

# RaT-Newsletter Edition XXXIX

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Research Centre "Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society"



[Link to the web version](#)  
Edition XXXIX/December 2024

## RaT-Newsletter



### Dear members and friends of RaT,

We hope that all of you are having a successful and (relatively) stress free semester so far! As is custom here at RaT, we send you a new edition of our newsletter half way through the winter term, to give you an update on the recent activities of our centre:

On the organizational side of things, we want to warmly welcome our two new deputy speakers, **Christoph Augustynowicz**, and **Kirsten Rüter** who have taken over from **Gerhard Langer** and **Rüdiger Lohker**, both of whom we want to thank dearly for their dedicated work for our centre during the last years! But that's not all: Apart from this change, we also want to introduce you to two new members that have joined us since October: **Tugrul Kurt** from the department of Islamic-Theological Studies and **Anna Hager** from the department of Systematic Theology and the Study of Religion at the faculty of Protestant Theology. If you want to learn more about their research, you can find their profiles below.

The organizing team for the **European Academy of Religion 2025** has been busy planning the conference and can present you with new information on the now open early bird registration, the keynote lectures and the planned side events, all of which you can find below.

We also proudly present two new volumes of our RaT series: The anthology *Taking Seriously, Not Taking Sides. Challenges and Perspectives in the Study of Religions*, edited by **Lukas K. Pokorny**, and **Astrid Mattes** and the monography "*Die Hyperbolé der Wirklichkeit. Metaphysik nach dem Ende der Metaphysik*", written by **Sandra Lehmann**.

In addition to that, this newsletter also contains a look into the research work done by our members: Among others, **Christian Danz**, **Mădălina Diaconu**, and **Rudolf Langthaler** have recently published/edited new volumes and **Hüseyin I. Çiçek**, and **Markus Tiwald** have acquired new third party funded projects. Scroll down to find out more!

Our next newsletter will arrive in March of 2025. In the meantime, we wish all of you a relaxing Winter break and a happy new year!

*Kurt Appel, Noemi Call, Jakob Deibl, Marco Fiorletta, Sára Heidl, Sofiia-Olga Kungurtseva, Daniel Kuran, Magdalena Lorenz, 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](#).

## RAT-NEWS: EUROPEAN ACADEMY OF RELIGION

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Time is fleeting: Now it's only six more months before the start of the conference and we are already very excited! The event is beginning to take shape, but there is of course still a lot left to do. Here's the most important news and updates:

Since November 4, **early bird registration** is available. If you want to profit from lower prices, make sure to register before the end of January 2025!

We are also ready to announce the **keynote lectures**: We have managed to convince the following outstanding scholars in the field of theology and research on religion to present their insights and perspectives at EuARe 2025:

- **Grace Davie:** *Religion in modern Europe: Unexpected challenges*
- **Isabella Guanzini:** *Faith and Desire. On believing in secular Europe*
- **Tariq Modood:** *A Framework for Comparing and Evaluating Political Secularisms*
- **Hans Schelkshorn:** *Transformations of Religion and Politics in a Multipolar World. New Challenges for an Intercultural Philosophy of Religion*
- **Rik Torfs:** *Religion in a Secularized Society: Legal Pitfalls and How to Avoid Them*

If you want to learn more about these scholars and the topics of their keynote lectures, [click here](#). The exact date of each lecture will be announced on the conference website soon.

We have also been working on the **side events** that will accompany the academic conference program. We can now announce that the following events will be offered:

- A **gala dinner** at a Wiener Heurigen, partly **sponsored by the mayor of Vienna, Dr. Michael Ludwig** (July 10)
- A **Jazz concert** (July 11)
- A **trip to the abbey of Melk** (July 12)

If you want to learn more about the planned events, please visit the [EuARe website](#).

Last but not least, we would like to use this opportunity to remind you of the most important deadlines for the coming months:

- **Deadline for Call for proposals (open panels, closed panels, AMC)** December 15, 2024
- **Opening of the Call for papers within open panels** January 7, 2025
- **Deadline for Early-bird registration** January 31, 2025

If you have any questions regarding the conference, feel free to write us at [euare2025@univie.ac.at](mailto:euare2025@univie.ac.at). We are looking forward to see you soon!

*Noemi Call, Marleen Thaler, and Marian Weingartshofer*

## NEW DEPUTY SPEAKERS

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*Christoph Augustynowicz*



*Kirsten Rütter*

**ao. Univ.-Prof. Mag. Dr. Christoph Augustynowicz** (Faculty of Historical and Cultural Studies) and **Univ.-Prof. Dr. Kirsten Rütter** (Faculty of Philological and Cultural Studies) have taken on the role as [RaT deputy speakers](#). From now on, they are part of the centre's management team and serve as the representatives of their respective faculties.

