Migration is one of the key factors of modern social processes. In Russia, external immigration makes it possible to compensate for the natural decline of the population and provide the economy with the necessary workforce. Russia's participation in integration associations in the post-Soviet space is added to the above-mentioned factors. In the structure of external migration, labour migration takes absolute priority. Most of those who come to work are from the Muslim population. Demographic trends characteristic of this population allow us to make predictions about a significant increase in their presence and influence in the future on changes in the ethno-religious composition of the population of Russian regions. A number of researchers talk about the emergence of migrant enclaves. The high religiosity of Muslim migrants suggests that the educational influence of the Russian Muslim clergy could be an effective means for their interculturization. The lack of effective adaptation and interculturization leads to an increase in inter-ethnic and inter-religious tensions. The results of the surveys reflect the growth of negative ratings in the attitude of Russians to migrants. Two key conclusions: the influence of the Muslim clergy, focused on the cultivation of national identity, could be an effective way to adapt and prevent the trends of voluntary segregation of migrant communities; but so far, the role of religious organizations in the adaptation of migrants is not significant.
**84 Cricket Event as Ritual: Potentials and Limits of Durkheim’s Concept of Ritual Usage for Understanding the Aspects of Community Life**

Michaela Žáková

Department for the Study of Religions, Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic

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**Abstract**

“Football is like a religion in Italy.” “Cricket is a religion in India.” These phrases show the convergence between religion and sport in public discourse, in which sports environments are shrouded in value systems, collective beliefs, and identities, and successful team players presented as gods. Thus, the relationship between these two areas became the subject of academics. The authors have discussed sports as new religious expressions in modernity and sporting events as rituals connecting diverse individuals. The poster presentation contributes to the academic discussion by portraying the study of one specific sport case. Based on data from observations and interviews in the cricket events in the Czech Republic, it evaluates the usefulness of Durkheim’s concept of ritual as an analytical tool used for understanding the meanings of sport for community life, especially group cohesion. What is the relationship between sport and religion? Which types of theoretical or methodological problems does the concept of ritual allow us to find out and what does not reveal to us? How can we use it effectively to study aspects of sports life? The poster reconsiders the work of the “founder” of modern sociology and suggests possible answers to the above questions.

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**329 Values and World View in Popular Science Web Videos**

Annika Bracht

Leipzig University, Leipzig, Germany

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**Abstract**

In recent years, web video platforms such as YouTube have been hosting influential (lay) channels of science communication and popularization. It can be observed that in popular science web videos on YouTube scientific theories aren’t just used to explain the world. Rather, actors in this field engage in questions about values and the meaning of life as a means to provide guidance and orientation for their viewers. These questions constitute a field where religion has traditionally been claiming sovereignty of interpretation (over science). However, there have been scientifically grounded endeavors in the production of meaning before. Working with context and content analysis, the research project aims to analyze the communication and the popularization of meaning and values in science videos on YouTube. It thus asks for objectives, strategies of legitimization and processes of negotiation of values deriving from a scientific context of justification. By contrasting this current research object with the history of science and religion this shall contribute to our understanding of the continuous processes of boundary work between religious and scientific spheres.

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**353 The Reset of Death in Late-Modern Societies**
Pablo Echeverría  
Universidad Pública de Navarra, Pamplona, Spain

Abstract

Approaching and managing death is one of the main problems of late-modern societies. Not in vain, life expectancy has been overwhelmingly increased during the last decades. Such a technical development has somehow removed death from social life. But at the same time, it has made it ominipresent due to the aging population. Frequently confined in ad hoc institutions, rarely asked or heeded about their life conditions. As if they were a plague, elder people have recently been banished to the social periphery. They have become both the most numerous and the least important collective.

The obvious contradictions arising from this paradox are manifesting themselves through deep transformations in how death and the final stages of life are conceived and approached. The recent regulation of euthanasia and assisted suicide in Spain can be presented as an example of these incipient changes. In such a context, religiousness has by no means lost its relevance. On the contrary, human relationships with transcendence and unknown instances of existence are now as crucial as they have ever been.

Opening Address and Welcome Speech

15:00 - 15:30 Monday, 30th August, 2021

Inaugural Lecture (Barker)

15:30 - 16:30 Monday, 30th August, 2021

Massimo Introvigne

925 Why Can’t we Stay - Just as We Are? Challenges Faced by First-generation Religions and Their more or less Successful Solutions

Eileen Barker

London School of Economics, London, United Kingdom

Abstract
Religions that are in tension with society and thus, almost by definition, showing a degree of resilience, have been categorised as sects or cults by sociologists. However, these terms have come to have decidedly pejorative connotations, frequently denoting little more than 'a religion I disapprove of'. For this reason, the majority of social scientists studying the waves of religions that have appeared in the West since World War II have adopted the term new religious movement (NRM) in order to approach their study from a more neutral position. However, this term soon became problematic for several reasons, one of which being the changes just about all the movements underwent with the passage of time. My talk will use the term first-generation religion (FGR) to define those NRMs that consist predominantly of converts, then, having described some of the characteristics such movements may exhibit, examine ways in which they are under pressure to change far more rapidly and radically than older, more established religions. The more resilient FGRs manage to adapt in a variety of ways to changing circumstances as they become second-generation and then multi-generational movements, others that are less resilient to both internal and external pressures will find difficulty in surviving. At one extreme, the movement’s resilience involves transiting to another planet; at another extreme, the movement will adapt to the ways of society successfully enough for it to be classified as a denomination. Few FGRs, if any, remain in their original form.

ISC 1 Ancient Greece (Individual Short Communications)

16:30 - 18:30 Monday, 30th August, 2021

Andrea Taddei

527 A Missing Piece of the Local Mythography? The Phrygian Helmet of Athena in Ancient Campania

Tommasina Matrone

Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Venice, Italy

Abstract

This proposal discusses the adoption, the evolution and the value attributed to Athena with the Phrygian helmet in the Gulf of Naples between the Vth and the IIIrd centuries BC.

The distribution of this characteristic iconographic type occurred in the following places: Capua; Fratte and Pontecagnano; Pitecusa; Stabiae (‘località Privati’), Pompeii (the Doric temple and ‘località Bottaro’); the Athenaion of Punta della Campanella and the sacred areas of Poseidonia / Paestum. Therefore, all these places of worship suggest an organization of Athenai, located at the most visible points along the entire coastal sector.

Certainly, the helmet worn by the goddess has an Eastern origin: it moved from the Anatolian to the Greek world, recurring in Thrace and Southern Italy.
This precise choice reveals the use of shared places of worship in order to circulate information among cities and strengthen civic identities, creating a supra-civic community with shared religious practices and divinities. I investigate the iconographic type through the study of architectural decorations (antefixes) and votive coroplastics during the Romanization of Campania.

In this scenario, the adoption of the Phrygian helmet could take on the value of an iconographic mark, representing a way to emphasize the “relaunch” of a local cult after the Samnite conquest of Campania. Thus, the helmet worn by Athena could represent the effigy adopted by the Italic populations in order to reaffirm their authority over the territory and strengthen their political and cultural identity, presenting themselves as a unique community in opposition to Roman conquerors.

498 Naming the Gods: Animal Forms of Onomastic Representation in Greek Polytheism
Federica Lazzari
University of Pisa, Pisa, Italy

Abstract

Recent scholarship reflects a growing interest in investigating the role of animals in various frameworks of the Ancient Greek religious experience. Scholars not only explore the role of animals in the traditionally well-researched practice of sacrifice but also the presence of the animal world in divination, magic, and the epiphany and representation of deities. This poster focuses on animal forms of onomastic representation of the gods in ancient Greece. Animal ἐπικλήσεις might be reasonably understood as elements granting access to the modes of structuring the broad spectrum of competences and prerogatives belonging to gods. Divine functions are indeed understood according to the different cult sites (i.e. local pantheons) in which deities appear, usually associated with each other in actual divine micro-systems. We will therefore consider the category of trans-divine animal epithets. To this end, I seek to analyze the occurrences of the cult epithets Smintheus/Musia, Delphinios/Delphinia, Lukeios/Lukeia belonging to Apollo and Artemis respectively, who configure a couple rituel as for Zeus-Hera (husband-wife) or Zeus-Athena (father-daughter). Furthermore, I aim to examine the occurrences of the epithet Hippios/Hippia shared by a broader group of gods, such as Poseidon, Athena, Hera, Ares, and Hermes.

276 The Workings of Chaos
Chryssanthi Papadopoulou
University of the Peloponnese, Kalamata, Greece

Abstract

This paper shows how ancient Greek polytheism was a chaotic system. Like all chaotic systems, it responded to external stimuli, which are termed “perturbations”. Such perturbations included, but were not limited to, war, political and/or social changes. The Greek gods exhibited sensitivity to these perturbations and their
Cultic personas were continually reworked in a process of constant contemporization. Myths and aitia pertaining to their genealogy, traits and cults were frequently altered or invented anew. These demonstrate chaos’ responsive nature. Nevertheless, with every introduction of a new myth – especially if this new myth contradicted an earlier one – the chaotic system that was Greek polytheism was pushed further into chaotic behavior. From one point onward the responsiveness of the Greek gods to perturbations led to the polytheistic system’s fast-track to entropy and disorder. The property that allowed the Greek pantheon to survive in changing conditions and environments eventually led to its decline. This paper presents Artemis’ interaction with Aktaion, and her fifth-century connection to the Athenian victories in the Persian Wars as examples of the pliability of the personas of Greek gods and their adaptivity to contemporary historical events. It then shows how responsive gods are bound to eventually die.

271 Artemis and Jesus: The “Sacred”, Juridical, and Political Identity of Ephesus challenged by Christians in 1st Century CE (in Italian)
Paolo Costa
Dipartimento di Giurisprudenza dell’Università di Genova, Genova, Italy. Pontificio Istituto Biblico, Roma, Italy

Abstract

This paper will examine the religious and political situation in the city of Ephesus during the 1st century CE, as it emerges especially in the Acts of the Apostles 19:23-40, in the edict of Paullus Fabius Persicus (I.Eph. Ia,17-19) and in the inscription on the foundation of Caius Vibius Salutaris (I.Eph. Ia, 27). The Artemision was the religious, economic and financial heart of Ephesus, which gave the city centrality in the province and in its relations with other Asian cities. This study will show how a relationship of mutual purposes was established in Ephesus between the civic and religious identity and the Roman presence, and how Romanization took place by giving new connotations to the traditional elements. An examination of Acts 19:23-40 from a historical and, above all, a legal-historical point of view will show that Christian preaching was considered a threat not only to Greco-Roman religion, but also to the economy and identity of Ephesus, as the Christians could damage the city’s role in the province and the relations with Rome.

The paper will study also how the Christians wanted to present themselves as a group that did not produce any social tensions or riots, without the aim of subverting the legal order. The Christian target, which emerges in the text of Acts, was the inclusion of Christian communities in the Roman legal order on the assumption that, if Roman law was correctly applied, Christians were not in danger. Anyway, in the early Christian message, this loyalty to the empire was united with a certain subversive force and this underlying tension often surfaces also in Lucan’s text. Acts 19:23-40 is defined the locus classicus of urban disruptions sponsored by craftsmen (P. Venticinque), but it was also an important example of a “megatheistic” conflict between two divinities, expressed with a precise juridical language. The text will be placed within a broad spectrum of epigraphic, numismatic, legal and literary sources that will allow a better understanding of the behaviour of the city officials in the face of the challenge of the new cult in the framework of the narrative of the riots that are frequent in the 1st and 2nd centuries CE.

173 “Si curerà il dio di darti la forza”. Spiritualità e malattia nei Discorsi sacri di Elio Aristide
Marco Munarini
Charité - Universitätsklinikum Berlin, Berlin, Germany. Università degli Studi di Padova, Padua, Italy

Abstract

Recenti ricerche nell’ambito della palliative care mostrano gli effetti positivi del supporto spirituale sulla prognosi di malattie gravi. Il rapporto con il trascendente favorisce la messa in atto di diverse strategie adattive (coping), portando a una significativa riduzione dell’impatto negativo dei sintomi della malattia e a un miglioramento della qualità di vita del malato. Anticipando di molto i tempi rispetto all’integrazione di medicina e assistenza spirituale, nel II d.C. Elio Aristide, retore, sacerdote di Asclepio, nonché uno dei malati (forse immaginario) più celebri della letteratura antica, fornisce nei suoi Discorsi sacri una testimonianza autobiografica estremamente moderna, sia nella forma che nei contenuti, del ruolo della spiritualità nello sviluppo di un atteggiamento resiliente al dolore e alla malattia. Scopo dell’intervento sarà quello di individuare nel testo antico le strategie di coping messe in atto da Elio Aristide grazie al contatto col divino, distinguerne le tipologie secondo la classificazione proposta da W. Weiten e analizzarne il lessico. Si vedrà come la fede nel dio Asclepio fornisca al suo adepto la forza per essere paziente: essa innesca processi adattivi rivolti non solo alla risoluzione del problema, ma soprattutto alla rivalutazione positiva delle circostanze (Or. 48, 44, 72; 51, 21; 52, 2-3 Keil), al miglioramento delle reazioni emotive (Or. 47, 52; Or. 48, 22-23, 28, 33; 50, 7 Keil) e alla ricerca di feedback positivi nelle attività pratiche (Or. 47, 60; 47, 73; 50, 19-22, 38 Keil).

