reason, the progressive secularization, the increasing success of science and technology, and the return to transcendence play a significant role in the philosophy of the Enlightenment and its further development in the 19th and 20th centuries. In this sense, I am delighted to be collaborating with the Research Center “Religion and Transformation,” as the Enlightenment and modernity present particular challenges and times of change for religion.

To learn more about Katharina Kraus's research, [click here](#).



### **Univ.-Prof. Dr. Sigrid Müller**

*Faculty of Catholic Theology*

*Head of the Department of Systematic Theology and Ethics*

*Deputy Head of the Department for Ethics and Law in Medicine*

I am a theological ethicist at the University of Vienna's Faculty of Catholic Theology. My work addresses foundational questions in theological ethics, with a current emphasis on intercultural theological ethics. Together with Mirijam Salfinger and Andrea Vicini (Boston College), I have co-edited a volume on this topic; it is available online and will soon appear in print. I understand intercultural theological ethics broadly—as a framework for cooperation across religions and worldviews in various ethical domains, and as a fundamental approach within Catholic Christianity in light of its cultural diversity.

I have already collaborated with RaT on a journal issue and a book project concerning human dignity and interdisciplinary ethical anthropology. Beyond the historical development of Christian ethical thought, my research also engages how emerging technologies challenge and enrich Christian ethics. In biomedicine, I collaborate with the Institute for Ethics and Law in Medicine, the Pontifical Academy for Life, and the International Bioethics Group. I also participate in Central European networks with partners across nearly all countries of the region. I am pleased to now formally join RaT's cross-disciplinary community of cooperation and exchange.

To learn more about Sigrid Müller's research, [click here](#).



### **Ass.-Prof. Nickolas Roubekas, Privatdoz. BA MA MRes PhD**

*Faculty of Catholic Theology*



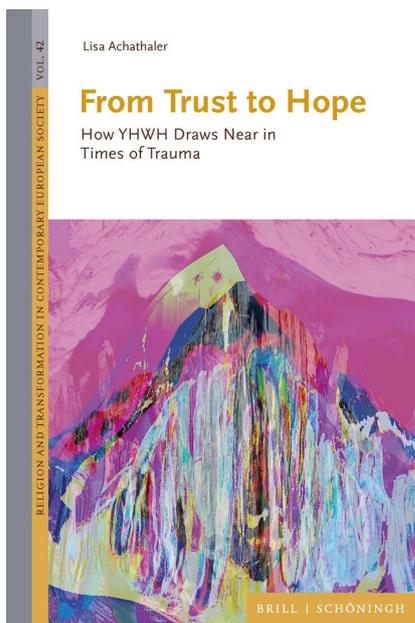
*Department of Religious Studies  
Deputy Head of the Department*

Before joining the Department of Religious Studies, I was tenured assistant professor of religious studies at the Department of Theology, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece. I have studied Theology, Religious Studies, Social Anthropology of Religion, as well as Cognitive Study of Religion in Greece, Denmark, and Scotland, and I received my habilitation from the Department of Religious Studies, University of Vienna in 2022. Prior, I held research and teaching positions at the University of South Africa (UNISA, Pretoria), North-West University (Potchefstroom, South Africa), and the University of Aberdeen (U.K.). My research is focused on theories of religion (past and present), comparison and classification in the study of religion, myth and mythology, as well as Graeco-Roman religions.

I have served as book reviews editor of *Religion & Theology* (Brill) and managing editor of the *Journal of Cognitive Historiography* (Equinox). Since 2022, I am the editor-in-chief of [NUMEN: International Review for the History of Religions](#) (Brill), the official journal of the International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR). I am currently working on a monograph on the concept of “origins” in the study of religion while also finalizing a research article on “theological incorrectness” in ancient Greek religion.

To learn more about Nickolas Roubekas's research, [click here](#).

## PUBLICATIONS: JRAT, JRAT Supplementa and RaT Series



### RaT Series (Volume 42): **From Trust to Hope. How YHWH Draws Near in Times of Trauma**, by Lisa Achathaler

Attempting to approach the name of GOD may be seen as bold and daunting, but, especially when read through the lens of trauma, it may also simply be necessary. In this book two rather indirect ways were chosen: through biblical narratives and through religio-philosophical reflections on Bernhard Welte's concept of Mitvollzug. The name of GOD, which is interpreted as being-there-for-you, serves as a common thread running through the entire book.

[Link to the publication.](#)

## Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society

VOLUME 11 | ISSUE 2 | 2023

Charisma, Popularity, Power: Grace, Religions and  
Belief throughout History until the Present

BRILL | SCHÖNINGH



## throughout History until the Present, edited by Rüdiger Lohker and Nikola Pantić

This Special Issue explores possible theoretical connections and methods to align historical notions and beliefs in mystical grace with sociological theories of charisma, addressing the scholarly challenges that arise from studying charismatic individuals and institutional religious authorities in monotheistic traditions and beyond. Studying the charismatic quality of certain people, locations, and items as a socio-anthropological marker, this project aims for a more nuanced understanding of the history of various religious traditions. Approaching the charisma/grace binary, papers within this issue analyze the emergence, institutionalization, and growth of religious offices tasked with addressing popular religious needs, and the influence of grace on political power. Emphasis is placed on the connection between charismatic rulers and priestly hierarchies, and the lasting monopoly over grace among charismatic confraternities as a means of social, economic, jurisprudential, and at times political control.

[Link to the publication \(full access\).](#)

## Interdisciplinary Journal for Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society

BRILL | Ferdinand Schöningh

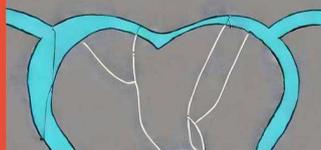


## Latest articles published online in advance (all articles are published open access):

- **Kurt Appel:** [The Qu'ran as a Gospel for Christians. What Christians can Learn from the Qu'ran about Trinity, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit](#)
- **Yoram Margalioth:** [Bridging the Divide. A Case Study in Regulating Faith-Based Financial Institutions](#)
- **Idris Nassery:** [The Islamic Ethics of Tax Evasion. Interdependence of Law, Theology and Practice](#)
- **Fabio Rambelli:** [The Buddha's Dues. Taxation in Historic Buddhist Societies in East Asia, with Special Focus on Japan](#)

## PUBLICATIONS: Monographs & Anthologies

THE FLAVOR OF  
THINKING  
Philosophy in Artistic Research  
Artistic Research in Philosophy



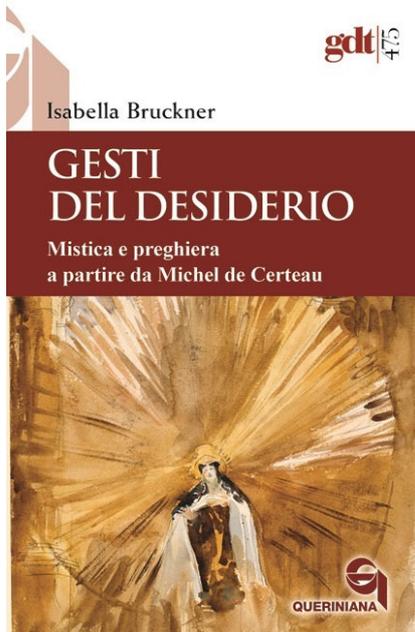
**Arno Böhler, Susanne Valerie Granzer (eds.): The Flavor of Thinking. Philosophy in Artistic Research – Artistic Research in Philosophy.** Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag 2026.