We warmly welcome them in this new role and thank them for their support!

This change was necessary because our two long time deputy speakers, **Univ.-Prof. Mag. Dr. Gerhard Langer** and **Univ.-Prof. Mag. Dr. Rüdiger Lohlker** have retired with the start of the new academic year. They will, however, stay connected with the centre as "Professorial Research Fellows". We want to thank them for their dedicated work during the last years. Without your support, the centre wouldn't be where it is today!



Gerhard Langer



Rüdiger Lohlker

## NEW MEMBERS: Welcome to RaT!

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### **Dr. Anna HAGER, MA**

*Faculty of Protestant Theology  
Department of Systematic Theology and the Study of Religion*

I am currently a postdoctoral research fellow (Hertha Firnberg fellowship of the FWF) at the Faculty of Protestant Theology where I am working on the Syriac Orthodox community in Lebanon (1918–1982).

My research includes modern Islamic movements, Christians in the Middle East and Christian-Muslim relations. I previously held research and teaching positions at the Department of Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University and the Institute for Eastern Christian Studies (IvOC) at Radboud University in the Netherlands. At IvOC I worked on the conversion of half a million Mayas to the Syriac Orthodox Church in Guatemala. My book *Christian-Muslim Relations in the Aftermath of the Arab Spring: Beyond the Polemics over "The Innocence of Muslims"* appeared with Edinburgh University Press in 2024. Academic Studies Press is currently preparing a translation into Russian. I recently initiated the Network Promoting the Field of Middle Eastern Christianity with a quarterly newsletter (<https://etfst.univie.ac.at/ueber-uns/team/anna-hager/#c1090498>)

To learn more about Anna Hagers' research, [visit her profile on our website.](#)



## **Ass.-Prof. Dr. Tugrul KURT, BA MA**

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

My research is grounded in the comparative study of religious texts, with a particular focus on Quranic studies and exegesis as they pertain to interreligious dynamics and historical context. A core component of my work involves a comparative approach to the Qur'ān, analyzing it not only as a foundational Islamic text but as one deeply shaped by the socio-religious landscape of the Late Antiquity. This approach includes examining intertextuality and surrounding cultural texts that inform the Qur'ān's engagement with pre-existing religious frameworks, particularly through isrā'īlyyāt narratives that reveal early interreligious connections.

By applying a historical-critical and hermeneutic methodology, I seek to uncover the Qur'ān's complex theological dimensions and its interaction with contemporary intellectual currents. Situating Islamic studies within a broader interreligious and comparative framework, my research promotes constructive engagement with diverse theological and academic perspectives. At the University of Vienna, I aim to advance this interdisciplinary approach, positioning Islamic theology as a vital contributor to global religious scholarship.

*To learn more about Tugrul Kurts' research, [visit his profile on our website.](#)*

## **NEW TEAM MEMBERS: Welcome to RaT!**

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[Marco Fiorletta, BA MA](#) and [Dr. Andreas Telser](#) have both recently joined the [RaT team](#). Marco will support us on the administrative side of things in his role as Organisational Assistant, while Andreas will support the scientific staff as a Postdoc Assistant with his theological expertise that is complemented by his interest for the social sciences and anthropology.

We are looking forward to working with them!

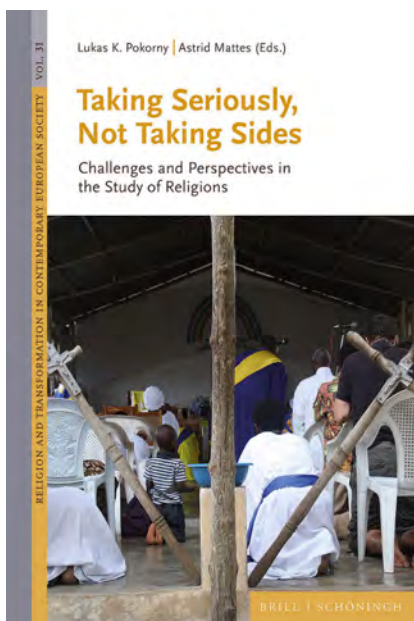
## PUBLICATIONS: JRAT, JRAT Supplementa and RaT Series



**RaT Series (Volume 35): *Die Hyperbolé der Wirklichkeit. Metaphysik nach dem Ende der Metaphysik*, by Sandra Lehmann**

This book develops the thesis of the hyperbolic character of being against the background of the 20th century's critique of metaphysics. A hyperbolic concept of being opens up a different perspective on historical and systematic questions. It makes it possible to indicate what drives the many, often very different approaches in the history of metaphysics. But it also shows how metaphysical thinking can be continued. The key to both is a hyperbolic ontology that deals with the inner excess of reality.