739 Gaia, la dea necessaria
Sabrina Colabella
Independent Researcher, Rome, Italy

Abstract

Nella Teogonia esiodea, Gaia ha una funzione cosmo-teogonica primordiale. Benché preceduta da Chaos nell’elenco delle entità primigenie, essa sembra nascere da se stessa (Hes. Th. 116-117); in seguito genera da sola o unendosi a entità divine da lei messe al mondo (Ouranos, Pontos); la discendenza che deriva da Gaia ha infiniti esiti e diramazioni; nelle Opere e Giorni (563) essa è “madre di ogni cosa” (γῆ μήτηρ πάντων), sia dei mortali che degli immortali se, come dice Esiodo, dèi ed esseri umani hanno la stessa origine (Or. 108 ὡς ὡμόθεν γεγάασι θεοὶ θνητοὶ ἄνθρωποι).

Dopo aver dato origine a numerose e prolifiche catene generative, Gaia sembra collocarsi sullo sfondo e limitarsi a dare consigli a Zeus su come arrivare al potere supremo e mantenerlo, attività alle quali essa si mostra disinteressata.

Tale ruolo “dietro le quinte” sembrerebbe giustificare l’apparente assenza di culto (i Greci non avrebbero venerato Gaia perché non era attiva, Sabbatucci 1978: “Gaia è statisticamente senza culto”); le testimonianze archeologiche ed epigrafiche di un culto ad essa dedicato esistono, ma sono considerate poco numerose (Georgoudi 2002 “la Terre-Mère… reste… introuvable dans les contextes cultivés des cités grecques”).

Secondo queste interpretazioni, non dovremmo dare particolare peso alle occorrenze letterarie che considerano Gaia come una “madre” da invocare nei momenti di difficoltà, o alle numerose attestazioni di
invocazione rivolte ad essa come garante in occasione dei solenni riti di giuramento e maledizione, per citare solo alcuni tra i numerosi esempi della letteratura antica (Ruijgh 2004; Landi 2012; Colabella 2018).

Se da un lato Gaia è ben lungi dall’essere la divinità principale del pantheon greco, è innegabile il fatto che molte attestazioni letterarie la presentino come colei che viene invocata soprattutto nei momenti di disperazione estrema, quando sembra impossibile ottenere giustizia o rassicurazione da qualunque altra divinità; essa è la figura materna a cui si fa ricorso nelle difficoltà più gravi.

Partendo dall’esame delle varie declinazioni della divinità, il mio studio intende indagare le motivazioni della contraddittorietà di questo atteggiamento nel mondo antico.

È una duplicità che si riflette anche nelle interpretazioni della critica moderna e, su scala più ampia, nell’atteggiamento che l’essere umano ha nei confronti della Terra: rispettata, onorata e difesa in quanto necessaria, oppure data per scontata, sfruttata, violata, inquinata: ottusi tentativi di dominio assoluto che si rivolgono contro di noi, ultimo anello della catena genealogica, come la pandemia ci sta ampiamente dimostrando.

Come ha scritto Paula Philippson, “il primogenito continua a sopravvivere in tutti i suoi discendenti”. Gaia è la dea resiliente per eccellenza. Non è affatto sullo sfondo o dietro le quinte, ma è ovunque, come l’uomo greco delle origini sapeva bene, e come noi dovremmo ricordare.

ISC 2 Roman Religion (Individual Short Communications)

16:30 - 18:30 Monday, 30th August, 2021

Fabio Guidetti

16:00 - 16:20

423 The Cumaean Sibyl Beyond Time and Space

Tiziana Palandrani

Independent researcher, Sassari, Italy

Abstract

During the Holy Week in Puente Genil (Cordoba) the men of the village walk in procession along the streets reciting as biblical figures from the Old and New Testament.
Among these we can also discern the Cumaean Sibyl, whose presence is justified by the fact that she announced the advent of Christ.

In a reality where men have codified tradition, pursuing it with dedication and awareness, however, there seems to be no place for women.

Yet, it is precisely the Cumaean Sibyl that can be understood as the archetypal inheritance of the female role, from the prehistoric Mother Goddess to the millenary figures linked to the sacred, such as priestesses, prophetesses, etc.

Through masks reminiscent of Greco-Roman antiquity and family legacies confronting the modern world, one might wonder what survived the original Sybil-Goddess and whether her true identity is still preserved or has survived.

This short paper aims to present the complex and resilient tradition of the Andalusian village of Puente Genil which, over the centuries, has endured the opposition of the official Church which banned the presence of biblical figures and paraliturgical rites.

Within this tradition the Cumaean Sibyl of the ancient world - not by chance the oldest figure handed down by the rites of the country - represents the emblem of resilience, since she has managed to reach the present day over a long journey through time and space.

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16:20 - 16:40

670 From East to West: Mystic Cults and Tauroctony

Diego Romagnoli

SISR, Verona, Italy

Abstract

During its long pilgrimage from India to Rome when did the Mithras’ cult reconfigure itself as a mystery religion? In which phase of its history did all that happen? What role did the tauroctony’s icon with its astrological references play?

The discussion over such fundamental queries is still open. So Diego Romagnoli, a member of the Società Italiana di Storia delle Religioni (SISR), scrutinizes all of them through an ample study published in the current sixth volume of his work *Mitra: Storia di un dio*. Indeed, during the years, the author dedicated himself to the research on the birth and evolution of this divine figure.

Besides, this sixth volume of his work includes the text of the relation *Benevolentia et malevolentia deorum in mithraic, magic and theurgic rites*, that Romagnoli presented at Symposium Classicum Peregrinum held in Lonato del Garda in 2018.
396 Damnatio memoriae. Eliminare la memoria, tracce di erasioni su epigrafi mitraiche
Bastianelli Giovanna
Università degli Studi di Perugia, Perugia, Italy

Abstract

During my activity of reading and classifying some Mithraic inscriptions, I came across names partially or totally deleted. In the first case it was still possible to read the names but in the second the erasure was so deep that the reading was impossible; in the end some inscriptions were reused as building materials with the inscribed side hidden with the aim of forgetting the name of certain persons. Thus the possibility of correcting a supposed mistake, of removing the memory of an inappropriate person, and return to the previous condition allowed a sacred place to continue its life in a sort of resilience. Such modifications had ideological, even political but not economic reasons. “In other words, the practice of re-employment would become a conscious choice to express precise symbolic contents of a political or religious nature”.

Nel leggere e catalogare epigrafi relative al culto di Mitra, mi sono imbattuta in alcune iscrizioni in cui si è fatto scempio di un nome o più nomi. Talvolta lo sfregio è avvenuto in modo sommario, cosicché tra le scalfitture le lettere sono ancora leggibili ma, in altri casi, si è agito in modo più radicale o asportando un intero strato di pietra, abbassando così lo specchio epigrafico, oppure, non bastando il profondo solco già fatto per asportare del tutto il nome, probabilmente del dedicante, l’epigrafe è stata posata, al contrario, nella nuova pavimentazione del thronum restando in qualche maniera nel suo ambito di provenienza, quello sacro al dio, ma annullando del tutto qualunque identità. Così, in questa capacità di correggere un’anomalia, di eliminare una probabile violazione per ritornare ad una pristina condizione, starebbe la resilienza di un luogo sacro che continua la sua vita. Ne consegue che impiegare spolia, con opportuni ritocchi e modifiche, come in questo caso, non avendo nulla a che fare con necessità economiche, obbedisce piuttosto ad esigenze ideologiche. “In altre parole la pratica del reimpiego diverrebbe scelta consapevole per esprimere precisi contenuti simbolici di natura politica o religiosa” come in questo caso.

921 Le Pleiadi e le Città con Sette Colli
Arduino Maiuri¹, Felice Vinci²
¹Sapienza Università, Rome, Italy. ²Independent researcher, Roma, Italy

Abstract
Our proposal offers an explanation of the fact that many ancient cities are on seven hills. The investigation starts from the Seven Hills of Rome, of which the authors show the relationship with the seven Pleiades, which probably was the cause of Ovid’s condemnation of exile. Indeed, such a hypothesis is based on an anomaly contained in Book V of the Fasti, composed just before the sentence, where the connection between the background of the founding of Rome and the constellation of the Pleiades - and, in particular, the star called sanctissima Maia by Cicero in his Aratea - is revealed. By inquiring about this strange connection, of which there is no other trace in ancient literature, one can deduce that the seven Pleiades were considered to be reflected by the Seven Hills of Rome. In particular, the star called Maia - whose counterpart is the Palatine Hill, where Romulus founded Rome - was the mysterious protector deity of Rome, whose name had to be kept strictly secret. So, what caused Ovidius’ exile was probably this unmentionable connection. On the other hand, Macrobius attests that Maia, the Earth, was the protective goddess hidden under the name of Bona Dea. This frame can also explain the date of the founding of Rome, April 21: the Pleiades belong to the Taurus, the Zodiacal sign that in the Mesopotamian calenderary starts on that date. Furthermore, there are several other cities standing on seven hills scattered all over the world, whose origins are very ancient, such as Armagh, Mecca, Jerusalem, Moscow, Tehran, Besançon, Byzantium, Macau, Tirumala, Cagliari; the names of some of them can be traced back to protective goddesses similar to Maia. All this could refer to a prehistoric cult of Mother Earth, which in some places considered sacred reflected the Pleiades on our world.

17:20 - 17:40

674 Religion on stage: pax deorum in Plautus' fabula palliatae.

Rebeca Vial

University College London, London, United Kingdom

Abstract

Religion on stage: pax deorum in Plautus' fabula palliatae.

This presentation examines what pax deorum, commonly known as ‘the peace of the gods’, means for the individuals in Rome at the III - II century BC, how they reach it and why they need it. To do this, I will look upon the mentions of pax deorum in Plautus' comedies.

In order to appreciate the mentions of pax deorum in the Plautine's comedies, it will be first necessary to consider the religious context of that time. My starting point is that the Romans believed in their gods, in a sense that they believed they existed and that they need their help to survive. They address them because they were the ones capable of helping them. Then it will be possible to better comprehend the role that the peace of the gods had in Plautus' plots and how it reflects a special kind of relationship between the individuals of Ancient Rome and their divinities.

It will be argued that the relationship of the Romans with their gods was not a complicated thing, full of laws and strict performances. Also, it will be stress that pax deorum was not a state that needs to be maintained and preserved, as some scholars had indicated (G. Wissowa, W.W. Fowler, C. Bailey), rather it was a gift that required effort and rituals; it was a grace, an individual act.

The methodology used to approach the subject of study draws upon an anthropological perspective. I will like to see the specific moments, uses and practices of pax deorum experience by the Romans themselves.
This approximation relates to studying and seeing Roman religion in a way known as ‘lived religion’ (J. Rüpke). Lived religion allows us to approach Roman religion not just as a set of cults or a rigid system but also to pay attention to how the individual appropriated and experiences his faith.

ISC 3 Early Christianity (Individual Short Communications)

16:30 - 18:30 Monday, 30th August, 2021

Carlo Ferrari

227 A God resilient to change? Philo of Alexandria and God as Being / Un Dio resiliente al cambiamento? Filone di Alessandria e Dio come Essere

Francesca Simeoni

Università di Padova, Padova, Italy

Abstract

If we consider the concept of resilience as the ability to counteract or absorb a process of change and if we relate it to the late antique religious sphere, we encounter Philo’s key position. In his case, we refer particularly to the survival of the Judaic cult in first-century BC/AD Alexandria.

In my contribution I wish to explore the nexus between resilience and religion in Philo of Alexandria, placing it in relation to the transcendent identity of the divine. Indeed, Philo associates the biblical God with the name ὁ ὄν, and describes him several times in terms similar to the Middle Platonic principles. In this regard, two parallel phenomena of resilience can be observed.

On the one hand, Philo accepts the resilience of the Jewish minority cult in a culturally Hellenized context, subjecting the divine to a philosophical reconfiguration, and using the terms of the most successful and accredited lexicon in the schools of the time.

On the other hand, the underlining of the ontological transcendence of God, described as asōmatos and emotionless, allows late antique man to come to terms with his own changing condition. Man, who experiences change since he is marked by time, corporeality, and passions, can thus appeal to a God placed outside the disturbing horizon of mutability. Human wisdom will therefore consist in becoming similar to an unchanging God.

How is resilience configured with respect to this kind of escape from transformation? Does this kind of resilient adaptation really make it possible to preserve the biblical identity of the divine and the human? What is successful and what is lost?
Se consideriamo il concetto di resilienza come la capacità di contrastare o assorbire un processo di cambiamento e lo rapportiamo all’ambito religioso tardo-antico, in particolare al caso della sopravvivenza del culto giudaico nell’Alessandria del I sec. a.C./d.C., incontriamo la posizione chiave di Filone.

Nel mio contributo desidero esplorare il nesso tra resilienza e religione in Filone di Alessandria, mettendolo in rapporto all’identità trascendente del divino. Filone infatti associa al Dio biblico il nome di ho ēn e lo descrive più volte in termini medioplatonici. A questo proposito, si possono osservare due fenomeni paralleli di resilienza.

Da una parte, infatti, Filone permette la resilienza del culto minoritario giudaico in un contesto culturalmente ellenizzato, sottoponendo il divino a una riconfigurazione di tipo filosofico, nei termini del lessico maggiormente vincente e accreditato nelle scuole dell’epoca.

Dall’altra parte, la sottolineatura della distanza ontologica di Dio, descritto come asōmatos e privo di emozioni, permette all’uomo tardo-antico di contrastare il proprio cambiamento, il cambiamento umano dettato dal tempo e dalle passioni, appellandosi ad un Dio posto fuori dall’orizzonte inquietante del mutare. La felicità e la saggezza umane saranno allora il frutto dell’assimilazione al Dio immutabile.