The relation between art and philosophy is highly precarious. To explore this complex connection, the contributors to this volume have structured their texts around key questions such as: What image of thought emerges when artistic practices are integrated into philosophical research? How does the conceptual



personae of philosophers change when they become artist-philosophers? And how do writing and working methods shift when crossing the boundaries between art and philosophy? This approach opens up a holistic perspective on strategies, methodologies, and concrete examples of writing and reading by philosopher-artists and artistic researchers who strive toward a genuine crossover between art and philosophy.

[Link to the publication \(full access\).](#)



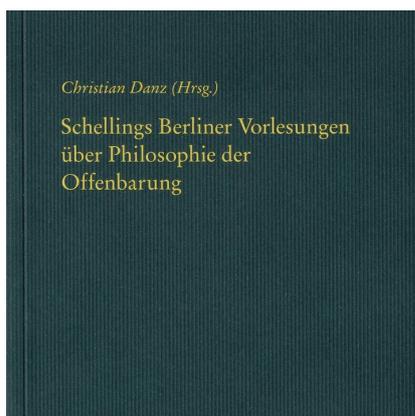
**Isabella Bruckner: Gesti del desiderio. Mistica e preghiera a partire da Michel de Certeau** (Giornale di teologia 475). Brescia: Queriniana 2025.

In the Judeo-Christian tradition, the experience of prayer emerges as a central element of spiritual theory and praxis. In light of the advancing secularization of European societies—which entails, on the one hand, the erosion of classical metaphysics and, on the other, the ambivalent “return” and re-politicization of religion—the meaning of prayer has nonetheless become an open question.

In this context, *Gesti del desiderio* seeks to reinterpret the topos of prayer in the wake of the work of Michel de Certeau (1925–1986). The interdisciplinary studies of this theologian, historian, and scholar of Christian spirituality and mysticism, together with his inquiries into secular everyday culture, lend themselves to a re-reading of prayer within a post-traditional context such as our own.

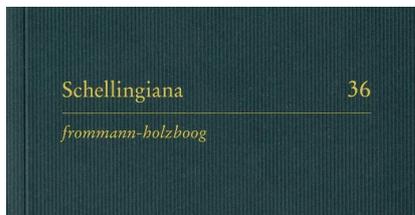
The psychoanalytic conception of Jacques Lacan, which strongly influenced especially the Jesuit Certeau’s later works, proves to be the hermeneutical key. The central category of desire (*désir*) serves as the essential point of reference for a psychoanalytic rendering of prayer. This approach allows prayer to be seen as a site where the subject confronts mortality and vulnerability, and thus as an instrument for symbolically realizing desire. In prayer, the intrinsic lack at the heart of existence is not repressed but kept open and hospitable, as a condition of love and a starting point for the world’s creativity.

[Link to the publication.](#)



**Christian Danz (ed.): Schellings Berliner Vorlesungen über Philosophie der Offenbarung** (Schellingiana 36). Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: frommann-holzboog 2026.

Schelling’s lectures on the Philosophy of Revelation constitute a central component of his late work. He fundamentally further developed them during his Berlin period beginning in 1841—a development largely overlooked by previous scholarship, chiefly because of the state of the sources for his late philosophy. The *Sämtlichen Werke* render invisible



the changes Schelling made in Berlin to his Philosophy of Revelation and suggest a finalized text. Drawing on new sources, this volume is the first to address and reconstruct his Berlin lectures on the Philosophy of Revelation from the years 1841/42, 1842/43, and 1844.

[Link to the publication.](#)

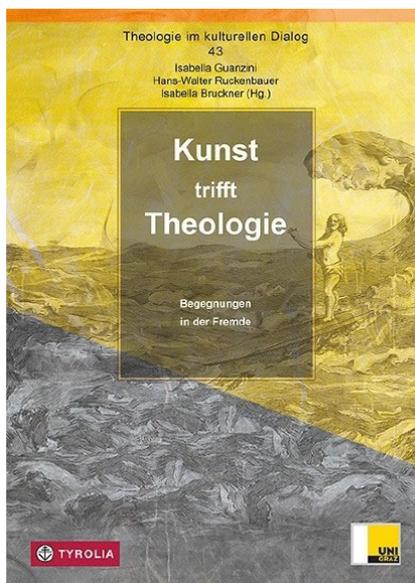


**Alexander Filipović, Annika Franzetti, Susanna Endres (eds.): Grundbegriffe der Medienethik für Studium, Wissenschaft und Praxis.** Tübingen: UVK Verlag 2026.

The anthology Grundbegriffe der Medienethik (Basic Concepts of Media Ethics) provides a well-founded yet accessible introduction to an increasingly complex field. In 48 articles, key concepts ranging from ethics and morality to practical media topics such as journalism and advertising are systematically explored and placed in their professional and social contexts.

This volume makes classic media ethics categories accessible for study and teaching purposes, while also highlighting current areas of discussion. The book is aimed at students, researchers, and practitioners in the fields of media and communication studies, philosophy/ethics, and media education. It also serves as a reference work for media practice and journalism.

[Link to the publication.](#)

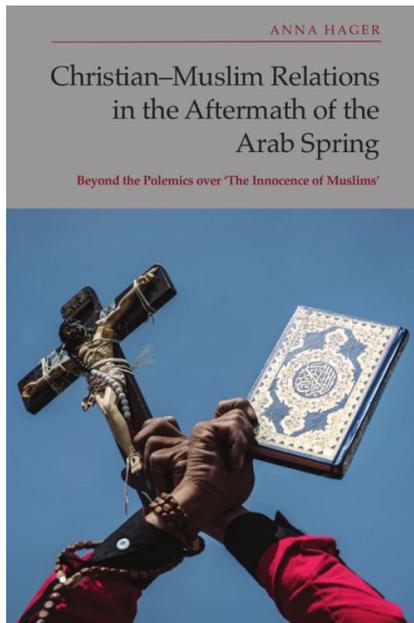


**Isabella Guanzini, Hans-Walter Ruckebauer, Isabella Bruckner (eds.): Kunst trifft Theologie. Begegnungen in der Fremde** (Theologie im kulturellen Dialog 43). Innsbruck: Tyrolia 2025.

Contemporary art unsettles and attacks; it provokes and reconciles. Theology attuned to its time challenges thought and faith. Both call self-certainties into question and make common cause against the banalization of life in the calculus of utility. In the precarious balance between continuity and rupture, they become arenas in which human longings are played out. This often happens on “distant islands,” rarely in shared spaces.

This volume seeks to open such a space. Fortunately, there are a number of successful examples of encounter and engagement between these two worlds, including ones free of fantasies of mutual domination. Wherever art and theology make a good-faith effort to let the tension between religious and aesthetic frameworks of meaning become generative, exciting things can happen. Where different artistic perspectives enter into dialogue with concepts and motifs of the Judeo-Christian tradition, something new can be discovered and developed.