[Link to the publication.](#)



**RaT Series (Volume 31): *Taking Seriously, Not Taking Sides. Challenges and Perspectives in the Study of Religions*, edited by Lukas K. Pokorny, and Astrid Mattes**

“Taking seriously, not taking sides”: This statement about the positioning of Religious Studies as a reflexive, unbiased research approach, which must always recognise emic perspectives, is a central theme of the “Viennese Tradition of Religious Studies.” With his vast expertise and innovative research, Hans Gerald Hödl has shaped Austrian Religious Studies like few others. This book, which is dedicated to him and his work, brings together scholars who share his passion for the study of religions and have engaged with his perspectives. The contributions in this collection engage in disciplinary debates, explore different dimensions of ritual, and offer (religious) philosophical perspectives and aesthetic reflections.

[Link to the publication.](#)

**Latest articles published online in advance**

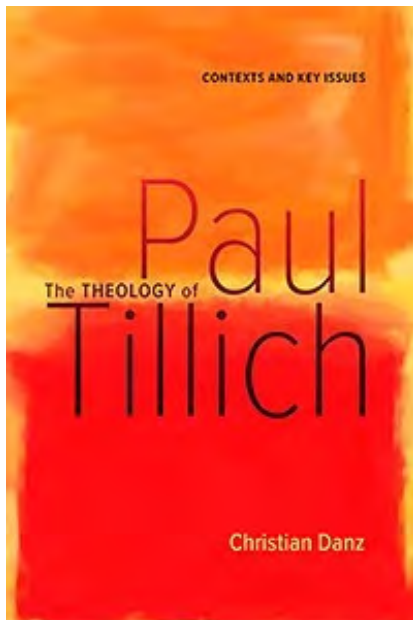
Interdisciplinary Journal for  
Religion and Transformation  
in Contemporary Society



(all articles are published open access):

- **Isabella Bruckner, and Eduard Prenga:** [The Generative in the Gospel of John. Biblical-theological Reflections on a Philosophical Concept and Attempt of its Liturgical Translation](#)
- **Daniel Kuran:** [Drowning in Hegel or the Baptism of Philosophy](#)
- **Esther Heinrich-Ramharter:** [Genesis 2–3 as a Primal Scene for Weak Metaphysics](#)
- **Graham Ward:** [Michel de Certeau: a Jesuit Apologist](#)

## PUBLICATIONS: Monographs & Anthologies



**Christian Danz:** *The Theology of Paul Tillich. Contexts and Key Issues.* Macon/Georgia: Mercer University Press 2024.

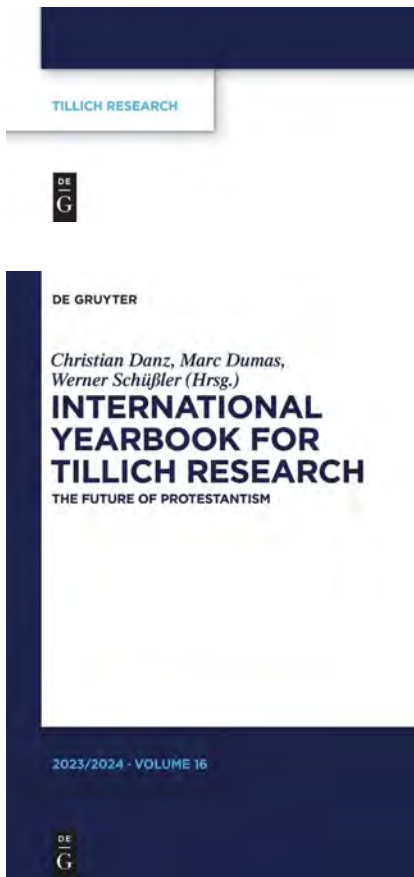
THE THEOLOGY OF PAUL TILLICH examines Tillich's main theological work, the three-volume Systematic Theology, against the background of Tillich's developing theological thought since his studies around 1900. While the Systematic Theology emerged from lectures Tillich gave at Union Theological Seminary in New York from 1936 onwards, his lectures on "Advanced Problems in Systematic Theology" take up considerations that go back to his first drafts of a systematic theology from 1913 and his dogmatic lectures from Germany in the 1920s. The Systematic Theology that Tillich published in the U.S. cannot, therefore, be understood without including his German dogmatic drafts, an area of Tillich research that has previously been underrepresented in English scholarship. The volume presents a concise introduction to Paul Tillich's thought in the context of twentieth-century Protestant theology and a clear direction for responsible appropriations of Tillich's theology today.

[Link to the publication.](#)



**Christian Danz (ed.):** *Der junge Paul Tillich und die Theologie um 1900. Theologie – Wissenschaft – Religion.* Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter 2025.