Come si configura, allora, la resilienza rispetto a questa sorta di fuga dalla trasformazione? Questo tipo di adattamento resiliente, permette davvero di conservare l’identità biblica del divino e dell’umano? Cosa è vincente e cosa va perso?

98 The Valentinian Gnosis of Nag Hammadi: Resilient or A-resilient?
Franck SEJALON
Université Paul Valéry, Montpellier, France

Abstract

Au début de l’ère chrétienne apparaissent un ensemble de communautés et de mouvances qui synthétisent une vision particulièr du monde et de l’homme. Qualifiées de gnostiques, issues du valentinisme, du séthianisme ou d’autres tendances, elles professent des religions singulières dans laquelle l’humain est placé au cœur d’une double réalité, et même d’une double histoire, à la fois temporelle et éternelle. Il y a d’un côté l’humain avec son tempérament, sa psyché, son âme, qui sont assujettis aux lois du monde et à la mort; et d’un autre côté un principe divin, pré-existant, une âme divine, qui n’appartient pas à cette nature du monde et qui aspire à rejoindre son royaume originel.
De cette conception, dans laquelle le monde est une création déficiente par rapport à ce que est la vie dans sa totalité, ils tirent des conclusions étonnantes dont L’Apocryphon de Jean se fait écho :

N’y étant pas parvenus, ils se réunirent à nouveau tous ensemble pour tenir conseil une nouvelle fois et créèrent un esprit contrefait à la ressemblance de l’Esprit qui était descendu, afin de souiller les âmes par son entremise... Et ils entraînèrent dans de grands soucis les hommes qui les avaient suivis, les égarant dans de multiples erreurs. Ils moururent sans avoir atteint de vérité ni connu le Dieu de la Vérité et c’est ainsi que la création entière fut tenue en un esclavage perpétuel depuis la fondation du monde jusqu’à maintenant.

Deux Esprits, deux logos, deux âmes, deux créations, voilà ce que dépeignent un ensemble de courants gnostiques. Dans cet ordre des choses, la création a été détournée par des puissances imitant l’Esprit pur et enveloppant les humains dans l’illusion et les conséquences de cette contrefaçon : l’avilissement, les soucis, l’erreur, le vieillissement, l’enfermement et la mort. Dès lors, une question se pose : que peut-on attendre de la vie dans ce monde si son essence est corrompue, si elle porte la marque de la déficience ? A ceux qui aspirent à un monde meilleur, la confrontation permanente à la souffrance, aux manques, aux maladies et à la disparition des proches et de soi - ce que l’histoire et la vie de chacun attestent en continue - nécessite un effort permanent de prise sur soi, de persévérance et d’espérance en des lendemains meilleurs ; lendemains qui ne viennent jamais totalement.

Mais pour ceux qui intègrent que les bases de cette vie sont fondamentalement limitées, ou comme le présente ce même Apocryphon: Jésus a dit : Celui qui a connu le monde a trouvé un cadavre, l’acceptation de l’adversité est une évidence, une seconde nature. Elle s’accompagne même d’une dynamique régénératrice qui fait du constat de la limite du monde un élan à construire une vie illimitée, ou dit autrement, immortelle.

En étudiant les éléments gnostiques, il sera question de montrer comment ces courants de pensée possèdent intrinsèquement une composante résiliente.

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189 Jerome and Ambrosiaster: The Gospel of Matthew in the Religious Debate at the End of the IVth Century (in Italian)

Daniela Scardia

Università di Roma Tre, Rome, Italy

Abstract

In 398 Jerome wrote the Commentary on Matthew and asked his friend Eusebius of Cremona to promote it among Roman circles. More than ten years earlier, he had been forced to leave the City, because of malicious rumours about him spread by those who called his revision of the original Greek version of the Gospels outrageous. Despite the spatial and temporal distance, Jerome continued to resist, to question and to counter his Roman adversaries, especially Ambrosiaster. Ambrosiaster is never actually mentioned by Jerome, but indirect allusions are clearly made to him. This dispute centred on two important points. First the issue of Easter, on which the two exegetes were diametrically opposed. Here Jerome rigorously rebutted the arguments of his opponent by reinterpretating correctly his adversary’s mistaken interpretation of the same scriptural quotations. Secondly the issue of the Millenarism, a doctrine which Ambrosiaster
supported and against which Jerome took a stand both through the revision and correction of the Commentary on the Apocalypse of Victorinus of Pettau and through some allusions located in many passages of the Commentary on Matthew. These controversial statements are evidence of Jerome’s resilience. He refused to declare his adversaries victorious and even though they had forced him to leave and flee to the Orient, they were not able to silence him.

858 Resilience in Martyrdom Texts, an Opportunity for Dialogue between Different Cultures

Andrea Zauli

Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Madrid, Spain

Abstract

The ability to face an adverse circumstance by not letting oneself be overwhelmed by it, but by absorbing its impact without suffering upheaval is one of the most heartfelt challenges in the experience of martyrs.

The fear of suffering, so, ultimately, the fear of death, induces questions in persecuted Christians, raises queries, causes rethinking and abjurations. How to overcome suffering? How to face death? How to live such circumstances by remaining firm in one’s positions?

The language of the first martyrial texts reveals how precise comparisons, certain terminological and conceptual choices are the result of a profound reflection which, upstream, also took place on these issues. The intention of these texts was, among others, to bring to the attention of the faithful those witnesses who had shown the strength to resist during the trial and during what followed.

The purpose of this intervention will be to investigate the forms with which, in the martyrial texts, what is currently referred to as resilience emerges, what are the concepts, categories, figures, words, used to indicate the ability to face and bear adversity knowing how to absorb the bump; what, finally, is the role of the sacred, of religious experience, in order to verify whether and how it has contributed to the resilience of the Christians who were in a position to be persecuted, captured, tried and condemned.

An analysis of this kind that starts from specific concepts to derive general data will not only highlight the topic under examination as it emerges in the martyrdom texts but will also open up perspectives useful for understanding how it was in many ways a place, an occasion, an opportunity for interaction, for dialogue, in the late antique context, between Christianity and the other religious traditions that preceded it, specifically Judaism and classicism, to which it wanted to look - certainly not exclusively but certainly privileged traditions - in developing and transmitting a message that today we could define resilient.

346 St. John Chrysostom Homilies on Genesis: Proposals for a Rereading of the Relationship Between Male and Female Genders

Alessia Brombin
Abstract

The basic question, which this paper will attempt to answer, is raised by the need to define the role of women in marriage by referring to the “stories” of their origin, somehow grounding both in the duality of the sexes and in the subordination to the man, favouring the observation point of John Chrysostom. The writings to which I will refer, although part of a big corpus, relate to biblical commentaries and homilies, which may represent a sort of interpretative organon on the subject of male and female identity in the 4th Century AD. The texts under investigation will be the Homilies on Genesis (IIIX - X) and some passages chosen from the comments on the Pauline letters (1Corinthians and Ephesians). With the contribution of ‘Golden Mouth’ I will try to provide some answers in the field of Gender Studies.

The research method will be rooted in biblical exegesis to stand on the author’s theological foundations, in order to relocate the material within a reflection on the masculine and feminine paradigm. The hoped-for fruits will mature in the course of the investigation, in the awareness that the original status of the woman - for this Father of the Church - is that of being man’s subordinate in marriage, where there is a natural subjection to the husband, due to her minority and fragility.

741 A Saint as a Resilient Tool. A Study of the Case of St. Felix on the Base of Paulinus of Nola's Works

Marcin Wysocki

The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Lublin, Poland

Abstract

Without a doubt, one of the most interesting, but also not very well known, personalities of the turn of the 4th and 5th centuries was Paulinus of Nola. Born into a wealthy senatorial family, appointed governor of Campania, he abandoned his wealth and political career, was baptized and settled in a monastery he founded at the tomb of St. Felix in Nola near Naples where he lived till his death as Bishop of Nola. To honour his patron saint, every year he wrote a poem to celebrate the holy day of St. Felix (natalicum) and in these poems he presented St. Felix as his special patron, father, teacher and protector. Paulinus treated him as a powerful tool for reacting to difficult situations in his and his fellows’ lives, and a guide on how to cope with a crisis. The aim of the proposed paper is to show by the example of St. Felix presented in Paulinus’ life, in his poems and letters, which are among the most interesting examples of early Christian epistolography and poetry, how a saint can become a model of religious life and commitment to God, how one can find in the saint a protector, an example and a teacher in the difficulties of daily life, and especially in the time of doubt and crisis.
Caterina Fregosi

74 “The Wise Do Not Moan over the Living nor the Dead.” On How Knowing the Real (sat) Bolsters Coping with Crisis in Bhagavadgītā

Vilém Skopal
University of Pardubice, Pardubice, Czech Republic

Abstract

_Bhagavadgītā_ is part of the Indian epos _Mahābhārata_ telling a story of rivalry between two groups of cousins, Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas, about a dynastic succession. In _Bhagavadgītā_ we see Arjuna the Pāṇḍava with his charioteer Kṛṣṇa in the dawn of the battle, an inevitable outcome of the conflict. Arjuna seeing his relatives, friends and teachers as his enemies is overwhelmed by grief and asks Kṛṣṇa whether to fight and kill them or not. There are numerous verses describing Arjuna’s both emotional and bodily conditions while solving the dilemma: his body is shaking, his hair raising, his mouth is dry and his hands are uncapable of holding bow and arrows, he is confused and unable to compose himself. In other words, Arjuna faces a deep crisis and seeks advice and consolation in Kṛṣṇa’s wisdom. Kṛṣṇa’s advice concerning the dilemma is affirmative for a number of reasons and, therefore, my paper shall focus only on the first one mentioned in the second chapter, verses 11-30. Here Kṛṣṇa discriminates between body, senses, sense object and impressions stemming from senses on the one hand and a _dehīn_, _śārīrin_ (i.e. one having a body) on the other hand. Arjuna is said to concentrate on the ‘embodied’, because it is stable and eternal and, therefore, cannot be killed. Hence, he should go and fight his relatives and friends because he will do harm only to bodies with their senses which is perishable anyway. I will use the hypothesis of S. N. Balagangadhara about two levels of reality, a common intellectual tool in Indian thought, to explain Kṛṣṇa’s advice. I shall focus mainly on questions: What exactly is meant by ‘embodied’? How a body with its senses is conceptualized? What is the difference between these two conceptions? Last but not least, how these two conceptions might bolster coping with crisis?

512 Resilience of a Sacred River: Survival in the Textual and Archaeological Records

Rita Jeney
Bhaktivedanta College, Budapest, Hungary

Abstract
Climate change threatens our environment today. The turns of nature might affect not only our everyday life, but grounds, forests and rivers that are considered sacred in certain religions. Past changes of the sacred landscape are sometime recorded in religious texts. An example of such a change is the River Saraswati, which was praised as a mighty river in the earliest Sanskrit text, the Rig Veda, and then said to have gone underground in later scriptures such as in the Mahabharata. However, its notion survived in Hindu religious thought not only as a sacred river, but also as the goddess of knowledge. The idea of a mythical river drew the interest of Europeans from the 19th century, and they started to examine the landscape of South Asia looking for a lost river both in maps and on the ground. In the 20th century, more thorough research was initiated by Sir Aurel Stein, who identified a dried up river bed in the north-western part of the Indian subcontinent and, based on the collected archaeological data, he dated it to the 3rd millennium BC showing its gradual desiccation till the 4th century AD. The presentation discusses the main textual and archaeological evidence of the lost river and aims to examine the contemporary effects of a sacred river lost and found.

239 Resilience Through Social, Political and Economical Upheaval: Learnings from the Jain Way of Life

Anchal Jain
Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, India

Abstract

The historical traces of the Jain religion in India can be traced back to the 5th Century B.C. However, there have been very short periods in history when the Jain community was the majority. Despite its ancient roots and a minority status, the Jain religion is a world-renowned religion and the Jain community is a thriving minority in India. This paper explores how Jainism and the Jain way of life made the Jain community resilient through social, economic and political upheavals like colonization or liberalization. This paper will further try to understand what could be some possible reasons for such inbuilt resilience within the religion and the community. Lastly, based on field work in the city of Mumbai, India, the aim of the paper will be to reflect on modern times and investigate how, if at all, the community exhibits resilience in these changing times, balancing modernity with conservative values.

167 Conceptualizing Awakening: Modern Discourse on the Enlightenment Event in the Thought of Jiddu Krishnamurti and U.G. Krishnamurti

Robert Trochonowicz
Maria Curie-Sklodowska University, Lublin, Poland

Abstract
When analyzing the experience of awakening in Buddhism we are limited to studying source materials which often date back as far as the first millennium BC. Understanding ancient texts written in Sanskrit or Chinese with their terminology and outdated philosophical concepts is a challenge for contemporary readers.

This paper attempts to analyze a new way of conceptualizing the experience of liberation which has appeared in the twentieth century. The author will focus in particular on Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895-1986) and Uppaluri Gopala Krishnamurti (1918-2007), who have developed a new discourse about an enlightenment event.

In the case of Jiddu Krishnamurti we find linguistic expressions representing a first-person perspective on enlightenment. His position differs from previous approaches by completely replacing the traditional terminology with concepts taken from the contemporary psychological theories.

On the other hand, U.G. Krishnamurti presents a view which eliminates the psychological jargon described above and replaces it with naturalistic terminology. He describes the experience of transcending the subject-object dichotomy by using the concepts representing a scientific third-person view, and emphasizing the physiological aspect of the enlightenment.

The question arises: how do these different modes of expressions affect the understanding of the phenomenon of enlightenment and the possible path leading to it?