[Link to the publication.](#)

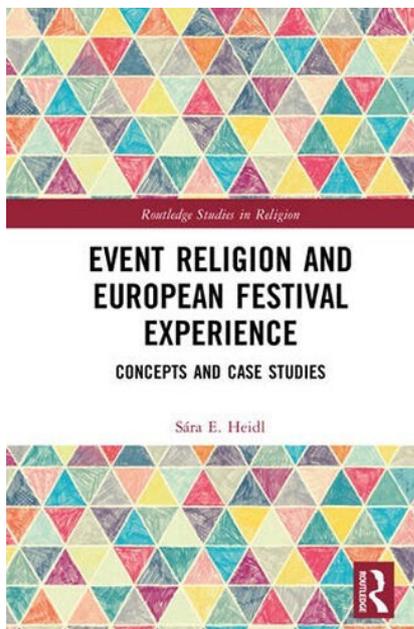


**Anna Hager: Christian-Muslim Relations in the Aftermath of the Arab Spring Beyond the Polemics over 'The Innocence of Muslims'** (Paperback Edition). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2026.

In September 2012, a video titled 'The Innocence of Muslims' provoked widespread condemnation and protests in the Middle East. It depicted an attack on Copts by a presumably Muslim group, connecting it with the prophet of Islam, Muhammad, portrayed as a ruthless killer and child-molester. Although the video could have had dramatic consequences for Christians in the region, since Coptic individuals living in the US had produced it, the controversy turned instead into a moment of Christian-Muslim unity.

This book uses this controversy as an entry point into the study of relations between Christians and Muslims in Egypt, Lebanon and Jordan. Instead of dismissing the condemnations and joint reactions as shallow and ritualised displays of solidarity, Anna Hager argues that they offer insights into the mechanisms of Christian-Muslim relations. Christians and Muslims, including Islamist figures, channelled the potential violence – turning it into an occasion to strengthen inter-communal relations and, crucially, their own positions.

[Link to the publication.](#)



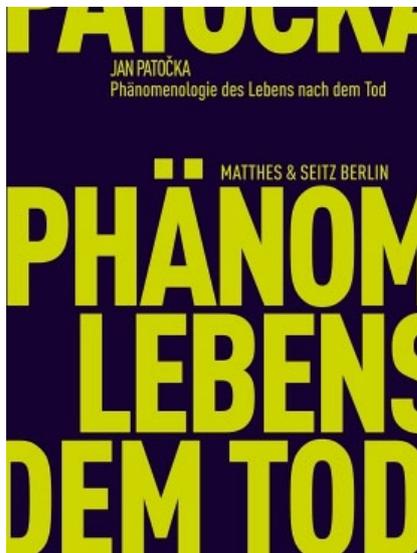
**Sára E. Heidl: Event Religion and European Festival Experience Concepts and Case Studies.** New York/London: Routledge 2026.

This book contributes to empirical research on festivals and presents a model of "event religion" for interpreting festival experiences from a religious studies perspective. It features a comparison of three Hungarian case studies with different backgrounds - a mindfulness festival, a Catholic event, and a rock-metal music festival. Heidl suggests that examining event experiences along the four dimensions of spatiotemporality, symbols, community, and inward experience provides a conceptual framework for understanding contemporary alternative religious beliefs, behaviours, and experiences. She also utilises "religionesque" as an umbrella term for the various concepts that describe religion-related experiences and approaches.

[Link to the publication.](#)



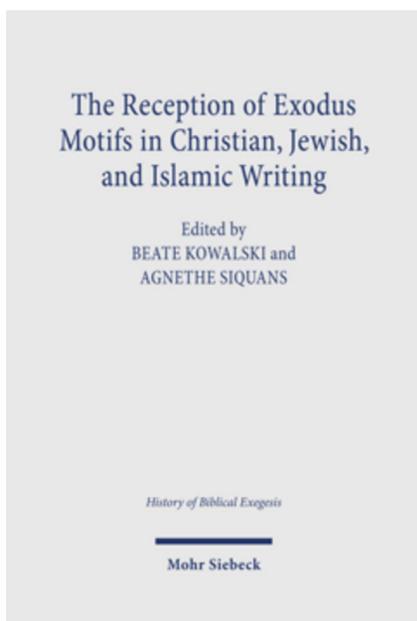
**Tobias Keiling, Sandra Lehmann (eds.): Jan Patočka: Phänomenologie des Lebens nach dem Tod.** Translated by Sandra Lehmann. Berlin: Matthes & Seitz 2026.



What is our relationship to the dead, and how does the death of a loved one shape the course of our lives? Jan Patočka, one of Edmund Husserl's most important students and a pioneer of Czech phenomenology, addresses one of philosophy's most fundamental questions in this essay: Is there life after death? Beyond religious dogma and metaphysical speculation, he investigates the structures of consciousness in the face of finitude. How does death appear to us as a phenomenon? What is the significance of anticipating one's own end for the constitution of the lifeworld and temporality?

With his characteristic philosophical precision, the Prague thinker develops a perspective on mortality and immortality that fits neither within traditional metaphysics nor within scientific reductionism. His premise is that our existence always takes place through an original and reciprocal "being-for-others." A philosophical testament by the civil rights advocate and philosopher who died in 1977 following interrogations by the state police—his moving contribution to the phenomenology of human existence, presented here in German for the first time.

[Link to the publication.](#)



**Beate Kowalski, Agnethe Siquans (eds.): The Reception of Exodus Motifs in Christian, Jewish, and Islamic Writings (History of Biblical Exegesis 9).** Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2026.

The Book of Exodus is the story of the origin of the people of Israel and, therefore, plays a major role in defining the people's identity. Later biblical books, oral traditions, books that were not accepted as authoritative, and interpretation, paraphrasing, rereading as well as liturgical texts refer to this foundational narrative to reassure, reinterpret and defend the identity of a religious community, be it Jewish, Christian, or Muslim. These readers perceive the story of the Exodus as their own story of origin, identify with the people, trace their origin to this event, to the Hebrews, or refer to Moses as a founding figure.

Reception is not only—and often not even primarily—guided by the biblical text, but equally, or even more, by the ideological perspectives and the socio-cultural setting of the interpretive communities. Sometimes these communities share a common cultural milieu, such as Paul or the Church Fathers with the Rabbis or the first Muslims with Jewish or Christian groups. The reception of the Book of Exodus thus also reflects connections between social and religious groups, including discussion and reception as well as delimitation and even rejection of the other(s).

[Link to the publication.](#)

Thomas Mark Németh und Tamás Végheő (Hg.)

## Zwischen Ost und West

Christen byzantinischer Tradition in Ungarn

PETER LANG

Neue Forschungen zur  
ostmittel- und südosteuropäischen Geschichte

New Researches on  
East Central and South East European History

Recherches nouvelles sur  
l'histoire de l'Europe centrale et orientale

**Thomas Mark Németh, Tamás Végheő (eds.): Zwischen Ost und West. Christen byzantinischer Tradition in Ungarn.** Berlin: Peter Lang 2025.

Byzantine Christianity in Hungary is located at an important cultural crossroads and offers numerous links to Western and Eastern Christianity, as well as to Vienna (icon of Máriapócs in St. Stephen's Cathedral). This volume contains the contributions from the conference of the same name, which was organized on October 22-23, 2021, by the Chair of Eastern Christian Studies of the Faculty of Catholic Theology, together with the Lendület/Momentum research group "Görögkatolikus Örökség" and the PRO ORIENTE Foundation. Ten experts from Hungary shed light on the history of Greek Catholic and Orthodox Christians in Hungary from the Middle Ages to the present day, also covering art, liturgy, piety, charity, and canon law.