The development of the theology of the young Paul Tillich has been little researched to date. Although there are studies on his reception of Fichte and Schelling, the significance of his academic theological teachers and the theological debates around 1900 for the formation of his own theology has surprisingly not



been the focus of research. This volume is the first to address in detail the theological-historical background to his theology as well as the young Tillich's engagement with the theology of his teachers in Halle in the period between 1905 and 1919.

[Link to the publication.](#)

**Christian Danz, Marc Dumas and Werner Schüßler (eds.):** *The Future of Protestantism. International Yearbook For Tillich Research 2023/2024.* Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter 2024.

Volume 16 of the International Yearbook for Tillich Research, entitled The Future of Protestantism, explores Tillich's interpretation of Protestantism from historical, contemporary diagnostic, work-historical and systematic perspectives. In numerous publications, Paul Tillich has expressed his views on Protestantism in the context of modernity. This theme runs through his entire oeuvre and is one of the significant components of his theology. Protestantism here means above all a critical principle. However, Tillich does not stop at criticism from the point of view of the unconditional, but also addresses the historical realization of Protestantism and a possible end of the Protestant era.

[Link to the publication.](#)



**Mădălina Diaconu:** *Aesthetics of Weather.* London/New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2024.

In an age of rife consumption, the aesthetics of weather becomes vital for fostering sustainable patterns of behaviour and for improving scientific communication. In response, offering the first in-depth examination of the aesthetics of weather, this book analyses multisensory atmospheres and the 'art in the air', whilst rejecting the short-sighted 'consumption' of landscapes and fine weather.

With its broad range of inquiry ranging from Aristotle to eco-phenomenology, from the pioneers of meteorology to contemporary art, and from everyday aesthetics to waste management, this book calls attention to the global and intergenerational implications of individual practices and argues that an aesthetics of weather can become a valuable ally to climate ethics in the Anthropocene.

[Link to the publication.](#)



**Mădălina Diaconu, and Zhuofei Wang (eds.):** *Atmosphäre: polylog. Zeitschrift für interkulturelles Philosophieren 51/summer 2024.*

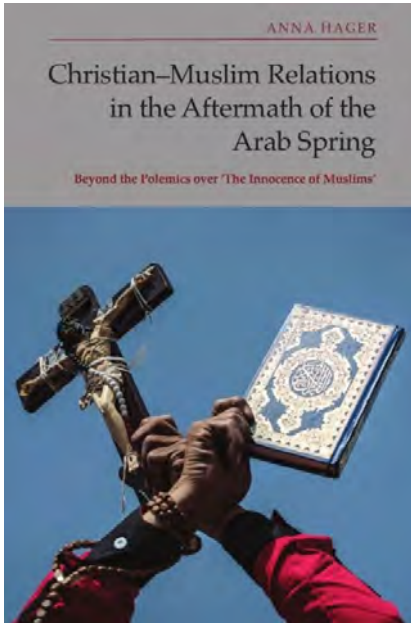
This issue of the journal *polylog*, edited by Mădălina Diaconu and Zhuofei Wang, collects papers in





German and English that introduce to the European phenomenology of atmosphere (Jürgen Hasse), detect equivalents of this concept in Japan (Kantaro Ohashi) and the Arab world (Mounira ben Mustapha Hachana), explore analogies with Indian philosophy (Srisrividhiya Kalyanasundaram & Sandhiya Kalyanasundaram) and analyse social atmospheres on the example of Brazil (Paulo Gajanigo). The papers are preceded by two substantial introductions by the editors on characteristics, challenges, and implications of the theory of atmosphere and on its relevance to intercultural philosophy.

[Link to the publication.](#)



**Anna Hager:** *Christian-Muslim Relations in the Aftermath of the Arab Spring: Beyond the Polemics over "The Innocence of Muslims"*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2024.

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.](#)



**Rudolf Langthaler (ed.):** *Kant - eine bleibende Herausforderung für das Christentum? Zur Aktualität des kantischen »Projekts der Aufklärung«*. Baden-Baden: Karl Alber 2024.

Kant's challenge to Christianity and the churches is still highly topical: his questions and problematizations of the "proofs of God", the "divine sonship of Jesus" and his "vicarious atoning death", the topic of "grace" and the relationship between "theonomy versus autonomy" are still largely unanswered by theologians and, above all, the church. Kant's 300th birthday would probably be a fitting occasion to address these deficits in an appropriate manner. Philosophers, theologians and also important church officials were therefore invited

to comment on the topics mentioned - but unfortunately this invitation was met with numerous refusals on the part of the church and theologians...

[Link to the publication.](#)



**Rudolf Langthaler, and Magnus Striet:** *Vernunftreligion statt Kirchenglaube? Kants unerledigte Anfragen an die Theologie.* Freiburg i. Br.: Herder 2024.