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La philosophie taoïste et l’Art : une résilience centrée sur l’Être universel

Clara Mure

Université Paul Valéry, Montpellier, France

Abstract

Dans un contexte de crise sanitaire et écologique, où nos vies sont bouleversées et notre avenir incertain, se raccrocher à la religion, à la spiritualité et à la croyance semble être une voie pour survivre à cette épreuve et affronter les cataclysmes avec philosophie. Car la religiosité d’une société permet aussi son détachement face aux imprévisibles crises. Celles-ci deviennent des opportunités pour le changement ou préfigurent les conditions de rencontre entre l’individu et l’universel. C’est pour cette raison que j’étudie le spirituel dans l’art – au prisme des philosophies chinoises (taoïste, bouddhiste et confucianiste) car – « le principe essentiel de toute création artistique (comme l’exprime Kandinsky dans Du spirituel dans l’art) est le principe de nécessité intérieure, c’est-à-dire le principe de l’entrée en contact efficace avec l’âme humaine ». Et en tant qu’individu tachant de soigner ses traumatismes et de se reconstruire en étant engagée dans une Voie (Tao) spirituelle et intérieure – afin de m’élever/m’éveiller personnellement et ainsi trouver ma place et ma mission au sein du collectif mais surtout au sein du Grand Tout, de l’Univers d’où provient et retourne toute chose – je suis très attachée à cette dimension résiliente des religions et croyances.
La conduite de vie du taoïsme classique invite — comme l’expliquait l’anachorète centenaire Lin Lei dans un entretien amorcé par Confucius — à ne pas prendre part à l’agitation du monde, à refuser les soucis et les activités courantes en pratiquant le « wou-wei » (le non-agir) et cette attitude morale permettrait de vivre sereinement son existence et d’être joyeux.

Et c’est par cette quête du Constant que nous pourrions atteindre l’Illumination comme l’exprimait Lao Tseu dans le texte fondateur de l’école philosophique Taoïste le Tao Te King :

« Atteindre le Constant donne accès à l’Infini

Par l’Infini à l’Universel

Par l’Universel au pouvoir royal

Par la Royauté au Ciel

Et par le Ciel à la Voie

La Voie à la vie qui demeure

Et la fin de votre vie ne sera pas la destruction »

Cette quête existentielle inhérente à la nature humaine est aussi présentée par Arnaud Desjardins dans À la recherche du soi : « Cette aspiration (spirituelle) à l’Infini, à l’Illimité, à l’Absolu, elle existe en tout être humain. Le plus souvent elle est déviée parce que cet Absolu est cherché dans l’avoir (…) et non pas dans l’être ». Il y parle dépassement de l’égo et recherche de la non dualité.

La philosophie taoïste nous permet donc de cerner nos émotions -sans se laisser envahir par le mental- mais surtout de s’extraire du Moi -enfermant- pour se lier aux autres -avec empathie- et rencontrer notre Être véritable.

**ISC 5 Orthodox Christianity (Individual Short Communications)**

**16:30 - 18:30 Monday, 30th August, 2021**

63 **Pandemic Chronicles in an Orthodox Christian Community**

*Tina Do Egito*

PSTGU, Moscow, Russian Federation

**Abstract**
The Church of St. Nicholas in Kuznetsy is known in Moscow not only for its architectural merits, but, first of all, for the unity of its large community, whose strength lies in following the tradition. The community went through all the tests during the times of "militant atheism" of 1917-1987. However, the 2020-2021 coronavirus epidemic has become a real challenge. The community had to split up. Due to the difficult epidemiological situation, some of the priests, clergy and parishioners were forced to leave the large metropolis of Moscow for the village of Nikolskoye in the Tver region. Our report is a chronicle of the events of how the divided community went through these difficult times. The report is based on interviews with priests, singers, laity, teachers and students of the University, with which the temple and the community have long and lasting ties. Among the heroes of the interview - Father Philip, a priest (48 years old) who remained in Moscow even in the midst of the epidemic. He continued to serve in the church. He came home in special protective suits to the sick and dying parishioners, gave them communion at home, sometimes for the last time. The report examines how the pandemic affected the religious views of believers, changed their religious behaviour, and how the perception of parishioners, theologians and priests of the pandemic has evolved through the prism of religious doctrine (an apocalyptic vision of what is happening in the world). The community continues to lead a difficult life, divided into two camps. Many habitual forms of religious life are disturbed in whole or in part. However, new forms of communication have appeared: community chat, where all significant events in the life of each member of the community are reported, for example, illness of one of them, it also establishes an agreement on joint prayer, in the event of the death of someone from the community, the Psalter is read together. An important new form of community life has become regular online meetings with Archbishop Panteleimon, during which he tells parishioners about the peculiarities of the Christian faith, about the Eucharistic service, gives examples from the history of the Church, from his personal experience, reads sacred texts, poems, and performs a joint prayer service. Thus, the community perceived the challenge of the pandemic as the need to search for new shapes of religious life that would allow it to preserve its former unity.

378 Russian Religious Philosophy and the Transformation of the Traditional Orthodox Religiosity
Alexander Tokranov
Kazan federal university, Kazan, Russian Federation

Abstract

Eastern Orthodoxy during its history showed a great ability to resist changes. It did not adapt itself but resisted or simply ignored cultural transformations. This is the way opposite to that in which Catholicism and Protestantism used to react to historical and cultural challenges.

During its history, Catholicism had to deal with many important challenges: Protestantism, the Enlightenment, scientific naturalism, Postmodernity, just to name some of them. Initially, Russian Orthodoxy was not deeply involved with these controversies because they did not have any major influence on the Russian culture and social life till the second half of the XIX century. And while the official church institutions aimed only at the conservation of the medieval tradition, the secular theologians and philosophers were the first to realize the necessity to adapt Christianity to the changing world. The presentation deals with topics developed by these thinkers who were the very first to explore the potential of modernization inherent (as they believed) in the very core of the Orthodox teaching and to Christianity as a whole. Slavophiles, for example, discussed the problem of freedom (spiritual as well as political) with reference to the conflicting Orthodox and Catholic ecclesiological models. The most important Russian thinker Vladimir Solovyev vehemently criticized the historical Churches for neglecting the task of
The Soviet Reality in the Eastern European Biblical Folklore

Kaciaryna Bychak

Doctoral School of the University of Szczecin, Szczecin, Poland. Institute of Theology, University of Szczecin, Szczecin, Poland. Institute of Literature and New Media, University of Szczecin, Szczecin, Poland

Abstract

This presentation aims to depict and analyse the ways in which biblical motifs were situated in the imagination of the inhabitants of the Soviet countryside.

Extensive research on the interpretation of biblical motifs in the biblical folklore of the Eastern European Slavs shows that the motifs were adapted to the prevailing social and political reality. Analyses of the plots of individual stories allow us to understand the variety of attitudes of anonymous artists towards the system in which they lived. For example, the motif of the Flight into Egypt is often encountered in narratives about kolkhozes, where Herod is identified with a negatively perceived local ruler.

The aim of the study is both to describe the phenomenon and to reflect on the adaptation of biblical folklore motifs in response to the policy of atheisation which was prevalent in the Soviet Union.

The research is based on case studies and on a critical analysis of texts collected by ethnographers and folklorists after the end of World War II until the 1990s, taking into account the specificity of the oral tradition.

The poster will present the preliminary hypotheses and results of the analysis, as well as methods and geographical locations of the analysed texts.

Romanian Orthodox Church and Magic: A Synergized Functionality

Robert-Catalin Barbu

University of Gävle, Gävle, Sweden

Abstract
Magic and Christianity have a long history together going back to the basis of the Christian dogma itself. The Romanian Christian-Orthodox faith however seemed to have taken this history to an entirely new level. The present paper briefly explores the peculiar interaction between magic or magical thinking of Romanian citizens and the long-established Orthodox faith. The Orthodox faith served as a tool of resilience and as a preserver of certain elements belonging to the magical thinking of Romanian common folk. Furthermore, it adopted rites and rituals appertaining to magical thinking of the population, ending up with its clergy becoming the practitioners of such rites, as is exemplified in the case of the Romanian magical charm (descântec). A comparison between a magic charm and an apotropaic prayer is presented in order to emphasize the arguments outlined in the present work using a hermeneutical approach. This paper sheds some light upon this interaction, displaying a peculiar facet of Orthodoxy, unexplored in detail by academics.

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912 Teaching “The Foundations of Orthodox Culture” in Russian Schools: Achievements and Problems

Tania Pronina

Center for Religious and Ethnopolitical Studies, A.S. Pushkin Leningrad State University, Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation

Abstract

The report analyzes the conceptual foundations of the introduction and implementation of the course “Fundamentals of World Religious Cultures and Secular Ethics” in secondary schools in Russia. It is based on official figures provided by the diocesan administration and the education administration. It also presents the results of independent monitoring of the implementation and teaching of the “Fundamentals of Orthodox Culture” in schools of one Russian region. This monitoring included questionnaires, attendance at parent-teacher meetings, and interviews with teachers trained in the subject and with teaching experience. The author analyzes different opinions about teaching “Fundamentals of Orthodox Culture” in schools; identifies the most significant problems in this area, which include teacher training and low motivation of teachers and students; and gives examples of good practices. The reported study was funded by RFBR according to the research project № 21-011-44106/21.

146 Resilient Spirituality and the Challenge of Transformation ONLINE

16:30 - 18:30 Monday, 30th August, 2021

Martin Rötting
The open session will explore resilience with a focus on the relation of spirituality and religion. If resilience is considered as the ability to counteract or absorb a process of transformation and an ability to find what best suits new environmental conditions; and an awareness of how to cope with a crisis (EASR organizing committee), the question arises, how Spirituality, often understood in a personal, subjective and transformative sense, initiates or counteracts resilience in institutional religion. And how religion initiates or counteracts resilience in spirituality. Papers of this session will look into the challenge of transformation on both sides and analyze how spirituality contributes to resilient forms of life-way-navigation in a world of culture and tradition, but also cross culture, pluralism, interfaith and multiple faith identities and change.

835 Spiritual Resilience and Transformation of Imprisoned Bous in the Philippines

Albert Younas, Martin Rötting
university of Salzburg, Salzburg, Austria

Abstract

The paper will contend that boys who endure domestic hardships and are imprisoned because of street lives ended up estranged from society. When occasions lead to otherworldly arousing involvement, the subsequent treatment they get can lead them to form changes in their lives, or it can upset them from doing so. With support, boys can solidify positive life changes and reach an enduring condition of spiritual transformation. The paper demonstrates how some rehabilitation programmes in the Philippines allow deprived children to experience and develop constructive trust, reliance, attachment, and commitment. This assists in the development of faith that is a significant spiritual transformation component. The paper shows how such programmes catalyze and nurture this spiritual transformation.

834 Spiritual Resilience: A Panoramic Survey of the Feelings of Christians/Christianity Living in Borno, an Islamic Community

Femi Makinde
University of Salzburg, Salzburg, Austria

Abstract

From the beginning of time, spiritual consciousness has helped people understand, cope, and relate with both immediate and future consequences of religious beliefs. Borno is a state in Nigeria: it is a den of Boko-Haram religious extremists, who have been persecuting Christianity/Christians within the state consistently for 20 years.
Bouncing Back with God - Believing in a Monotheistic God in the Process of Resilience

Anne Piumi Samarathunga
Salzburg University, Salzburg, Austria

Abstract

This paper will be presented to discuss the probability of healing one’s traumatic memories through believing in a monotheistic God and analyzing the pros and cons in the process.

Life flows with a lot of ups and downs and hurdles. Persons who grew up in certain family backgrounds, various religious and cultural backgrounds may have different perspectives during their life circumstances.

The root causes for losing the inner balance of the person could be unexpected life situations; such as the death of a family member, a separation from a loved one, physical or psychological abuse. A person’s belief system and sense of meaning could be severely affected after traumatic experiences (Reich et al., 2012, p. 36).

Based on the American Psychological Association (2012), the definition of Resilience is a process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or significant sources of stress: such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems, or workplace and financial stressors.

In the Handbook of Adult Resilience it states that believing in spirituality and practising religious rituals are helpful for recovery and also for finding the purpose of life after traumatic or stressful experiences (Reich et al., 2012, p. 36).

Monotheistic religions believe the reason behind everything is the will of a Sovereign God who gives pain, sorrow, and happiness in life. At times a person who believes in monotheism may feel wrath toward God and unforgiven by him (Paloutzian & Park, 2005, p. 315). When people experience the presence of God as distant and hidden they may experience anxiety until they find the solutions to feel the presence of God (Reich et al., 2012, p. 319).

For many decades people from diverse cultures have attempted various methods, and techniques to bounce back from their unhealthy lifestyles.

References:


839 Dramatic Arts as an Opportunity for Combatting Resilient Destructive Religious Beliefs in Iran

Wienke Meyer

Johannes Gutenberg-Universität, Mainz, Germany

Abstract

The relationship of theatre and religion in Iran: Dramatic arts as an act of resilience and as a positive challenge for resilient Shiite religion in Iran. Resilient religion in Iran often represents a refusal of needed transformation. Dramatic arts also provide ways of processing the outcome of a resilient religious environment. Furthermore, the representation of creation through dramatic arts is an opportunity to reconnect with a natural relationship to religion in Iran.
Resilience as the Foundation of Escape and Migration-Related Transformations in Current Social Order Systems

Alina Knoflach

Religious Studies, University of Salzburg, Salzburg, Austria

Abstract

The complexity of social transformation processes reflects the complexity of their influences. The resulting conflict of value systems confronts postmodern society with the challenge of redesigning and, at the same time, preserving traditional values as a community based on solidarity. Further driving forces of transformative societies are shaped by demographic upheavals and the simultaneous demand for demographic stability, commercial relationships, resource and power relations and the associated political borders, barriers, and isolations. This makes it difficult to create and protect a respectful space for pluralism in a globalized world, for the needs of all individuals living in modern society to be met fairly.