[Link to the publication.](#)

**Lukas K. Pokorny (ed.): Religion in Austria. Volume 10.** Vienna: Praesens 2025.

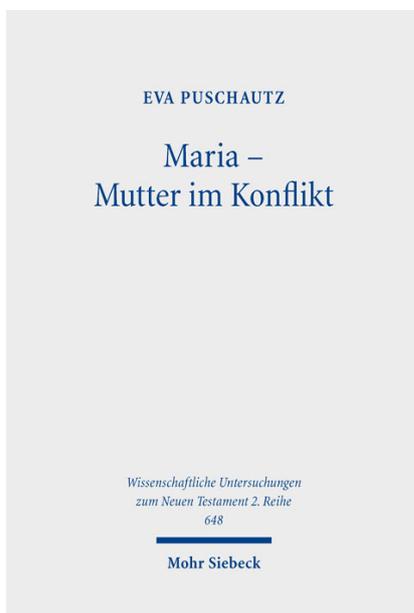
The Religious Studies book series "Religion in Austria" gradually explores Austria's religious landscape through a series of special studies. The newly published Volume 10 contains a wide array of articles and reviews, as well as bibliographies of all research on religion in Austria from 2024 and a list of all Master's dissertations and doctoral theses in the Study of Religions completed during this period. The articles cover a wide range of topics, from (Tibetan) Buddhism, Buddhist religious education, and theosophy to the völkisch movement, hyperreal religiosity, and the intersection of museum work and the Study of Religions.

[Link to the publication.](#)

**Eva Puschautz: Maria - Mutter im Konflikt. Eine feministisch-historisch-kritische Lektüre von Mk 3,20f.31-35.** Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2026.

Eva Puschautz undertakes a detailed analysis of Mk 3:20f.31-35, centering on the question of how Mary is portrayed within the narrative and theological framework of the Gospel of Mark. Combining textual, literary, form-critical, and redactional methods with narrative analysis, the author applies feminist hermeneutics to interpret Mary not as an idealized or marginalized figure, but as an autonomous actor.

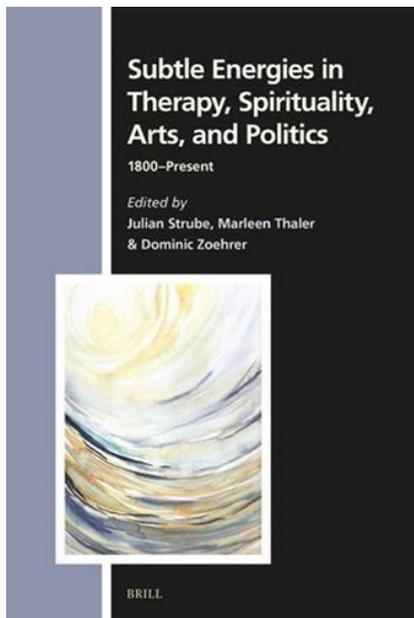
By reconstructing the socio-historical background, the author shows that Mary is plausibly understood as a widow in precarious circumstances, dependent on her eldest son's support. Against this backdrop, her attempt to bring Jesus home appears both



understandable and strategically motivated. The author shows how Mark combines two traditions: a family conflict and the definition of the disciples as Jesus' true family. Rather than harmonizing these strands, Mark preserves their tension, which proves challenging for both early communities and modern readers. Through synoptic comparison and intertextual study - for example, with Mk 6:1-6 - the author demonstrates how Mary's image evolves within the transmission of the tradition and how the motif of the rejected prophet is embedded in biblical discourse.

Eva Puschutz contributes to feminist and historical-critical exegesis by highlighting Mary as both historical figure and symbolic character. She provides a solid foundation for New Testament research and feminist theology, offering a nuanced perspective of Mary as an independent actor rather than as an idealized topos.

[Link to the publication.](#)



**Julian Strube, Marleen Thaler, Dominic Zoehrer (eds.): Subtle Energies in Therapy, Spirituality, Arts, and Politics. 1800–Present.** Leiden: Brill 2026.

Few ideas have captured the imagination of contemporary culture as powerfully as that of 'subtle energies.' The belief in subtle energies has shaped alternative medicine and mind-body practices on a global scale. It also had a profound—although little recognized—impact on music and visual arts, debates on gender and race, as well as political and ecological movements. This groundbreaking volume uncovers the historical roots of the concept of subtle energies and explores its many trajectories.

[Link to the publication \(full access\).](#)



**Jan-Heiner Tück (ed.): Wiederkehr der Säkularisierung? Der Streit um die religiöse Indifferenz.** Freiburg i. Br.: Herder 2026.

The contributions in this volume survey the current debate on the relationship between religion, faith, and society—a debate conducted, among other things, under the rubrics of religious indifference, postsecularity, and religious renewal. The prominent authors offer new insights into a complex situation and develop new approaches and interpretive models. The volume inaugurates a series of books edited and overseen by the editorial board of the journal *Communio*.

[Link to the publication.](#)

## PUBLICATIONS: Selected Articles

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**Isabella Bruckner: L'Eros in tempi apocalittici. La forza dell'intimità nei diari di Etty Hillesum**, in: Milena Mariani, Cristina Simonelli (eds.): *Le donne, il drago, le stelle. Dentro le apocalissi di questo tempo. Atti del Seminario 2025 del Coordinamento delle Teologhe Italiano*. Padua: Triveneto Theology Press 2025, pp. 83–94.

The Dutch Jewish woman Esther (Etty) Hillesum wrote her diaries (1941–1943) in “dark times” (Hannah Arendt). Indeed, one could say in apocalyptic times, in the double sense of the term: on the one hand, “apocalyptic” as catastrophe, a total abyss, with regard to the atrocities manifested in the horror of the Nazi regime, in which the lives of several million Jews, Soviet citizens, Roma and Sinti, homosexuals, and people with disabilities were systematically annihilated (including Hillesum’s entire family); on the other hand, “apocalyptic” in the revelatory sense, in that the truth of each person’s desire is unveiled precisely in such times of crisis.

Etty Hillesum’s diaries express a powerful desire to survive—not for mere survival, but in order to bear witness, as a “thinking heart,” to this apocalyptic period. Etty does not wish to have the atrocities remembered so much as the gestures of humanity of her time, since “dark times,” as Arendt says, simultaneously offer the possibility “that a particular kind of humanity may develop.” Hillesum’s diaries themselves bear witness to this particular and extraordinary humanity which, amid total misery, affirms the beauty of life and a hope that another world is not only possible but already coming to be.

[Link to the publication.](#)

**Isabella Bruckner: Zwischen Arbeit und Exzess. Michel de Certeau und die Dynamik des Begehrens in den Dichos de luz y amor**, in: Ephata. *Revista Portuguesa de Teologia* 7 (1/2025), pp. 87–119.

This article sheds light on the dynamics of desire in the context of modern mysticism, in particular considering the author John of the Cross. It draws on analyses by the historian and cultural scientist Michel de Certeau (1925-1986), who interpreted mysticism as a phenomenon of crisis and a response to the loss of plausibility of the theistic-cosmological symbolic order in Antiquity and the Middle Ages. The linguistic form of mysticism is examined in relation to the traditional theological discourse of metaphysics. The initial general analysis of John of the Cross’s style will be examined in a second step on the basis of his *Dichos de Luz y Amor*. The aim of the article is to grasp the dynamics of desire in the dialectic of asceticism and ecstasy. This is done with reference to Jacques Lacan’s psychoanalytical concept of desire and mysticism, often referred to by Michel de Certeau.