It is certainly doubtful that Immanuel Kant was an orthodox Christian when measured against the ideas of church orthodoxy at the time and today. However, this cannot be a reason to avoid the questions that he posed with unwavering clarity to central convictions of Christian theology. These by no means only concern the understanding of freedom, which he fundamentally changed, but also classical theological ideas of Jesus' sonship with God and his substitutionary atoning death. While Rudolf Langthaler reconstructs these questions directly from Kant's work, Magnus Striet explores ways of addressing them in a theologically constructive manner. Both share Kant's conviction that "a religion that unhesitatingly announces war on reason" will "not be able to withstand it in the long run".

[Link to the publication.](#)

## PUBLICATIONS: Selected Articles

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**Madalina Diaconu:** *The Fragrant Seal of the Spirit: the Aesthetics of Chrism*, in: *ESPEs*. The Slovak Journal of Aesthetics 13:1 (2024): "Olfactory Aesthetics", ed. by Madalina Diaconu, 64-80.

Despite recent developments in the fields of olfactory aesthetics, phenomenology of liturgy, religious aesthetics, and theological aesthetics, the complex presence of odours in the Christian culture has been scarcely discussed. This study is meant as a contribution to a future systematic exploration of the aesthetic 'osmology' of theology, by focusing on the fragrant chrism oil (in the Eastern Church called Holy Myron). Technical-historical explanations regarding the olfactory composition, preparation and use of this sacramental oil are followed by an examination of the semantics of its odour in patristic theology and medieval popular imaginary. This rich symbolism has been lost in the 'anosmic' modern Catholic and Orthodox sacramental theology.

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

**Madalina Diaconu:** *Nebulous landscapes and the aesthetics of indeterminacy*, in: *Lebenswelt* 23/2023: Landscapes. An atmospheric approach, 174-188.

A landscape is commonly conceived as an arrangement of items on solid or liquid surfaces. Despite its entanglement with the landscape, the weather condition tends to be overlooked. The liminal case of a thick fog that suppresses the view of the environment challenges this standard understanding. The paper examines the experience of being lost in fog with respect to perceptual, spatiotemporal and emotional aspects. Fog suspends the everyday scopic regime and the inconspicuous 'immateriality' of air as medium of perception, distorting the patterns of perception and temporarily installing an own spatiotemporality. Moreover, fog is an atmospheric phenomenon par excellence, a quasi-thing and a quasi-agent that is usually felt as distressing and maleficent yet may trigger a

sense of wonder as well. While it is considered a deficit in epistemic issues, nebulosity has a strong aesthetic expressivity, whose sources range from semantic ambiguity to defamiliarization and the transfiguration of the ordinary.

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

**Kirsten Rüter, Peter Delius:** *Familie Winter-Wangemann*, in: Frank, Martin (ed.): *Mission: Reflexion. 200 Jahre Berliner Mission*. Berlin: Wichern Verlag 2024, pp.111-119.

[Link to the publication.](#)

**Andreas Telser:** *Digitalität – Privatheit – Ästhetik*, in: Ethik und Gesellschaft. Ökumenische Zeitschrift für Sozialethik (2/2024).

Covid-19 has not only kept many of us behind screens for longer, but has also made us realize 'afterwards' how much digitality had already begun to change our ideas of privacy 'before'. Late modern subjects can't help but creatively juggle their permanently 'curated' identity at the liquefied boundary between private and public. By reminding public theology of the time and milieu in which it emerged, Shawn Copeland looks into its 'blind spots'. The public sphere is also the unthinking condition of possibility for racist action and suffering. In the context of "black culture", Kevin Quashie places an "expressiveness of quiet" alongside the attention-seeking public. Contrary to appearances, this expressiveness is by no means apolitical, but rather recalls an ultimate inexpressibility of every subject.

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

[Discover more publications by our members](#)

## VDTR: Vienna Doctoral School of Theology and Research on Religion

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### UPCOMING VDTR EVENTS

#### PhD & Skills Sessions, starting in December

The VDTR PhD & Skills Sessions offer PhD students the opportunity to gain practical insights into skills and strategies that will advance their academic careers.

##### Dates:

- **07 January 2025, 1-2.30pm:** How **mobility** during your PhD can enrich your research experience (and improve your career prospects), place: tba (please check the VDTR website)
- **14 January 2025, 1-2.30pm:** **Science/ Research Communication** (and why you should do it), place: tba (please check the VDTR website)
- **21 January 2025, 1-2:30pm:** **Good scientific practice** (and how to apply it), place: tba (please check the VDTR website)

Please register in a timely manner with an email to [contact.vdtr@univie.ac.at](mailto:contact.vdtr@univie.ac.at).

Find more information on the different sessions [on our website](#).