Resilience is required for a strengthening and development-promoting approach to processes of change that affect both, individual biographies and a society. Depending on the theoretical and conceptual considerations, the term resilience describes different conceptualizations, methodological approaches and cognitive goals. The increasing interest in research goes hand in hand with an increased complexity of the meaning of the term. The topicality and the intensified debates with phenomena of resilience are related to a changed perception of uncertainty, crises, and risks. The different contexts of the application of resilience range from individual stress management to political security and empowerment strategies. The term resilience here, turns away from definitions of protective measures and the setting of boundaries as political legitimation that oppose social change and is based on concepts of individual social and societal resilience in relation to current and future possibilities for coping with and shaping life in the transformation processes triggered by escape and migration. Finally, it is examined what potential spirituality and religiosity have as a resilience factor in dealing with transforming societies of this kind. Therefore, it is important to rely on large narratives that allow the adaptation of different worlds of meaning without having to give up belonging to one's own practices, traditions, or groups. It is about getting to know alternatives that enable change processes to be dealt with and allow further developments. It is not just about self-appointed or divine authorities, handed-down traditions, or disciplinary systems of values and norms, to which generally socially valid thinking, acting, and feeling should be aligned. Rather, resilience is characterized by openness to possible crises, unpredictable events, and omnipresent threats at any time. It is neither about adjustment and resistance, nor about coming to terms with the transformative challenges, but about accepting the current circumstances that are emerging in resilient development processes. Not the sovereignty and rationality, or the powerlessness and ignorance that serve the purpose of resilience in the course of current challenges, but both constructs shape resilient identities. They are characterized by autonomy and dependency as well as by vulnerabilities and are nonetheless capable of acting as sensible and value- and norm-oriented subjects. A resilient approach to everyday challenges in transforming societies is expressed through the call to recognize structures and power relations that promote exclusion and fear and to perceive these as not ontological but human-made.
ISC 6 Neopaganism and NRM (Individual Short Communications)

16:30 - 18:30 Monday, 30th August, 2021

Andrea Nuti

242 Reconfiguring the Old Religion. Crises, Transformation and Self-Legitimation in Wicca (1968-present)

Leonard van 't Hul¹, Léon van Gulik², Elise van Luijn¹

¹Utrecht University, Utrecht, Netherlands. ²Leiden University, Leiden, Netherlands

Abstract

From its inception onwards, contested historical claims and societal critique were part and parcel of the development of Wicca. Adherents of this postmodern nature religion were highly motivated to legitimize themselves vis-à-vis these challenges, crises and the wider religious landscape. This makes Wicca eminently suited to investigate narratives of religious resilience. By conducting a historical content analysis of an extensive corpus of emic publications, i.e. magazines and YouTube-channels that were published by Wiccans in the religion’s country of origin, the UK, in the last 50 years, we will assess developments in Wiccan self-legitimation. We show that claims of legitimation can be grouped into either truth or utility claims, although the character and content of those claims shift profoundly over the years. Especially intriguing is the waning presence of “religious Others” in both types of self-legitimation, as tightly constructed factual narratives gave way to impressionistic, emotive narratives. Adherents increasingly emphasize how the movement contributes to self-realization and the joy of being a witch.

314 Sa Sekhem Sahu: Venerating Sekhmet in the 21st Century

Olivia Kinsman

University of Bristol, Bristol, United Kingdom

Abstract

Sekhmet, the “Mighty Female One”, is an ancient Egyptian netjeret (or goddess) whose name first appears over four thousand years ago in the Old Kingdom Pyramid Texts. Sekhmet received cult across Egypt and into Nubia for over two thousand years, eventually experiencing a decline and end owing to the spread of monotheism. Moving forward another fifteen hundred years and Sekhmet’s name is once again being uttered in the prayers of her devotees, accompanied by the sound of shaking sistra, the scent of burning incense, though in places markedly different from the Nile Valley. This extensive ancient history, duration of disrupted worship, and distinctive modern revival demonstrates Sekhmet’s resilience, with devotees finding contemporary relevance in this ancient netjeret, despite radically different contexts. This presentation will
highlight some of the differences and similarities between Sekhmet’s ancient cults and their modern revivals in Anglo-American Goddess Spirituality, positing how such religio-spiritual engagement can be of interest to ancient historians, Egyptologists, and museum professionals today.

899 Minoranze Religiose e Covid-19: Staywell

Maria Elena Martini¹, Luigi Brambani², Fabrizio D'Agostino³

¹Chiesa di Scientology di Roma e Mediterraneo, Roma, Italy. ²Chiesa di Scientology d'Italia, Milano, Italy. ³Chiesa di Scientology di Roma e Mediterraneo, ROMA, Italy

Abstract

“QUALUNQUE SIA IL PROBLEMA, QUALCOSA SI PUO’ FARE”. Questo il motto resiliente dei Ministri Volontari di Scientology.

Il Professor Aldo Natale Terrin, nel suo libro, “Scientology. Libertà e Immortalità” conclude:


Quale condizione sociale poteva esserci che mettesse alla prova la vasta comunità internazionale al di sopra di ogni ideologia, credo, appartenenza se non l'emergenza sanitaria COVID19 che ci ha coinvolto nell’ultimo anno?

La risposta della comunità di Scientology a questa crisi è stata la campagna informativa di prevenzione Staywell che ha coinvolto volontari in tutto il mondo a diffondere gli strumenti per rimanere in Buona Salute (www.scientology.org/staywell) contiene opuscoli scaricabili e video informativi su come mantenere se stessi e gli altri in buona salute durante la pandemia e non solo.

247 An Interdisciplinary Discourse on the Semantic Links between Spirituality and Resilience ONLINE

16:30 - 18:30 Monday, 30th August, 2021
Ann-Kathrin Armbruster, Constantin Klein

People facing ultimate crises, for example in case of severe or terminal disease, search for ways of coping, of expressing both their hopes as well as their fears. However, how can the ineffable be expressed and which practices are helpful in enduring seemingly unendurable experiences? The interdisciplinary research unit 2686 “Resilience in Religion and Spirituality. Endurance and the Formation of Powerlessness, Fear and Anxiety”, funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) since 2019 focuses on the factors of resilience that might be relevant for people in critical situations. Therefore, the perspectives of theology, philosophy, psychosomatics, palliative medicine, and spiritual care are combined in hermeneutical and empirical investigations opening up possibilities to research the connections between resilience and spirituality more comprehensively.

It is often assumed that religion and spirituality can play an important role in dealing with crises (Koenig et al. 2012; Pargament et al. 2013) and hence serve as a factor of resilience. Though, how to define resilience and spirituality is still up to debate and depends largely on the context. Therefore, in accordance with the aims of the research unit the session takes an approach to understanding both spirituality and resilience more deeply via their semantic links: Both deal with experiences that can barely be put into words and as such rely on narrative mediation, semantic representations, and practices.

Our workshop attempts to give an insight in our interdisciplinary research: First, Stephan Bethe presents results on empirical-based semantics of spirituality. While discussing health-related definitions of spirituality, he shows that spirituality is often associated with meaning-making and psycho-social functioning. The results illustrate a connection between the semantics of spirituality, functionality, and concepts of mindfulness and religious practices leading over to the topics of the following papers.

Second, Katharina Opalka examines the intersection of individual meaning-making and collective liturgical practices, namely the narratives and semantics used in the ecumenical monastic Community of Taizé. In her analyses she focuses on the ways the Community reacts to challenges, e.g. the COVID-19 crisis, emphasizing the importance of dynamic adaptation and liturgical openness as factors of resilience.

Third, Viktoria Lenz investigates semantic links between mindfulness and spirituality as well as individual practices of mindfulness, meditation, and prayer. She identifies similarities between mindfulness and prayer as practices of spirituality. However, the moral psychological concept of mindfulness seems to be more focused on intrapersonal resonance while prayer has also to be seen as dialogical and interpersonally.

Fourth, Thorben Alles sums up and discusses the different aspects of functionality and a-functionality in semantic representations as well as practices that are given in the previous papers. He shows the ambivalent role of functionality in psychosomatics and other fields of medicine on the one hand and of spiritual and religious practices on the other. Nevertheless, spirituality and its practices are highly associated with positive effects on dealing with crises so that a-functionality must be emphasized to deal with the complexity of phenomena like resilience and spirituality.

204 On the Semantics of Spirituality

Stephan Bethe¹, Constantin Klein²

¹LMU, Munich, Germany. ²EHS, Dresden, Germany
Abstract

This paper will introduce different semantics concerning spirituality, in regard to a study by Eisenmann and Klein (2016) based on a sample of n=1779. The paper will therefore provide starting points for the contributions investigating links to the semantics of mindfulness practices (Lenz), to semantics in spiritual practices by the Community of Taizé (Opalka) and questions to whether spirituality can be regarded as (a-)functional, or if there need to be different categories to evaluate the connection between spirituality and resilience (Alles).

a) The question “What is spirituality?“ is answered quite differently depending on the scientific discourse. Health-related organizations, who have a special interest not only in physical, and psychological, but also in what has been called “spiritual well-being” (Ellison 1983) of patients, suggest existentialistic-humanistic definitions for spirituality. In a prominent definition, for instance, Tanyi describes spirituality as “a personal search for meaning and purpose in life, which may or may not be related to religion. It entails connection to self-chosen and/or religious beliefs, values, and practices that give meaning to life, thereby inspiring and motivating individuals to achieve their optimal being. This connection brings faith, hope, peace, and empowerment” (Tanyi 2002).

b) Such definitions, which emphasize the positive character of spirituality for the health, if understood not only as physical or psychological, could be seen as functional for resilience which Alles explores. Though, the phrasing of these definitions is not only functionalistic but also quite general in trying to avoid any exclusions, and therefore not practical for the analysis of concrete spiritual practices (Opalka, Lenz) and their links to resilience.

c) There have been numerous approaches to investigate the spirituality of a person. The most acknowledged method is to ask directly to which degree a person identifies as spiritual (Bethe and Klein submitted). In consequence, it is necessary to take a look at what people mean when stating that they are “spiritual”. According to the comprehensive analysis of the empirical semantics of spirituality of Eisenmann and Klein (Eisenmann, Klein et al. 2016) there are ten dimensions of spirituality originating from the answers of subjects who have been asked the question: “What is spirituality for you?”

The categories show that spirituality can express a variety of subjective meanings of which the feeling of an (all)connectedness and harmony with the Universe, with Nature and with the Whole (I), the understanding of spirituality as the vital core of religion, in particular a close relationship with God (II), the inner search for a higher self (III), and the dedication to ethics and values in relation to humanity (IV) turned out to be the most important. Relating these categories to concrete practices reveals connections to a mode of awareness (Sautermeister in press) and to the Taizé community, especially their functional use of liturgical elements in an unforeseen situation (COVID-19) which also closes the circle between the functional assessment of certain spiritual practices and resilience towards crisis.
Abstract

This paper will focus on finding inner strength in crisis through mindfulness and spirituality. Crisis may hit out of the blue, some people however respond differently than others and cope surprisingly well. One factor in this phenomenon called resilience can be mindfulness. This paper will show how mindfulness and spirituality can be described and connected as similar a-functional categories of self-resonating experience that may lead to resilient coping in crisis. One practical realisation can be prayer.

a) Mindfulness is often described as meditation-based practice focusing and developing a mode of awareness which evolves to the goal to monitor and intentionally bring attention to the present-moment experience with an attitude of acceptance and curiosity without judgement (Kabat-Zinn 2003). Research documented beneficial effects of mindfulness programs such as mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) and mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) across wide range of clinical conditions (Hofmann et al. 2010). Initial evidence also highlights resilience fostering potential of mindfulness training (Meiklejohn et al. 2012). But how are spirituality [Bethe] and mindfulness semantically and metaphorically connected? In MBSR programs you can see semantic parallels such as “how to take best care of yourself”, being just by yourself, accepting who you are, and what you are feeling in stressful situations.

b) An analysis of the findings and wording in Eisenmann/Klein et al. 2016 can show semantic links between spirituality and mindfulness. Some participants associated being connected to a higher power with being deeply connected with oneself. The results show that some participants describe spirituality with wordings also used for describing mindfulness such as feeling “inner peace” when feeling connected to a Higher Self, “awareness”, “consciousness”. Spirituality includes introspection and development of an individual’s inner life as well as mindfulness (e.g. meditation, prayer and contemplation).

c) Prayer can be seen as contemplative phenomenon baring similarities to mindful practices and therefore is a practical realisation of mindfulness in religion (Knabb 2012). Mindfulness can be described in a moral psychological way with seven dimensions including a spiritual-meaningful dimension (Sautermeister in press). However, prayer has a special dimension added implicating a higher power and is viewable as dialogical practice to bring something before God. Even when embedded in experiences of collective contemplation [Opalka] individual praying has diverse scenic realisation. Therefore, prayer cannot be reduced to intrapersonal resonance (as is mindfulness). Furthermore, it’s worth discussing whether mindfulness should be considered as preparation to reach a certain goal in prayer, e.g. coming authentically before God. Yet, it can be good preparation to sense oneself and one’s personal (emotional) needs but prayer should not be considered functional - at least not in crisis. Mindful experiences are a-functional [Alles], subjective and individual. But it can be stated that mindfulness as intrapersonal resonance experience may lead to a special quality of praying contemplation. Thus, taking spiritual care of yourself might mean also being mindful with yourself and therefore may be a resilient coping strategy in crisis.