[Link to the publication \(full access\).](#)

**Isabella Bruckner: Metafore della Nascita. La scultura Crowning: una traduzione contemporanea del Credo di Nicea**, in: Piero Coda, Stefano Fenaroli (eds.): *Ripartire da Nicea. Per leggere la fede dentro nuovi orizzonti (BTC 225)*. Brescia: Queriniana 2025, pp. 147–158.

The contribution explores the theological and dogmatic significance of *Crowning*, a controversial sculpture by Esther Strauß depicting the Virgin Mary in the act of childbirth. The work was part of the *DonnaStage* exhibition commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Linz Cathedral and drew public attention following its vandalism in July 2024. Interpreting the sculpture as a visual exegesis of the Incarnation and the Nicene Creed, the article argues that *Crowning* functions as a contemporary theological statement on the power of generativity – both biologically and spiritually. Through a threefold inquiry – into the Christological doctrine of the double generation of the Son, the soteriological reading of resurrection as rebirth, and the iconological legitimacy of representing and participating in the divine generativity – the article situates *Crowning* within the broader tradition of

Christian theological aesthetics. It concludes by considering how a “naturally oriented” interpretation of dogma might reshape contemporary perspectives on faith, the Church, and societal transformation.

[Link to the publication.](#)

**Isabella Bruckner: Gastliche Ordnungen. Die Regula Benedicti resonanztheoretisch gelesen,** in: Ufuk Topkara, Bernhard Nitsche (eds.): *Zur Resonanz von Gottesbild und Lebensform: Christliche und islamische Perspektiven in Auseinandersetzung mit Hartmut Rosa*. Berlin/Boston: DeGruyter 2026, pp. 271–290.

The Rule of Benedict (Regula Benedicti) is one of the foundational texts of European culture. Composed in the sixth century—a time of transition from Late Antiquity to the early Middle Ages and of eroding social and political structures—its primary concern is the establishment of a moderate, good order as a central precondition for spiritual life.

Against the backdrop of sociological diagnoses of the ongoing acceleration of social processes, this article reads the Rule of Benedict in dialogue with Hartmut Rosa’s resonance theory. It focuses on time, liturgy, and the ordering of community, examining their respective potentials to afford communal stability on the one hand and flexibility attentive to individuality on the other, as well as their openness to alterity—also in counterpoint to capitalism’s totalizing dynamics of acceleration. With regard to alterity, particular attention is given to the practice of hospitality, which is prominently anchored in the Rule of Benedict and, through its culture-shaping force, has significantly contributed to Europe’s spirit of openness—and continues to do so today.

[Link to the publication \(full access\).](#)

**Ingeborg Gabriel: Herausforderungen für die christliche Anthropologie,** in: OST-WEST. Europäische Perspektiven (1/2025), pp. 2–8.

Human dignity is a formative concept of the Christian worldview that has exerted far-reaching political influence over the centuries. In today’s political and economic debates, the Christian understanding of human dignity, with its universal claim, can make an important contribution to social cohesion.

[Link to the publication.](#)

**Ingeborg Gabriel: “Never Again!” and “Clash of Civilizations” Reflecting on Ethical Principles of Peace in a New Geopolitical Situation,** in: Volodymyr Turchynovskyy, Oleh Turiy (eds.): *Facing Russian Aggression: Struggle for Security and Peace in Europe*. Lviv: Ukrainian Catholic University Press 2025, pp.192–205.

“World peace cannot be safeguarded without the making of creative efforts proportionate to the dangers that threaten it.” These introductory words of the Schuman Plan of 1951 which laid the basis for European unification are still inspiring and worth reflecting in the light of the challenges of a new political situation today. The theme the organizers of this conference, who are to be thanked for their engagement and courage, formulated as a title for the first panel circumscribes these new challenges task and therefore is to serve as a heading of the first two points of this contribution, whereas the third point will sketch the ethical dimension as reflected in the overall title of the conference.

[Link to the publication \(full access\).](#)

**Moritz Maurer: Reading Evola in Germany,** in: *Aries. Journal for the Study of Western Esotericism* 25 (2/2025), pp. 226–257.

The article examines the reception of Julius Evola’s works in National Socialist Germany, with a focus on his four monographs published between 1933 and 1943. While Evola played a marginal role in policymaking, he gained recognition as a public intellectual whose works, including *Heidnischer Imperialismus* and *Erhebung wider die moderne Welt*, were debated in German intellectual and political circles. Some praised his critique of modernity and his aristocratic worldview, while others rejected his anti-Christian stance

and “non-German” political vision. The study highlights the pluralist nature of ideological discourse under National Socialism, revealing that Evola’s works were used both to support and critique certain ideologies ascribed to the regime. His ideas often served as a demarcating foil for competing visions of Germanness and National Socialism; however, these debates also demonstrate that he was viewed as part of the legitimate political discourse. Ultimately, the case exemplifies the complexities of ideological integration and debate in the “Third Reich”, challenging simplified narratives of Evola’s reception and influence.

[Link to the publication \(full access\).](#)

**Moritz Maurer, Thierry Göckel: The Tartarian Empire: Conspiratoriality, Pop Culture, and the End of the Past**, in: *Nova Religio* 29 (1/2025), pp. 5–34.

This article investigates the workings of a conspiratorial community focused on the “Tartarian Empire,” which members see as a lost, utopian realm erased from memory by a conspiracy. They claim that it was home to a highly spiritual, peaceful society based on the use of free energy. To study the dynamics of this community, we analyzed the content of a subreddit linked to it and employed an interdisciplinary theoretical framework to study key narratives and findings. Following the trail of the community’s media usage, a deeper contextualization is proposed: the view of history found here can be analyzed as a symptom of a general crisis of social historical consciousness. Accordingly, this study is a step in reorienting the study of esotericism from elite discourse to popular movements, and bringing it into conversation with other fields in cultural studies.

[Link to the publication.](#)

**Thomas Mark Németh, David Heith-Stade: Orthodox Churches and Conciliarity in the Habsburg Empire**, in: Irina Paert, Alison Kolosova, Andrey Shishkov (eds.): *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Conciliarity in Modern Orthodox Christianity*. West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell 2025, pp. 58–71.

The administrative and organizational structures of the modern Orthodox churches are not only shaped by the Byzantine tradition but also by the legacy of three other empires: the Ottoman Empire, the Russian Empire, and the Habsburg Empire. The role of the Habsburg Empire in shaping the modern Orthodox churches often goes unacknowledged, even though it has directly influenced the Orthodox churches of Serbia and Romania. It has also indirectly influenced global Orthodoxy through scholars such as Nikodim Milaš and Josef Zhishman, and through the Orthodox Faculty of Theology in Czernowitz (today Chernivtsi, Ukraine) – among whose graduates one finds, for example, the prominent Bulgarian theologian Stefan Zankov (Tsankov).

[Link to the publication.](#)

**Richard Potz: Ein religionsrechtlicher Status für Atheisten?**, in: *Religionen unterwegs* 31 (4/2025), pp. 17–24.

The ‘Atheist Religious Society in Austria’ (ARG) has applied for legal personality as a state-registered religious community, arguing to have a concept of God as a human construct in the sense of Ludwig Feuerbach. The ARG’s application was rejected by the state authorities for religious affairs, which was upheld by the Supreme Courts.