## 7 January 2025: Deadline for the Call for Papers of the Workshop "Körper(lichkeit): Locus theologicus - Lebensrealität - Territorium" (13-15 June 2025)

The body and corporeality are once again becoming a challenge for contemporary theology - not just 'still', but 'increasingly so': it is at the centre of political conflicts around the world. This can be seen both in the global rise of right-wing populism and anti-democratic forms of government and the associated attacks on women's and minority rights, LGBTQIA+ people and reproductive and sexual self-determination, as well as in the largely unbroken continuity of dogmatic-repressive positions on sexuality and gender relations in religious communities and churches. The aim of this international workshop is to reflect theologically on different areas of tension in relation to physicality and to bring approaches into dialogue with each other.

The workshop contributions can be handed in in German, English or Spanish. [More information on the workshop and the modalities of the call \(in German\) can be found here](#).

## 13 January 2025, 9.30am to 4pm: Workshop on Research Methods and Academic Writing

If you have any uncertainties and/or questions about academic writing and especially about the formalities of citation and bibliographies, this workshop is for you! It is open to all VDTR members, with a particular focus on those who write in English.

The workshop will be facilitated by [Christina Dietl](#), praedoc assistants at the Department of Liturgical Studies and [Julia Weingartner](#), praedoc assistant at the Institute of Canon Law and Law on Religion.

Places are limited to 15 participants on site; however, the workshop will be offered hybrid. **Please register in a timely manner by e-mail and specify whether you would like to participate online or on site: [contact.vdtr@univie.ac.at](mailto:contact.vdtr@univie.ac.at)**. Participants are encouraged to bring their own laptops (and paper) for the practical activities.

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

# RESEARCH: Projects

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## THIRD PARTY FUNDED PROJECTS



**Echokammern der Niedertracht. Erdoğan's AKP und die antisemitische Propaganda auf X im Nachklang des Hamas-Terrorangriffs**

**Projektteam:** PD Mag. Dr. Hüseyin I. Çiçek; Univ.-Prof. MMMMag. Dr. Lukas K. Pokorny, M.A.

**Laufzeit:** 1. November 2024 bis 31. Oktober 2025 (12 Monate)

**Projektbudget:** € 10.000,00

**Projektfinanzierung:** Zukunftsfonds der Republik Österreich

In contemporary society, we are witnessing a growing dynamic in which ideological and political narratives are deliberately shaped and amplified in digital

spaces. Authoritarian contexts, in particular, provide fertile ground for the use of such mechanisms to pursue political goals that exacerbate social tensions.

The research project "Echo Chambers of Malevolence: Erdoğan's AKP and Anti-Semitic Propaganda on X in the Aftermath of the Hamas Attacks" examines these developments through the case study of Turkish anti-Semitism. It focuses on tweets published between October 7 2023 — the date of the attack on Israeli civilians — and April 1 2024. This specific timeframe was chosen based on the assumption that the Turkish government's stance, alongside manifestations of anti-Semitism, anti-Zionism, and anti-Israel sentiment, will remain consistent as the conflict continues and elections approach (local elections took place on March 31, 2024). The project aims to highlight the specific characteristics of Turkish anti-Semitism by analysing its development and dynamics within political discourses, as well as its impact on German-speaking societies.

By linking anti-Semitic discourses, political agendas and digital communication strategies, this interdisciplinary project highlights how these elements shape public opinion and deepen societal polarisation.



### **FWF-Project PUB 1159-G, Markus Tiwald: Translation of a Monograph into English**

With 19 November, 2025 the FWF has granted Markus Tiwald a fund to translate his book into English:

Tiwald, Markus: [Frühjudentum und beginnendes Christentum : Gemeinsame Wurzeln und das Parting of the Ways](#) (KStTh 5). Stuttgart : Kohlhammer, 2022.

**FWF Grant-DOI:** 10.55776/PUB1159

The translation will be done by Jason Valdez, the former PraeDoc assistant of Prof. Markus Öhler. Start of the project will be 1 January 2025. In the project description the [connection to the RaT research cluster](#) was explicitly mentioned. Thus, the project counts also as a success for RaT.

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**



### **December 11-12, 2024: Christologie-Tagung: Christologische Diskurse in der Ära des Transhumanismus. Ansätze aus der orthodoxen Theologie der Gegenwart**

With presentations by:



Miniatur eines Mitglied der KTF und des Forschungszentrums RaT und herzlich zur Teilnahme eingeladen. Die Miniatur wird zur Veranschaulichung der Konferenz zur Verfügung gestellt.  
16.12.2024 gebildet



- Theodoros Alexopoulos
- Alexandru Ioniță
- Rade Kisić
- Mugurel Pavaluca
- Ephräm Giwi Lomidze
- Stefanos Athanasiou
- Georgiana Huian
- Ioan Moga
- Marina Kiroudi

The detailed program can be found [here](#).