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206 “The Power of the Provisional”: Collective and Contextual Dimensions of Spirituality in the Community of Taizé

Katharina Opalka

Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms Universität Bonn, Bonn, Germany
Abstract

This paper will analyse distinct practices of spirituality in a collective setting, namely in the Community of Taizé, from a systematic-theological perspective and show how the capabilities inherent in these practices and the underlying processes of semantic and narrative representations may further our understanding of factors of resilience.

a) The ecumenical-monastic Community of Taizé (founded by Roger Schutz in 1949) is generally perceived as a place where spirituality is made accessible for young people as they partake for a week in the life of the Community. Using the spiritual dimensions in Eisenmann/Klein et al. 2016 as heuristic categories [Bethe], the following aspects come into focus: The Community of Taizé has a unique way of opposing tradition (dim. IX) by combining traditions from different denominations (dim. II). The emphasis in Taizé is on living these traditions in daily life as a “Pilgrimage of Trust”, integrating the ethical dimension (dim. IV) as a relationship of “Struggle and Contemplation”. Most importantly, these spiritual values are balanced and checked by the spiritual practices of individual meaning-making in communal prayer (dim III; X): “Everything stops on the hill of Taizé [when the bells announce prayer]” (website taize.fr).

b) Furthermore, Taizé evaluates and changes liturgical and communal elements as is needed in a certain situation or at a certain time under the “Power of the Provisional”. That enables the Community to appropriately adapt to unforeseen circumstances. This can be interpreted as a resilient attitude to critical situations, for example, in the way the Community transferred their spiritual practices and parts of the communal life to the virtual dimension during the COVID-19 restrictions.

c) These fundamentally provisional spiritual practices in Taizé are saturated in narratives (e.g. the aforementioned “pilgrimage of trust”, “struggle and contemplation” and the “power of the provisional”). These narratives can also be changed and re-arranged in ways neither being completely random nor fully intentional. Rather, the narratives prove and establish themselves according to their functionality for spiritual meaning-making in collective, dynamic and fluent processes. However, neither narratives nor practices are reduced to functionality, but incorporate a-functional aspects in reference to the biblical texts and Christian traditions they stem from [Alles].

With respect to the interdisciplinary discourse, this “contextual spirituality” lived in a collective setting in Taizé can be seen as a resonating space that might help to foster a resilient attitude in individuals [akin to mindfulness: Lenz]. The aforementioned aspects of spiritual life in Taizé can be understood as capabilities adding to the resilience factors, namely: a) balancing and checking narratively mediated (spiritual) values with (spiritual) practices, which brings into focus the importance of collective (interpersonal, resonant and communal) phenomena for individual experiences of both spirituality and resilience; b) being able to adapt practices as the situation demands by understanding them to be fundamentally provisional; c) letting narratives and semantics emerge and establish themselves in dynamic, collective processes that value traditional expressions for their a-functional functionality.

221 Functionality, Functioning and A-functionality: On Conceptual Understandings of Semantical Links between Resilience and Spirituality

Thorben Alles
Abstract

This paper will offer a theoretical grounding of the interdisciplinary discussion on the semantic links between spirituality and resilience. From the perspective of systematic theology considerations about functions and their role for the intersecting discourses of resilience and spirituality shall be presented.

a) It is often assumed that spiritual or religious people show a more resilient way of dealing with crises (as discussed in Koenig et al. 2012; Zwingmann/Hodapp 2017). Furthermore, the semantic representations of spirituality (Eisenmann/Klein et al. 2016) are bearing certain links to the semantics of resilience or certain factors of resilience as is indicated by Bethe, Lenz and Opalka. Spirituality can therefore - at least in certain contexts and under certain conditions - be seen as functional for resilience. Functionality here means the aptitude for reaching a certain goal - in this case the goal of becoming or being resilient.

b) Furthermore, functionality is part of definitions of resilience (Richter/Geiser in press): the desired state, resilience, can itself be described as a way of functioning of the psycho-physical states of the subject (Glantz/Sloboda 1999) and the same holds with the concept “quality of life” in palliative care (Peusquens et al. in press). In medicine and psychology there is well-known difficulty in how to determine what psycho-physical functioning (as opposed to dysfunctions) consists of: it can neither be diagnosed by the patient him- or herself nor without considering his or her judgement. This leads to a complexity and multiplicity of objectivity, situativity, contextuality, and perspectivity as well as to - for therapeutic interventions indispensable - questions of judgement.

c) In the special case of spirituality, the situation is even more complicated. Spirituality does not work functionally in the sense of a simple unidimensional connection. For instance, no one would expect that prayers “prescribed” by a physician in order to “cure” a depression would necessarily lead to a recovery. This is further developed by Opalka analysing semantics used in the functional setting of Taizé. That is why the additional concept which we have called “a-functionality” has to be considered (Opalka in preparation). A-functionality does also apply to Lenz’s analysis of mindfulness (Sautermeister in press). Hence, the semantic links between spirituality and resilience can be explained without relying on simple causal patterns (Richter/Alles in press).

The concepts of functionality, functioning and a-functionality may help to further the understanding of semantic links between spirituality and resilience. By differencing between these three aspects of function, different disciplines can distinctly contribute and relate their research in interdisciplinary discourse. In addition, these concepts can contribute to further understand the concept of resilience, especially concerning the role of spirituality.

ISC 7 Case Studies (Individual Short Communications)

16:30 - 18:30 Monday, 30th August, 2021

Paola Zamperlin
Can Quantitative Analysis Elucidate Religious Superdiversity? The Case of Cape Town as a Critical Instrument to Investigate Resilience, Coexistence, and Conflict

Carmelo Russo

Sapienza, Rome, Italy

Abstract

Since the end of apartheid in 1994, Cape Town and South Africa have been experiencing “the greatest wave of both internal and international migrations from different racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds in the Country’s history” (Kakonde, Núñez, Zulu 2019). On the other hand, South African societies, especially in Cape Town, have fascinated scholars of social sciences for their multiethnic/multicultural character, “syncretic” cultural processes, and racialized patterns of inequality and prejudice, as if they were “endemic” in that society, layered across the last centuries through the landing of European colonists, the relocation of “indigenous ethnic groups,” forced immigrant workers from Asia, and more recent migration from different areas of the world.

Starting from the category of “Religious Supediversity” (Becci, Burchardt 2016), this paper aims at analysing quantitative data focused on religious affiliation of Cape Town by means of a comparison with different sources. The purpose is to use religious affiliation and adherence as indicators to plot the religious South African and Capetonian landscape. Religious belonging and adherence, in connection with other indicators emerging by census data, such as population groups, migration patterns, average annual household income, level of education, can provide a useful framework to define and explore the intersection between the role of faith communities and other characteristics in the society.

Despite the official representation fostered by South African institutions, which underlines South Africa as “a country where various cultures merge to form a unique nation, proud of its heritage, […] a rainbow nation with rich and diverse cultures” (Yearbook 2003-2004: chapt. 1, p. 1), cross-referencing religious data with other indicators shows that “racial” inequalities and injustice persist, despite the commitment of the Cape Town Inter Faith Initiative (which includes a category named Spirituality, Meditation & Yoga), established in 2000.

On the other hand, resilience is a pervasive element of the religious landscape. Some circumscribed surveys highlight a resurgence of Christianity, whose adherents increased 4.4 percentage points since 2001 to 2013 (Schoeman 2017); moreover there is clear evidence of religious pluralism (Burchardt 2016), the presence of resilient “unconventional” faith groups, like Quakers and Unitarians, and blurred boundaries through the categories, such as “hybridization” between Christianity and “African Traditional Religions” and the transversal power of supernaturalism (Farrar et alii 2019).

This paper is part of the EU-funded project RELCAPETOWN – Religious Super-Diversity in Cape Town. Dynamics of Leadership and Territorialization Through Religious Spaces in the Migration Process. This project has received funding from the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No 886578”. It is hosted by the Sapienza University of Rome and managed by Carmelo Russo.
“How Else but to Be Resilient?”: Social Resilience, Religion and the Left-Behind Families of Victims of War on Drugs in the Philippines

Bubbles Beverly Asor
University of the Philippines Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines

Abstract

“Filipino resilience” has long been celebrated by Filipinos as a collective response by people, communities and places to foresee, adapt to, endure and bounce back from the damage of natural catastrophes such as strong typhoons, volcanic eruptions and other disasters. This resilience is believed to have been extended to other spheres in Filipino lives such as exerting utmost patience and having a forgiving attitude towards political corruption, state excesses and inadequacies, and social inequality. During the Covid-19 pandemic, Filipino netizens have critiqued “Filipino resilience” as a valorised social trait that does not lead to any transformation. Although the notion of resilience is deemed problematic, I still see the merit of employing it to analyze the practices and strategies of “surviving” and “thriving” amidst and despite economic vulnerabilities, health risks, precarious lives and violent deaths. This paper examines the construction and practices of resilience of the left-behind families of victims of extrajudicial killings in their everyday life. I posit that these families have the precarious positions of learning to survive and thrive given the intersectional challenges and marginalisation they are facing - poverty, health risks and political threats. To survive and thrive, these left-behind families draw on religious resource as a source of resilience, at the community and organizational levels. These religious resources come in the form of a support system provided by Catholic organizations such as livelihood projects, documentation of the extrajudicial cases, psychosocial interventions, food provision, financial support and legal assistance to pursue legal accountability. This paper attempts to go beyond the treatment of resilience at the psychological and individual level, and aims to bring the social back into the discussion of resilience. It concludes with how religion enriches the study of social resilience, and vice-versa.

Rethinking Power Balances in the Church: Catholic Women in Belgium on (Female) Authority, Agency, and Reforms

Eline Huygens
Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium

Abstract

Despite being denied access to ordained positions of power and thus limited to lay positions, women numerically outnumber men in the Catholic Church in Belgium. Furthermore, their involvement in the Church is mostly conducted in gender stereotypical domains, such as education and care providing services. In this paper, I aim to explore how Catholic lay women manage and negotiate tensions between their religiously inspired aspirations to be involved in the Church on the one hand, and their lack of institutional authority on the other hand. Based upon ethnographic research (including in-depth interviews and informal conversations) conducted in the framework of my PhD research, this paper sets out to analyze the opinions and strategies of Catholic lay women who are active in the Church. In doing so, I seek to comprehend their understandings of (female) authority, resilience, and power. Moreover, I examine how these women envisions structural reforms in terms of power balances within the Church. Starting from a feminist
epistemological position and using a lived religion perspective, I draw upon insights from both gender studies and religious studies, in order to theorize their attitudes, experiences, and practices. Throughout this paper, I reveal the different ways in which these women position themselves vis-à-vis Church teachings and traditions regarding authority and power, and how they accommodate these in their everyday life. Finally, I argue that these women’s agency is shaped by various elements and depends on the local context in which these women operate.

641 “Contested Muslimness” – Polish Tatars and the Adaption of Transnational Knowledge
Franziska Sandkühler
Friedrich Schiller Universität Jena, Jena, Germany

Abstract

During the past decades, the interest of scholars of religion in migration, transnationality and identity has been rising. While a networks perspective has often been adapted to shed light on the social capital of migrants or their multiple belongings, more research still needs to be done with a focus on the actual conditions under which transnational networks emerge. It also appears relevant how knowledge transferred through those linkages is not only transmitted, but also transformed when applied to new social and spatial contexts. This research project aims to contribute to those questions based on the case of Polish Tatars. The (religious) identity and practices of this autochthonous Muslim community have been challenged by the arrival of non-Tatar Muslims in Poland as well as facilitated access to religious knowledge through the internet and mobile religious specialists. Since Tatar traditions are sometimes dismissed as un-Islamic by other Muslims, many Polish Tatar actors turn to those in Eastern European countries, seeking to enhance a Tatar cultural revival. Working with network analysis and qualitative interviews, the research project thus asks how belonging to a local community determines access to certain resources and translocal networks and vice versa.

ISC 8 Philosophy (Individual Short Communications)
16:30 - 18:30 Monday, 30th August, 2021
Elisa Coda

4 George Lindbeck and the Postliberal Theology (in Italian)
Enrico Cerasi
Università Vita e Salute - san Raffaele, Milano, Italy

Abstract
In this essay Lindbeck's philosophical theology, and in particular his cultural-linguistic model, is presented. Conceived to support ecumenical dialogue, Lindbeck's model argues that religion is a linguistic game, in Wittgenstein's sense, and that theology is the grammar of this game. In this way Lindbeck overcomes the theological-philosophical model prevailing in modern culture (especially Protestant culture), for which theology is less important than the symbols and myths of religions: myths and symbols that express the profound contents of the human soul. But the Lindbeck model requires a religious community more similar to sects than to the post-Constantinian church. Assuming that this model of church is possible, it risks making criticism and thus philosophical activity itself impossible.

56 Il neoanimismo come antropologia religiosa di Gonzalo Puente Ojea

Miguel Ángel López Muñoz

Universidad Pablo de Olavide, Sevilla, Spain

Abstract

Questa comunicazione intende valorizzare l'antropologia religiosa del pensatore spagnolo, Gonzalo Puente Ojea (1924-2017). La sua proposta sostiene una tesi che possiamo considerare audace nella misura in cui rivendica il recupero dell'animismo di E. B. Tylor alla luce del materialismo, del cognitivismo e delle ricerche neuroscientifiche di autori come R. Llinás, Daniel Dennet o Paul e Patricia Churchland.