From a legal perspective, religion and belief (worldview) are undefined legal terms. As it is often the case, these terms are characterised by fluid transitions, making the often necessary legal distinctions extremely difficult.

[Link to the publication.](#)

**Richard Potz: Europa und Religion im 21. Jahrhundert. Herausforderungen für das Religionsrecht**, in: Burkhard Josef Berkmann, Andreas Eicker, Peter G. Kirchschräger, Martina Tollkühn (eds.): *Iustitia – Libertas – Dignitas (Festschrift für Adrian Loretan)*. Stuttgart: Peter Lang 2025, pp. 815–830.

Even the best law on religion cannot solve fundamental integration problems. However, law on religion should be used in an inclusive rather than exclusive manner. As elsewhere in Europe, the perception of migrants in Austria has increasingly shifted towards religion, meaning that the debate on foreigners and their integration has become 'religionised,' having Islam in the focus

Furthermore, law on religion is not in itself a security law, even though coordination between these two areas will sometimes be unavoidable. Combating the destructive potential of religion, the state must ensure that this does not degenerate into symbolic legislation.

European law on religion is characterised by comprehensive guarantees of religious freedom, the religious and philosophical neutrality of the state, as well as the offer of a special legal status for religious communities. In view of the challenges posed by the religious pluralisation of society and by cross connections with integration and security, these fundamental elements must continue to be taken into account, without leading to either a 'cultural reservation' in favour of traditional religions or a decisive shift towards secular separation and privatisation of religion.

[Link to the publication.](#)

**Richard Potz: The State in the Orthodox Perspective. Historical Background and Current Developments**, in: *Percorsi costituzionali* (3/2024), pp. 755–778.

1. Introduction. – 2. Biblical sources. – 3. Texts of the Fathers. – 4. The Christian late Roman Empire. – 5. The Byzantine imperial church. – 6. The late Byzantine period. – 7. The Islamic challenge. – 8. Moscow, the 'Third Rome'. – 9. The emergence of nation states and national churches in the 19th century. – 10. The Danube Monarchy. – 11. The confrontation with the religiously hostile state of the 20th century. – 12. The fall of the Iron Curtain. – 13. Post-socialist Russia. – 14. Positions of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. – 15. Orthodoxy and European unification. – 16. Concluding remarks.

[Link to the publication.](#)

**Richard Potz: Zu aktuellen Fragen der Verfassung der Islamischen Glaubensgemeinschaft in Österreich**, in: *Österreichisches Archiv für Recht und Religion* 72 (2025), zugleich Festschrift für Stefan Schima, pp. 274–290.

On 15 June 2019, the Islamic Religious Community in Austria (IGGÖ) adopted constitutional amendments that were only partially approved by the state authorities because of contradictions to Austrian law on religion. This led to a complaint by the IGGÖ to the Administrative Court of Vienna, whose decision (6 October 2022, VGW-101/042/5151/2020) forms the basis of this article. The problems that arise in this context stem from Austria's concept of law on religion requiring uniform representation of religions and denominations, which was finally eliminated by the Act on Islamic Religious Societies from 2015. This question, and in particular its impact on the name and designations of the IGGÖ, is the subject of this article.

[Link to the publication.](#)

[Discover more publications by our members](#)

## RESEARCH: Third Party Funded Projects

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**ERC Synergy Project MANTRAMS**

*Corresponding Principal Investigator (cPI):* **Borayin Larios**



Despite their importance, longevity, and wide contemporary use, mantras have rarely been studied comparatively and on their own terms across cultural and religious contexts. Mantras are sacred utterances, formulas, or powerful syllables used in ritual, meditation, yoga, and healing. They circulate as sound as well as in material and visual forms and are articulated in Sanskrit and many Asian languages. The **ERC Synergy Project MANTRAMS – Mantras in Religion, Media, and Society in Global Southern Asia** addresses this gap by investigating mantra traditions as sonic, visual, material, and digital media across South Asia and beyond.

Funded by a **Synergy Grant from the European Research Council** and hosted at the University of **Vienna**, the University of **Oxford**, and the University of **Tübingen**, MANTRAMS brings together philological and text historical research with anthropology, religious studies, sound studies, art history, and digital humanities. The project also works closely with partner institutions, including EPHE PSL. A central outcome of the project is the **OMnibus of Mantras**, a curated digital research repository that serves as a core scholarly infrastructure for comparative mantra studies.

At the University of Vienna, MANTRAMS is carried out by Task Force 3 at the Department of South Asian, Tibetan and Buddhist Studies. The Vienna team focuses on the materiality, visibility, and public presence of mantras, with particular attention to exhibition based and experimental research formats. A major outcome of the Vienna based work will be the **research driven exhibition “Dhun / Dhūnī – The Fires of the Name”** (Vienna and Paris, 2026). Conceived as a hybrid format, the exhibition will be presented on-site and online and will coincide with the public launch of the OMnibus of Mantras, which functions both as the exhibition’s curated digital repository and as a long term research resource. The exhibition explores mantra as a multisensory practice through soundscapes, visual materials, and ritual objects, translating ongoing research into an immersive curatorial form.

Project Website: <https://mantrams.eu/>  
OMnibus of Mantras: <https://omnibus.mantrams.eu/>

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

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**Summer Term 2026: Guest Lectures at the Department of Old Testament Studies and Biblical Archaeology**



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Evangelisch-Theologische Fakultät  
Institut für Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft und Biblische Archäologie

## Gastvorträge im SoSe 2026

Schenkenstraße 8-10, 1010 Wien

**Do, 26. März 2026, 11:30-13:00, HS 3 (6 OG)**

**Prof. Dr. Paul Kim**, Methodist Theological School Ohio  
*The Suffering Servant, Jesus, and Jewish-Christian Dialogues*

**Do, 21. Mai 2026, 11:30-13:00, HS 3 (6 OG)**

**Prof. Dr. Angelika Berlejung**, Universität Leipzig  
*Non-violent Resistance in the Hebrew Bible.  
What Women Can and Should Do*

**Do, 21. Mai 2026, 15:00-16:30, HS 1 (5 OG)**

**Prof. Dr. Angelika Berlejung**, Universität Leipzig  
*Heiligtümer als epistemische Zentren. Tel Moza als Fallstudie*

**Do, 11. Juni 2026, 11:30-13:00, HS 3 (6 OG)**

**Prof. Dr. Ronnie Goldstein**, Hebrew University Jerusalem  
*Interpretation Problems in the Book of Isaiah*

Die Gastvorträge sind öffentlich – Gäste sind herzlich willkommen!

Online-Teilnahme ist möglich - bitte bis jeweils 1 Tag vorher  
bei [elisabeth.oberleitner@univie.ac.at](mailto:elisabeth.oberleitner@univie.ac.at) anfragen!