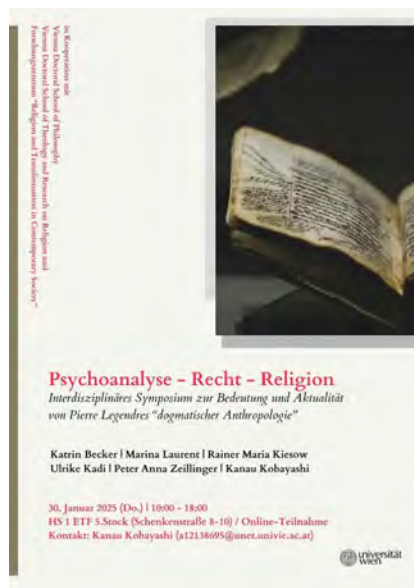
All students and members of the KTF and the Research Centre RaT are cordially invited to the conference! If you are interested, please register by e-mail to [marian.weingartshofer@univie.ac.at](mailto:marian.weingartshofer@univie.ac.at).

## January 30, 2025: Symposium "Psychoanalyse - Recht - Religion"

Interdisziplinäres Symposium zur Bedeutung und Aktualität von Pierre Legendres 'dogmatischer Anthropologie'

Pierre Legendre, one of the most important thinkers of our time, died in 2023. In more than 60 years of scientific activity, he left behind an extensive oeuvre comprising over 40 monographs, more than 150 scientific publications and several documentary films. However, the full scope and numerous ramifications of his work, which is known as 'dogmatic anthropology', has not yet been fully recognised. The aim of the German-language symposium is to discuss the relevance and topicality of Legendre's work from the perspective of law, religion and psychoanalysis. The aim is not least to make his thinking accessible to a wider public. [Please find more information here.](#)

If you want to participate, please write an email in a timely manner to Kanau Kobayashi [a12138695@unet.univie.ac.at](mailto:a12138695@unet.univie.ac.at).



## February 2-4, 2025: One God. One Mission. The Significance of the Abrahamic Others Today

- **Abbey of Melk** (Abt-Berthold-Dietmayr-Straße 1, 3390 Melk): Sunday, **February 2nd**, 2:00 p.m. – Monday, **February 3rd**, 2025, 6:00 p.m.
- **University of Vienna**: Deans Office at the Faculty of Catholic Theology (Main Building of the University of Vienna, Staircase 8, 2nd floor, Universitätsring 1, 1010 Vienna): Tuesday, **February 4th**, 2025, from 9:00 a.m. to 06:00 p.m.

The detailed program can be found [here](#).

If you are interested in the conference, please register per mail at [marian.weingartshofer@univie.ac.at](mailto:marian.weingartshofer@univie.ac.at) by January 17, 2025.

**Attention: Only limited space available.**

## PAST EVENTS



## Valedictory lecture by Prof Hans Gerald Hödl

On October 22, 2024, the valedictory lecture of H. Gerald Hödl, a founding member of the Research Centre RaT, took place. Gerald Hödl was on the board of our centre for a long time and is a member of the editorial team of JRAT. Particularly noteworthy is the publication of the special issue [“From Syncretism to Hybridity: Transformations in African-derived American Religions” \(2/2023, together with Bettina Schmidt\)](#) and his article [“Reversed Racism: Fundamentalist Genealogies in African-American Religions” \(2/2016\)](#).

His farewell lecture was entitled **“Der "afrikanische Hochgott" - Faktum oder Fiktion”** and once again demonstrated Gerald Hödl's extensive knowledge of African religious traditions. With the question of the “High God” (Hochgott), he brought a category of European research history into play and traced its role in accessing African traditions. He kept the large audience in suspense with the question of whether the category of the high god is a fact or a fiction, only to ultimately prove it to be unanswerable, even irrelevant. It is an expression of the self-reflection of European research history and has more to do with it than with the uniqueness of African religious traditions.



## Workshop „Reading Walter Benjamin’s Origin of the German Trauerspiel”

From 24th to 25th of October RaT-members Sandra Lehmann and Daniel Kuran organized a workshop on Walter Benjamin’s famous work Origin of the German Trauerspiel. The event was hosted by the Department of Intercultural Philosophy of Religion and by the Research Centre for Religion and Transformation. International as well as local experts in research on Walter Benjamin contributed to the event with their insightful and multifaceted presentations. Nassima Sahraoui, Sven Schöpf, Sebastian Truskolaski, Stefano Marchesoni, Stephanie Graf, Daniel Gönitzer, Sandra Lehmann, and Daniel Kuran held talks on many different aspects of Benjamin’s book. Through presentations but also through reading sessions the participants accessed one of Benjamin’s richest, but also most difficult and dense texts that has challenged readers for nearly a century since its publication. The contributions dealt with Benjamin’s understanding of epistemology, history, eschatology, baroque, sovereignty, allegory, martyrdom, but also with very concrete motifs and figures as the ruin, Dürer’s Melencolia I, baroque dramas by Gryphius, Lohenstein a.o., that all play a significant role in Benjamin’s book.