A tal fine, dopo una breve introduzione che espone i principali assiomi della sua ricerca e la distinzione di due grandi approcci teorici da cui affrontare il problema della genesi della religiosità, il lavoro è diviso in due grandi parti, seguita da una sintesi finale sul neoanimismo ponteojeano. Nella prima parte, intitolata “dualizzazione gnoseologica”, nel quadro dell’antropologia fisica, si espone il modo in cui l’autore rimanda l’origine della religiosità ad un processo evolutivo da una coscienza riflessiva a una coscienza riflessiva. Nella seconda parte, intitolata “dualizzazione ontologica”, nell’ambito dell’antropologia sociale e culturale, viene effettuata una rassegna della mostra che realizza Puente Ojea de Tylor, nonché della sua valutazione critica e di quella dei suoi critici. Inoltre si descrive quello che qualifica come “fallacia dell’essere” il processo filosofico e teologico di spiritualizzazione dell’anima fino a giungere a concepire il teismo come alienazione religiosa di carattere soprannaturale.

La metodologia utilizzata è l’analisi critica della opera di Puente Ojea e delle fonti secondarie cui fa riferimento.

565 Making Maimonides’ Prophetic Anthropology Uneasy: Joseph Soloveitchik’s Skeptical Philosophy of Religion

Chiara Carmen Scordari
Abstract

The need to read biblical figures through the lens of the present is a peculiar tenet of Joseph Soloveitchik’s philosophical and theological thought. In doing this, he transforms several traits of Moses Maimonides’ biblical hermeneutics and anthropology.

Moses Maimonides (1138-1205) found models of human perfection in biblical key-figures. The Edenic Adam foreshadows the human intellect in its conjunction with the divine intellect; Abraham, a restless Aristotelian philosopher, capable of reaching the monotheistic truths by himself and of converting people to the rational faith, epitomizes the twofold love of God: the intellectual and the community-oriented; Moses embodies the “emblematic philosopher-prophet-king”, and Job’s final redemption overcomes human humbleness and frailty. Born in Pruzhan, Poland, to a family of Talmudic scholars, and leader of Modern Orthodox movement in the United States, Joseph Soloveitchik (1903-1993) gives Maimonidean anthropology an existentialist twist. Faced with the same biblical figures, he outlines realistic types of humanity in order to scrutinize the inner contradictory nature of human beings and give reading keys on crucial contingencies of history. The figure of Abraham is paradigmatic. Building on Maimonides’ Abraham, Soloveitchik adds to his character melancholic and lonely features. The result is a new Abraham-type, more fit to face contemporary contingencies, with whom Soloveitchik identifies himself and whom he invites to follow as model of religious personality. In his words, «to meet God […] implies an act of heroic skepticism», i.e., a radical critique of one’s identity, both personal and social.

12 The drama of salvation and comicity in H.U. von Balthasar (in Italian)
Ida Soldini
Facoltà di Teologia, Lugano, Switzerland

Abstract

In Homer, the god’s interminable laugh let Ilion’s tragedy begin and encompasses the tragedy itself in a comic frame, that defines the space where Greek heroes prove their virtue. But, what are the boundaries between tragedy and comedy? How do they relate to each other? What is the common ground from which they take their liveliness?

Balthasar affirms in his Theodramatic, that the structure of dramatic art is paramount in order to understand the fundamentally interpersonal structure of Christian salvation. I would like to point out that the cathartic effect of drama has very much to do with salvation and that salvation has very much to do with resilience in religion.

Nobody can begin an analysis of tragedy except with Aristoteles’ Poetics. But the missing book about comedy grants lots of free space to approach this part of dramatic art outside the very narrow framework set by Aristoteles. Tragedy is a genre that comes down all the way from the last 2500 years and we can immediately understand the protagonist’s struggle, the point of sorrow and of horror that tragedy makes visible to us. But comedy? What is comedy about? Why did the assistant laugh? The mystery of this dramatic genre is deeper than it would seem at first glance.
I will try to approach this matter the other way round. How is a theological approach to dramatic art capable of shedding light on comedy? I will follow Balthasar in his analysis. Firstly, Balthasar states that without a divine background, without the presupposition of the divine, tragedy itself would fail to be what it is and would lose the power to affect with sorrow or with horror. Secondly, he points out that tragedy has mingled with comedy in modern times due to a romantic - romantic, meaning of German-idealistic - point of view of the human being. Humans are risible because they are tragically inept, limited and fallible. However, counters Balthasar, if they have no other feature, then tragedy, comedy and the human being all together become uninteresting. Thirdly, the stage can become a tribunal where justice speaks out. The assistant has to give a judgement about the action on stage, whereas the author points out his understanding of justice, as he condemns and saves destinies. The drama becomes meaningful and enjoyable, whether it is full of sorrow or of delight. Tragedy and comedy are safe.

But what are Balthasar’s conclusions? According to him, the problem about the dramatic arts, is who will play the role of the judge. Dramatic art stands and falls depending on a judge measuring the action on stage with his standards. The author, the audience are judging, but their judgement rests in the end on that of the judge that founds the dramatic arts themselves. The outcome of dramatic art, well understood, is that a human community recognizes and shares its identity by purifying it with a cathartic action from what does not comply with the standards of the dramatic judge.

Welcome reception

18:30 - 20:00 Monday, 30th August, 2021

32-I War, Peace and Resilience in the Ancient World Narratives

09:00 - 10:40 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

Marinella Ceravolo

Throughout their history, all cultures of the ancient world have experienced periods of war and peace, demonstrating great resilience in overcoming long battles or in restoring the social order destroyed by the conflicts. Since man is a homo narrans (K. Ranke 1967, Kategorienprobleme der Volksprosa, «Fabula» 9/1-3, 4-12; W. R. Fisher 1987, Human Communication as Narration, University of South Carolina Press) and narration is one of the main means he uses to organize the reality in which he lives (P. Ricoeur 1983-1985, Temps et récit, Seuil; B. Czarniawska 2004, Narratives in Social Science Research, Sage), even war and peace have been explained and made intelligible through processes of narration. Taking into account that religion is also subjected to continuous narrative processes (J. Rüpke-C. Degelmann 2015, Narratives as a Lens into Lived Ancient Religion, Individual Agency and Collective Identity, «Religion in the Roman Empire» 1/3, 289-296), the purpose of this panel is to investigate how and to what extent religious elements were used to narrate peace and war in different cultures of the ancient world.
In particular, abstracts may cover the following topics:

Reflections on the nature of peace and war in relation to specific religious beliefs

The role assigned to specific extra-human agents in the outbreak of wars or in the stipulation of peace pacts

The narration of the relationships between political and military leaders with religious practitioners and extra-human agents

The reuse of known mythical motifs to explicate, justify, or establish war and peace

The storytelling of peace and war as acts of resilience related to religion

The creation of ad hoc new narratives featuring extra-human agents as the main characters of war and peace.

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110 “I did not want War, the Gods did!”: Late Bronze Age War Justifications

Sasha Alessandro Volpi

University of Padua, Padua, Italy. University of Verona, Verona, Italy. University of Ca' Foscari, Venice, Italy

Abstract

In the Ancient Near East, religion dominates every aspect of life, including war. Gods declared war in the name of justice and kings launched their campaigns due to religious obligations. In particular, the Late Bronze Age (XVI - XII century BCE) was a period where great powers fought each other in order to achieve imperial dominance. Since the club of great powers, as they were called by Liverani (1988), shared a political, economic and cultural space, even their way to stipulate alliances, bring peace and war were similar. In other words, Ancient Near East elites developed a sort of chivalry-code that bonded those rulers to each other.

However, as always, rulers needed a justification for their acts. One of the most important was religion. And it worked even better in such a wide area were the same religious beliefs were shared among different countries. One of the greatest examples of such a policy can be found in the Tukulti-Ninurta Epic. In this poem, in fact, Tukulti-Ninurta I, ruler of Assyria, affirms without any doubts that the evil Kaštiliyaš the Kassite, the ruler of Babylon, was the only person responsible for breaking their previous pacts. As a consequence, all the mighty gods of the Babylonian pantheon were invoked in order to leave Kaštiliyaš without any divine protection. Therefore, when he attacked, Tukulti-Ninurta presented himself as the one who would bring justice side by side with Šamaš, the god of justice and protector of treaties.

On the other hand, the Kassites - as the Babylonian people are usually called in Late Bronze age times - developed a very similar attitude to justify war and military expeditions outside their borders, as will be seen in the documents I will analyze in this presentation: the Agum-kakrime Inscription, two contemporary inscriptions by Kurigalzu and three not well-preserved epics. The Agum-kakrime Inscription is the earlier piece of Kassite literature and where the mighty Marduk asked the King Agum to bring home his own statue. The two inscriptions were written by Kurigalzu, one of the most important rulers of Babylon who lived in the
early XIV century. Finally, there are three not well-preserved epics: the Kurigalzu Epic, a single fragment about the Babylonian-Elamite conflict; the Adad-šuma-uṣur Epic, which deals with reconciliation after the Tukulti-Ninurta’s conquest of Babylonia in XIII century; and the Fall of Nippur, which describes the punishment the gods inflicted on the Babylonian rulers.

All these examples deal with peace and war, reconstruction and destruction, vengeance and forgiveness, all actions eventually sanctioned by gods, who have the first and last word about human fate. In conclusion, in this presentation I will compare the Tukulti-Ninurta Epic, the most famous and well-preserved piece of literature of the Late Bronze Age, with the above-mentioned Kassite documents, in order to find differences and similarities between these two cultures.

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123 From Myth to Epic: The Imagery of War in Syro-Mesopotamia

Jérôme Pace

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Abstract

Fascinating but difficult objects of study, religious and historical “myths” define the world views and identities of human societies. Syro-Mesopotamian mythology plays its part: a set of explanatory and normative narratives, which are among the most important sources of information for the study of the ancient Near East.

Ninurta’s 3rd millennium mythology - especially Lugal.e and Anzû - offers an interesting vision of the imagery of war in Syro-Mesopotamia. It is a real plea for the promotion of the young god in the pantheon, which appears as a reflection, in the region, of a royal power now in the hands of the gods: thus, Ninurta’s fight against his enemies - with its causes and consequences - cannot only be read for itself, but also as the expression of the diplomacy and war rules of the time.

Yet being one of the most important “cycles” of the Sumero-Akkadian literature, both in size and in posterity, the influence of Ninurta’s mythology is considerable: first, because it is an attempt by the authority in place to define what ancient Near Eastern royal ideology should be; then, because it asserts itself as the “model” of numerous mythical literary pieces dedicated to other deities (Enûma Eliš, Epic of Gilgamesh, etc.) or linked to the Syro-Mesopotamian royal ideology (Cylinders of Gudea, Lamentations, Royal Inscriptions, etc.).

Therefore, we would like to focus on the Lugal.e and the Epic of Tukulti-Ninurta. At first, our study of Lugal.e will allow us to understand war in its mythical and narratological dimension; then, our comparison with the Epic of Tukulti-Ninurta will raise the question of its continuity in the royal propaganda. Finally, our reflection on the nature of “myths” and “epics” will reflect on the role of Syro-Mesopotamian literature and its place in our imagination.
Divine Aid in Military Campaigns of South Mesopotamian Rulers in the Late Third and Early Second Millennia BCE

Iakov Kadochnikov

Tartu University, Tartu, Estonia

Abstract

The success of military affairs in ancient Mesopotamia heavily depended on the will of divine patrons. Any victorious campaign against the neighbouring lands usually resulted from direct divine orders and the gods’ favour. Simultaneously, any change in the patrons’ mood explained the disastrous invasions of barbarian hordes.

Surviving written sources (royal inscriptions and royal hymns) suggest that the divine agenda responsible for military success was changing in time. In some periods, it could be the supreme god Enlil, powerful divine hero Ninurta, the deity of sexual and military passion Inanna, while in other periods deities such as the head of the Netherworld Nergal, storm deities Adad and Ningublaga, or others. Usually, rulers acknowledged not a single deity as their battle patron, but some combinations of different gods.

Moreover, the status of the rulers was not always the same. Some rulers were mere servants of the gods, while some other human rulers claimed to be divine by themselves. It affected how they needed divine support in battles.

This paper aims to track how exactly the relationships between rulers and their divine military patrons changed in the late third and early second millennium BCE. Mentions of which deities were usual in the military context in each particular period. What is the possible explanation for their rotation?

The first period to open this discussion is the early Dynastic Period: particularly the Rulers of Lagash and the approved by city-gods conflict with the neighbouring Umma. The first attempt to unify southern Mesopotamia under Lugal-zagesi is another critical point in the discussion of the Early Dynastic Period.

The next Sargonic period is famous for the first successful unification of southern Mesopotamia and the first life-time deification of a king.

The invasion of Gutians inevitably affected the new royal ideology. Later literary tradition perceived it as a punishment for the unfaithful deeds of the late Sargonic kings.

Gudea of Lagash and later the divine kings of the third dynasty of Ur found some new cooperation methods with divine patrons. After the fall of their kingdom, Isin and Larsa’s rulers were the main political actors in southern Mesopotamia. They defined the relationships with the divine realm.