[Click here to download the full programme.](#)

**March 20-21, 2026, Workshop: Paul Tillich's Vorlesungen über "Religion und Kultur" (Harvard 1955/56)**

*Schenkenstraße 8-10, 6th floor, lecture hall 3, 1010 Vienna*



universität  
wien

Evangelisch-Theologische Fakultät

## Paul Tillichs Vorlesungen über „Religion und Kultur“ (Harvard 1955/56) Workshop

20.-21. März 2026  
Schenkenstrasse 8-10, 6OG, HS 3, 1010 Wien



Zoom-Link: <https://shorturl.at/EHGzJ>

Freitag, 20.3.2026;

14:00 Uhr: Eröffnung

14:15 Uhr: **Friedrich Wilhelm Graf**  
Die religiöse Lage der Gegenwart

15:00 Uhr: **Christian Danz**  
Religious Language. Der Religionsbegriff in Paul Tillichs Vorlesungen ‚Religion and Culture‘

16:00 Uhr: **Fabio H. Abreu**  
Finite Interrelationships and Ultimate Concern:  
On the Relationship Between Religion and Science in Paul Tillich's Harvard Lectures on ‚Religion and Culture‘

17:00 Uhr: **Michaela Durst**  
„Historical research as historical research is good...“:  
Zum Verhältnis von historischer und religiöser Wahrheit in Paul Tillichs Vorlesung ‚Religion and Culture‘

18:00 Uhr: **Julius Trugenberger**  
„The greatest of all curiosities“:  
Religion und Philosophie in Paul Tillichs Vorlesung über ‚Religion and Culture‘ an der Harvard University

Samstag, 21.3.2026

10:00 Uhr: **Werner Schübler**  
The self-interpretation of man. Zum Verhältnis von Religion, Existentialismus und Tiefenpsychologie  
in Tillichs Vorlesung ‚Religion and Culture‘

11:00 Uhr: **Stefan Dienstbeck**  
Religion – Kultur – Recht.  
Eine Betrachtung des Rechtsbegriffs in Paul Tillichs Vorlesung ‚Religion and Culture‘ von 1955/56

14:00 Uhr: **Sabine Wolsink**  
The Healing Power of Art in Paul Tillich's Harvard Lectures on Religion and Culture

15:00 Uhr: **Matthew Lon Weaver**  
The Functions of Culture and Resistance to Tyranny

16:00 Uhr: **J.J. Warren**  
Religion & Experience: (Queer) Questions of Meaning and Being in Tillich's Harvard Lectures

17:00 Uhr: **Friedrich Schumann**  
„The most embracing of all cultural functions“: The case of Politics and Religion.

18:00 Uhr: Ende

FWF Österreichischer  
Wissenschaftsfonds



ÖFG ÖSTERREICHISCHE  
FORSCHUNGSGEMEINSCHAFT



The event will be livestreamed via zoom: <https://www.shorturl.at/EHGzJ>

[Click here to download the full programme.](#)

### March 27-28, Workshop: Religion und Identität im Museum

*Museum Krems, Krems an der Donau*

The working group “Religion, Collecting, Exhibiting” invites you to a workshop on religion, identity politics, and museums. The workshop combines a practical component with expert presentations. Scholars from universities in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland will address the representation of one’s own and others’ identities in the museum space (e.g., the exhibitionary habitus of Jewish life), as well as how such representations are taken up by outsiders to construct new identity narratives or conspiracy theories. The workshop aims to provide an open forum for discussing current questions in religious studies and museology.

**PROGRAMM**

ORT: MUSEUM KREMS. KREMS AN DER DONAU  
Moderation: Michaela Wisler – Universität Bern

**Freitag 27.03.2026**

10:00 Uhr | Meet & Greet

11:00 - 12.30 Uhr | Führung durch die Ausstellung „Zeitgeschichte-Werkstatt“  
Dirk Schuster – Universität Wien

13:00 Uhr | gemeinsames Mittagessen

14:00 - 17:00 Uhr | Workshop „Nur zum Anschauen? Das Erinnern, Erstarren und Erklären jüdischen Lebens im Museum“  
Yasmin Koppen – Universität Leipzig  
Alisha Meininghaus – Jüdisches Museum Franken

18:00 Uhr | historische Stadtführung

19:30 Uhr | gemeinsames Abendessen

**Samstag 28.03.2026**

9:00 - 11:30 Uhr | Vortragssektion  
„Wessen Identität? Zum Einfluss der eigenen Identitäten auf Repräsentationen“  
Alexandra Probst – Universität Zürich

open slots Nachwuchs

11.30 Uhr | Best Practice Diskurs  
Abschlussdiskussion/Ausblick  
Michaela Wisler – Universität Bern  
Erdogan Bir – Ruhr-Universität Bochum

12.30 Uhr | gemeinsames Abschlussmittagessen

Please register via [web form](#) or e-mail to: [yasmin.koppen@uni-leipzig.de](mailto:yasmin.koppen@uni-leipzig.de)

## April 9-12, Festival: PHILOSOPHY ON STAGE #6: Notebook of the Heart

Within the FWF-PEEK project PHILOSOPHY IN THE ARTS : ARTS IN PHILOSOPHY (Grant-DOI 10.55776/AR822),  we explore the entanglements of artistic research and philosophical practice.

Join us for **"PHILOSOPHY ON STAGE #6: Notebook of the Heart"** at brut nordwest (Nordwestbahnstraße 8–10, 1200 Vienna). Admission is free. Across four days, the festival offers an open, cross-cultural research setting with artistic research performances, installations, workshops, and lecture formats.

Thu, 9 April (18:00–22:00) | Fri, 10 April (09:30–22:00) | Sat, 11 April (09:30–22:00) | Sun, 12 April (10:00–14:00)

Full programme details: [brut-wien.at](http://brut-wien.at) and [mdw.ac.at/the.heart](http://mdw.ac.at/the.heart)

AND TRANSFORMATION IN CONTEMPORARY EUROPEAN SOCIETY VOL. 40

Andreas Telser | Annette Langner-Pitschmann  
Barnabas Palfrey | Sebastian Pittl | Sibylle Trawöger (Eds.)

**Breaking Boundaries  
in Theology**

In Conversation with Roger Haight SJ



## April 11, Online Book Launch and Discussion: RaT Series Volume 40

The Research Centre RaT and the Catholic Theological Society of America cordially invite all interested parties to the **online book launch of RaT series volume 40, Breaking Boundaries in Theology. In Conversation with Roger Haight SJ** (Brill/Schöningh 2025), published in December 2025 in open access.

- **Edited by:** Andreas Telser, Annette Langner-Pitschmann, Barnabas Palfrey, Sebastian Pittl



and Sibylle Trawöger.

- **When:** 11.04.2026, 04-05:30 p.m. CET (10-11:30 a.m. EST)
- **Where:** Online via zoom: <https://univienne.zoom.us/j/67184322940?pwd=skPZbOErz1x6T19b6EQaZixP4Q9lw0.1>
- **Response:** Michael Maloney, Ph.D. (Seton Hall University)
- **Moderated by:** Lisa Holsberg, Ph.D. (Fordham University)
- **Organised in Cooperation with:** [Catholic Theological Society of America](#)

[Click here to view the full programme.](#)



Tagung

## Herausforderung religiöser Pluralismus

Paul Tillich's Schrift  
"Das Christentum und die Begegnung der Weltreligionen"

**17. - 19. April 2026**

Evangelische Akademie Hofgeismar



Evangelische Akademie  
Hofgeismar

**April 17-19: Herausforderung religiöser Pluralismus. Paul Tillich's Schrift 'Das Christentum und die Begegnung der Weltreligionen'. Jahrestagung der Deutschen Paul-Tillich-Gesellschaft e.V. Evangelische Akademie Hofgeismar**

Paul Tillich's lectures, *Christianity and the Encounter of the World Religions*, which he delivered as the 1963 Bampton Lectures, address Christianity's stance toward non-Christian religions. In them he examines the challenges that religious pluralism poses for the Christian religion and its self-understanding. With these lectures Tillich takes up a topic that has lost none of its relevance in the twenty-first century. Through contextualizing papers and close readings of the text, the reading conference explores the impulses that Tillich's theology of religion offers for a contemporary theology of religions and for engaging religious pluralism.