## RaT Research Day

The annual RaT research day took place this year on November 22. As with the last edition, we were lucky enough to be able to spend this day together at Melk Abbey. After arriving together by train, the participants were able to get an impression of the wide range of approaches to religion united in the RaT Research Centre during a packed program of lectures.

**Christoph Augustynowicz**, who together with Kirsten Rüter, was recently appointed as the center's new deputy speaker, presented his current research on the work of social historian Roman Rosdolsky. **Nikola Pantic** from the department of Near Eastern Studies then spoke about the development of charismatic holy orders in the Ottoman Empire. Finally, before the start of the lunch break, **Katerina Koci** used the biblical figure of Sarah to present the central thesis of her FWF Elise Richter project “Two Sarahs: Victimhood in the Bible and Its Reception”: that victims of patriarchal exploitation can become perpetrators themselves.

After lunch in the Stiftsküche, the lectures were continued by **Madalina Diaconu**, who presented her fascinating, recently published book on “Aesthetics of Weather”, in which she shows that our experiences and discourse on weather phenomena are linked in many ways to cultural and religious images. After her, **Arno Böhler** took the stage and presented the philosophical background of his current FWF research project, which deals with the concepts of the \*heart\* in the works of the German philosopher Nietzsche and the Indian thinker Aurobindo.

**Ikenna Okafor** then presented his current project, in which he combines the fields of theology and literature with the work of the Nigerian writer Chinua Achebé and examines the role played by the image of the “crossroads”. To conclude the day, religious education researcher **David Novakovits** presented his theories on “agonal learning” and the productive role conflict can play in religious education.



The intensive day finally came to an end with a joint dinner in the abbey. We are already looking forward to the next edition!

## 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:

- [More Men, More Toxic Theology? Critical Questions on Being the Church from a Gen Z Theologian](#), by **J.J. Warren**
  - In his article, J. J. Warren describes how the ever-increasing role of Generation Z in American society is causing fundamental shifts in the faith landscape, which also brings with it dangers for all those who are committed to an egalitarian church
- [Rapture not Rapture“Quo Vadis?” International Film Festival Report](#), by **Milja Radovic**
  - From 7 to 10 November 2024 Iași (Romania) hosted the first International Film Festival Quo Vadis? and became for these four days one of the brightest spots of Europe. The Film Festival organised and supported by the Metropolis of Moldavia and Bukovina celebrated thirty-five years after the December Revolution in 1989, thus devoting this first edition of the Festival to the theme of freedom.

## 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

- **Anna Hager:** *5 things you might not expect of Christian-Muslim relations in the Middle East*
  - Drawing on a long history of Christian-Muslim coexistence, Anna Hager explores the nuances and complexities of interfaith relations in the Middle East
  - [Christian-Muslim Relations | Edinburgh University Press](#)
- **Uta Heil, Jan-Heiner Tück:** *Streitfall Nicäa? Was ein 1.700 Jahre altes Konzil für Theologie und Glauben heute bedeutet* - "Diesseits von Eden" podcast
  - The Council of Nicaea in 325 settled or decided an important dispute on the question of the Trinity: the dispute about the divinity of Jesus. Does this mean that the matter is still off the table today? No, say the Viennese Protestant church historian Prof. Uta Heil and her Catholic colleague, Prof. Jan-Heiner Tück. The Council is still ecumenically relevant today.
  - <https://diesseits.theopodcast.at/1.700-jahre-konzil-von-nizaea>
- **Rüdiger Lohlker:** *"Europa sollte sich im Nahost-Konflikt neu positionieren"*
  - The Islamic world's view of the Gaza conflict is different from that of the West, and this has become even clearer since the events of October 7. The geopolitical solidarity of Muslims with the Palestinians will not diminish - an analysis
  - <https://www.furche.at/religion/islamwissenschaftler-lohlker-europa-sollte-sich-im-nahost-konflikt-neu-positionieren-14367618>
- **Walter Kasper – Jan-Heiner Tück:** „Eine Synode ist kein Theologenkongress“.

## Ein Gespräch mit Walter Kardinal Kasper über die Weltbischofssynode in Rom

- No sooner has the World Synod in Rome come to an end than a dispute arises over the theological assessment of this event. In a conversation with Jan-Heiner Tück, Walter Cardinal Kasper, who has decades of experience with synods of bishops, warns against dismissing the final document of the assembly as a non-binding option.
- <https://www.herder.de/communio/theologie/walter-kardinal-kasper-im-gespraech-ueber-die-weltbischofssynode-in-rom-eine-synode-ist-kein-theologenkongress-/>

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