[Click here to view the full programme.](#)

## April 24: Feiertag - freier Tag? Zu Legitimation und Transformation religiös geprägter gesetzlicher Feiertage in Österreich seit 1945

Austria's public holidays are far more than days off work: they reflect political traditions, religious claims, and societal values.

The interdisciplinary conference "Feiertag - freier Tag?" addresses the question of how religiously shaped public holidays have contributed to identity formation in Austria since 1945, and how they are negotiated today amid the tensions between pluralization, equal treatment, and state neutrality.

[Click here to view the full conference programme.](#)

## PAST EVENTS

**11.09.2025: Thomas Németh at the Plenary Assembly of Bishops of the**



as a timeless founding of an “other beginning,” a site of the truth of Being; on the other hand, as a medium of a radically historical self-critique of modernity, in which truth flashes up in the fractured and formal constellation of the poem itself. For both thinkers, a truth comes to the fore in Hölderlin’s poetry that seems to transcend conceptual thought and must become binding for a philosophy that seeks to confront the crises of the present.

[Event Website](#)



### **23.-27.02.2026: Meeting of the Arbeitsgemeinschaft katholischer Neutestamentlerinnen und Neutestamentler**

From 23-27 February, Markus Tiwald and his team (Eva Puschautz, Hanna Mehring, Christoph Belitsch, Katharina Rötzer) hosted the [Arbeitsgemeinschaft katholischer Neutestamentlerinnen und Neutestamentler](#) (AKN) in the Abbey of Melk. 65 scholars from the German speaking world attended this conference with the topic: *Antijudaismus – eine exegetische Problemanzeige*. Our special thanks go to Prof. Jakob Deibl of RaT, who is in leading position in the Abbey of Melk and helped to make this conference possible.

## **THIRD MISSION ACTIVITIES**

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

### **Notable Media Appearances**

- Isabella Bruckner: [Il gesuita “pellegrino”. Sulle orme di Michel de Certeau morto 40 anni fa](#) (L'Osservatore Romano)
- Isabella Bruckner: [Con gli altri e per gli altri](#) (L'Osservatore Romano)
- Hüseyin Çiçek: [Integration oder Vernichtung? Die syrischen Kurden im neuen Machtgefüge](#) (Der Standard)
  - The United States’ pressure on the Kurds to disarm and submit to Syria’s new strongman does nothing to bring peace or stability. Europe will bear the brunt of the cost.
- Ingeborg Gabriel: [A Big Heart Open to God: Notes on the Legacy of Pope Francis](#) (Talk About: Law and Religion. Blog of The International Center for Law and Religion Studies)
  - The title of this post refers to the first interview Pope Francis gave, in August 2013, in which he stated the basic intentions of his pontificate. I happened to be in Rome when he was elected and vividly remember the moment the new pope stepped on to the balcony, greeting everyone with a warm “*buona sera.*” This first self-presentation, as well his chosen name, signaled an agenda that has unfolded during his 12 years in office. The decision to reside in the Guesthouse Santa Marta—at the time much commented on—was another landmark choice signaling his approach. A Pope in the cafeteria carrying a

tray with his dinner? This represented a fresh, liberating style to many and a scandal to others, who feared it may tarnish the image of the papacy. Despite such criticism, a bon mot began circulating: John Paul II listened, Benedict taught, and Francis touches the heart.

- **Ingeborg Gabriel:** [Deaton, Deenen, and Integrity and Role of Catholic Social Teaching](#) (Talk About: Law and Religion. Blog of The International Center for Law and Religion Studies)
  - The debate in the United States and beyond on liberalism has taken a rather disconcerting turn, in which concepts from Catholic Social Teaching (CST) are invoked. The following post is an attempt to sketch this phenomenon drawing on ideas of economist Angus Deaton and philosopher Patrick Deneen. Can CST, which is also high on the agenda of the present pontiff Leo XIV, cut a trail through the jungle of these ideas?
- **Anna Hager:** [Arabisch als christliche Sprache: Brücke zwischen Glaube und Kultur](#) (Der Standard-Junge-Akademie-Blog)
  - In her guest blog post, Middle East scholar Anna Hager writes about how the Arabic language has historically—and to this day—served Christians in the Middle East as a means of religious practice, cultural networking, and social participation.
- **Dirk Schuster:** [Guten Morgen Österreich](#) (ORF)
  - On 17 February, Dirk Schuster (Department of the Study of Religions) appeared as an expert on the ORF morning programme “Guten Morgen Österreich” and explained the significance of fasting in Christianity and Islam.
- **Dirk Schuster, Marleen Thaler, Robert Wurzrainer:** [“Homo religiosus – Der Mensch und seine Religionen”](#) (Kreuz und quer plus, ORF)
  - As part of the ORF programme “Kreuz und quer plus”, five episodes entitled “Homo religiosus – Der Mensch und seine Religionen” were broadcasted. In these episodes, the origins of the world's major religions were presented by members of the Department of Department of Religious Studies.
- **Jan-Heiner Tück:** [Kommt es zum Schisma? Der Papst und die Piusbrüder am Scheideweg](#) (Communio)
  - The controversy surrounding the Society of St. Pius X is coming to a head once again: after years of cautious rapprochement, illicit episcopal consecrations once more threaten to create a schismatic situation. Caught between an offer of reconciliation and fidelity to the Second Vatican Council, the Church faces a decisive choice—with far-reaching consequences for its relationship to modernity, ecumenism, and Judaism.
- **Jan-Heiner Tück:** [Provokation? Piusbrüder wollen wieder Bischöfe weihen](#) (Deutschlandfunk)

## RAT-BLOG

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During the last months we published articles by our members and guest authors that cover a broad range of topics:

- **Marco Fiorletta:** [Die Natur des Entwurfes: Überlegungen aus einem Hölderlin Entwürfe-Workshop](#)
  - From 24 to 26 September 2025, a transdisciplinary workshop on the drafts of the Homburger Folioheft took place at the University of Vienna under the title “Ein seidnes Maas, des Entwurfes nemlich”. Hölderlin lesen: Entwürfe aus dem Homburger Folioheft. The workshop was organised as part of the FWF project Gott in Anmuth in cooperation with the Hölderlin Society and the Research Centre “Religion and Transformation” and was accompanied by Hölderlin experts from various universities and disciplines.
- **Roger Haight SJ:** [On New Ways of Thinking about the Church \(Part I\)](#)
  - For a growing number of Christians, mainly in the Western hemisphere,

church-talk has become problematic for many reasons. However, for theology to shy away from or even avoid questions of the church only further limits the credibility of theology.

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- **Roger Haight SJ:** [On New Ways of Thinking about the Church \(Part II\)](#)
  - Most Christians have a general idea of how the church developed. The New Testament provides the main entrée into that process, but it does not paint an exact picture of how the church took form in response to the preaching of Jesus and his execution...
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