Based on the analysis of the royal inscriptions and hymns of the above-named periods, this paper tries to find out the primary dynamics in the relationships between the political power and the divine actors as military patrons.
"I established the triumph of Assur": A Glimpse into the Religious Motifs in the Eighth Campaign of Sargon II (721-705 BC)

Flavia Pacelli

Università di Roma "La Sapienza", Rome, Italy

Abstract

In 714 BC, the Assyrian king Sargon II (721-705 B.C.) planned the decisive military expedition against Urartu and sent his armies beyond the northern borders of the empire. To commemorate his victorious feat against Assyria’s historical enemy, Sargon recounted his exploits in an extensive narration, wherein he celebrates his successful work in war and the total fulfilment of the divine plans. This narrative is universally known as “Sargon II’s Eighth Campaign”. Besides being “one of the most impressive surviving monuments of Assyrian prose” (Foster 2005: 790), this inscription has the peculiarity of being written in the form of a letter to the gods. This aspect may already indicate how important the communication of this undertaking to the gods was to obtain their approval and support. By addressing his account to Assur and the other gods living in his temple, Sargon presents himself not only as a fearless commander and capable king, but mostly as a hero of the Assyrian people chosen by the gods to restore justice. According to Sargon’s report, the gods themselves show the Assyrian king the favourable omens for entering the war. Furthermore, every stage of the campaign against Rusa, king of Urartu, is demanded and sustained by the divine entities, who are invoked to assist the king and his army throughout the account with more or less extensive references. The prerogatives of each deity provide Sargon with the needed skills to penetrate hostile territory and subdue enemy cities: thanks to the continuous support of the gods the king defeats his opponent and ensures victory to Assur. Another important feature is the reason that causes war: king Rusa is represented as the one who did not observe the commands, instructions, and laws of the gods. Only after an invective against Rusa, mainly based on religious motifs, Sargon specifies the political reason for war. Respect for the gods and their divine justice is the parameter that sets Sargon and Rusa in complete antithesis: the former represents what is right for men and gods, the latter what is wrong, and thus he is condemned to lose. Hence, the war between Assyria and Urartu turns out to be a battle between the two kings for the recognition of earthly and divine justice. In addition, the end of the war is not marked by the defeat of Rusa, but by the occupation of Musasir, the sacred city of Urartu, and the seizing of the statues of Haldi and the other Urartian gods. To conclude, this paper aims to investigate the following main features: 1) the relationship between ideological-political reasons and religious motifs within Sargon II’s Eighth Campaign; 2) the divine entities mentioned in the text, how often and in what context they are referred to before, during and after the war; 3) the figures of the main character, Sargon, and his enemy, Rusa, understood as opposites in time of peace and war on the basis of their connection with the divine laws.
“Just because we broke their statues, just because we drove them out of their temples, in no way did the gods die because of this”, wrote Konstantinos Kavafis in 1911. Indeed, gods tend to show remarkable resilience skills. In the face of political and cultural changes, divine beings and cult practices are often able to adapt to new contexts. Their images and sacred places may maintain or resume their vitality, even if in partially different form. Moreover, long after the disappearance of their statues and temples, gods often continue, more or less undisturbed, to roam immaterial places, from literature and art to folklore and popular culture.

This open workshop session aims at exploring how deities and cults were able to cope with broader processes of political, economic and cultural transformation affecting the societies which expressed and worshipped them. Of course, gods live primarily in the minds of their believers; therefore, by bringing together a range of case studies from different cultural and historical contexts, we intend to explore how communities and individuals adjusted their gods and cult practices to challenging situations and found a way for them to survive in a changed environment. Although our primary focus will be on the ancient world and especially Graeco-Roman antiquity, we welcome proposals from other geographical and chronological contexts as well, in order to approach the topic also from a comparative perspective.

Possible topics include (but are not limited to): how local deities and cults reacted in the face of invasion, conquest, colonisation; how individuals and communities adapted their ancestral gods when entering into contact with other religious practices (be it through forced displacement, voluntary emigration, or more occasional cultural contacts); how the religious landscape of a community was transformed due to internal political, social and cultural developments; how traditional gods were updated and refashioned to make them more appealing to a changed society; how gods and cult practices which seemed to have disappeared resurfaced after a period of underground survival. The discussion will aim at clarifying the roles played by different actors - from priests to simple believers, from local communities to political authorities - within such processes, by comparing top-down and bottom-up approaches in a trans-cultural perspective.

463 Tales of Slaughter, Resilience and Redemption from the Mahābhārata
Danielle Feller
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Abstract

The gods aren’t always what we think they are. Thus, in the brahmanical context of the great Sanskrit epic, the Mahābhārata, which was composed around the turn of the millennium, the gods can take unexpected shapes. The Mahābhārata repeatedly shows us that the Brahmins, the members of the highest priestly class, are not only more powerful than the rest of mankind – which goes without saying –, but even mightier than the gods themselves. This power derives from the fact that only the Brahmins were allowed to perform sacrificial rituals and that they were the sole repositories of Vedic lore: thanks to their extraordinary mnemotechnic exertions, the Vedas, the most ancient texts of the Indian tradition, were transmitted by heart from guru to disciple for centuries, if not millennia, before being committed to script.

But in the centuries preceding the beginning of the common era, the northwestern regions of south Asia, the homeland of the Vedic religion, underwent great political change and upheavals: Alexander the Great
invaded the northwestern frontier; subsequently, the Maurya empire, whose capital, Pāṭaliputra, was situated in the eastern gangetic plain and whose religion was not Vedism, in turn annexed the north-west of the Indian subcontinent; later, the collapse of the Maurya empire only left room for further invasions from the north. In short, the time was one during which Vedic religion was in danger of disappearing altogether. (See Johannes Bronkhorst, How the Brahmins Won, Leiden: Brill, 2016). That it did not, and on the contrary found means of adapting itself to these new circumstances and emerging even stronger, testifies to its great powers of resilience.

Some passages of the Mahābhārata contain stories which might possibly reflect these times of devastating social and political turmoil. They show us how the Brahmins as a group are slaughtered by kings going on genocidal sprees, vowing to eradicate the Brahmins to the last – even up to the embryos in their mothers’ wombs. In this presentation, I propose to examine some of these tales, mainly taken from the Mahābhārata’s first Book, and to see by what stratagems the Brahmins (and with them the Veda, which, as an oral corpus, can only survive incarnated in them), after facing tremendous ordeals, find ways to overcome their trauma, go on living, and, sometimes, make peace with their oppressors.

477 Shamanism: A New Approach to the Animal Presence in Indo-European Religions
Á. Manuel Mayo López
University of Santiago de Compostela, Santiago de Compostela, Spain

Abstract

Resilience is an inherent characteristic of religion itself, that ability to transform, reinvent and adapt to the needs of every human being who seeks to establish a relationship with an entity that is above him and in which he can find help, comfort or just a spiritual experience. In the same way, the presence of sacred animals and zoomorphic numens is another element indisputably linked to religion itself that reinforces its own resilience and its ability to resist and remain faithful to its essence, still subject to the incessant transformation that the evolution of the societies and religious worldview demands.

Our proposal is based on the theory of the phases of religion postulated by the philosopher Gustavo Bueno, in which religion itself could be divided into three phases (nuclear, mythological and metaphysical) that correspond to a progressive decrease in the presence of animals in it, taking a diachronic and evolutionary perspective. In turn, it relies on the postulates of Jean Clottes and David Lewis-Williams on the relationship between religion and Paleolithic art, to crystallize its application in Indo-European religions.

This new perspective dispenses with the prejudices and limitations, both geographical and cultural, that have traditionally been attributed to the term “shamanism” and applies it to the world of Indo-European language and culture, with the aim of promoting a cultural reconstruction that is as scientific as possible and explain the animal presence in worlds such as Greek, Indian, Germanic or Celtic, among others. On the other hand, we are aware of the universality both of the shamanic phenomenon itself and of the validity of the theories of Bueno, Clottes and Lewis-Williams. However, it is our decision to focus on the Indo-European world to establish a framework that allows us to stick to a limited linguistic, iconographic and cultural sample, without thereby excluding comparison with other shamanic phenomena that do not belong to this field.
In this way, the following proposal is based on demonstrating the resilience of religion from the animal presence in it and its transformation and adaptation through the various phases of the evolution of Indo-European religion, providing both textual and iconographies that reinforce this idea.

Thus, the bear, for example, would be an animal covered with sacred connotations since the Palaeolithic, a fact that is reflected in its representation in caves such as Chauvet in Ardèche or remains of ursids found inside other caves belonging to this period. Later, this numinosity would pass to the Indo-European languages and cultures themselves, creating dozens of taboos around the name of this animal and religious manifestations as diverse as those of the Artemis cult in Brauron, the Germanic warrior tradition of the berserkir, the Celtic Dea Artio or the Hittite ritual of the “bear-men”. All this, to end up demonized by Christianity from the first millennium, demonstrating the resistance and resilience of the cult of this powerful animal.

573 Maintaining Egyptian Ma’at in Canaan: The Adaptation and Transformation of Egyptian Deities and Cultic Worship at Levantine Beth-Shean
Krystal V. L. Pierce
Brigham Young University, Provo, UT, USA

Abstract

The Late Bronze and Iron Age (13th-12th centuries BCE) site and cemetery of Beth-Shean in the Levant is identified in contemporary texts as the location of a major Egyptian administrative and military base during this period of Egyptian hegemony in Canaan. Expatriate Egyptians lived, worked, and worshiped in the city, which featured domestic, administrative, industrial, and religious districts. Although the Egyptians at Beth-Shean are typically assumed to have only included high-status male government and martial personnel, the presence of female and juvenile remains in the cemetery, as well as material culture associated with other professions, like craftspeople and priestesses, demonstrate that a wide variety of Egyptians had left their homeland and emigrated to this city in the Levant.

Although much of the city of Beth-Shean was culturally segregated into Egyptian and Canaanite areas, the religious precinct showcased a more broad-based multinational or hybridized character, where both Egyptian and Canaanite material culture amalgamated together. The center of the religious district featured a large multi-chambered Canaanite-style temple, where Egyptian cultic objects, including inscribed stelae, jewelry, figurines, vessels, and ceremonial implements were discovered. The deities identified on and associated with these objects included both Canaanite and Egyptian gods and goddesses, some of whom were syncretized into Egypto-Canaanite forms. For the Egyptians to maintain ma’at, the concept of balance and law in the cosmos, the deities of Egypt must be adequately appeased, supplicated, and praised, even while outside Egypt.

In this study, the deities and cultic practices of the Egyptians in the Canaanite temple at Beth-Shean will be analyzed in light of processes of cultural adaptation and transformation. This will include an investigation into how traditional Egyptian worship customs and rituals were altered in order to fit this new overseas setting, especially within a sanctuary of non-Egyptian style, layout, and structure. Special attention will be
paid to the presence of female and religious Egyptian personnel, as well as the private Egyptian votive stelae discovered in the Canaanite temple. These stelae were inscribed with the images, titles, prayers, and offering formulae of the Egyptians who donated the stelae, as well as the Egyptian, Canaanite, and syncretized deities they were worshipping. The results of this study will demonstrate that the expatriate Egyptians at Beth-Shean were able to innovate, adapt, and transform their traditional cultic practices, and even their own deities, in order to adequately worship, appease, and supplicate the gods and goddesses of Egypt and maintain ma’at, even while living abroad in Canaan.

702 Discontinuity and Continuity in Ritual Practices Following a Major Political Switch in a Cult Place of the South Italian Iron Age

Mario Denti

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Abstract

The cult place of Incoronata, in the present Basilicata region of South Italy, offers a crucial model for understanding the mechanisms of a collective sharing of techniques, objects, imageries, and, above all, rituals, between a non-Greek community dominating the Ionian coastal belt of Ænotria during the IX-VIIIth century B.C. and an Aegean group of people arriving here at the very beginning of the VIIth century B.C.

This crucial moment marked a new era, characterized by a mixed society, Greek-indigenous, attending this cult place during the whole VIIth century B.C. Some important human, technical, cultural changes occurred in the frequentation of the site, which archaeological excavations and research are able today to observe, and understand, through an accurate analysis of the ritual practices realized on this hill during more than two centuries. The common ground in which we can follow those dynamics is the rituality of ancestor (and probably heroes’) cults.

In this paper we will show how new - Greek - votive and ceremonial objects, people and ideas, offer a good pattern to perceive phenomena of discontinuity, while the same way of organizing cultual spaces, realizing ritual practices, performing intentional fragmentation of pottery and, finally, constructing complex ritual forms of obliteration, can well illustrate phenomena of continuity in behaviour, beliefs, and aristocratic ideology.

493 The Gods’ New Clothes: Divine Iconographies and the Visual Languages of Graeco-Roman Egypt

Nicola Barbagli

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Abstract

One of the long-lasting effects of the expansion of Greek culture in Egypt and the Near East was the adoption of the Hellenistic visual language by the local communities. The introduction of this new figurative tool, with its baggage of styles and images, had a deep impact on the local artistic traditions, from royal and private representations to religious iconography. For instance, the ancestral divinities either took wholly new forms - when they did not get one for the very first time - or changed some aspects of their traditional appearance adapting to new modes of representation. The creation of these new iconographies can be seen as an aspect of the gods and goddesses’ resilience in the face of political and cultural changes, just as the survival of ritual practices or the continuity of the places of worship.

The iconography of Egyptian deities can provide a useful case study thanks to the abundant evidence available, reflecting a coherent cultural and religious environment. The analysis of a selection of documents in different media (sculpture, relief, coinage, painting) covering the period from the 3rd century BC to the 3rd century AD will show how the iconography of the Egyptian deities developed during the Graeco-Roman period. I will argue that the creation of new iconographies reflected the viewers’ growing familiarity with the Hellenistic visual language; the main agents of such changes can be identified with the priests of the local cults, who drew elements from different models and traditions in order to create images expressing the gods’ traditional qualities through new visual means.

30 The Concept of Religion according to the Church Fathers ONLINE

09:00 - 10:40 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

Georgios Gaitanos

This closed panel will present the results of a two-year collaboration between colleagues and researchers in the field of Study of Religion and Theology dealing with “The concept of religion according to the Church Fathers (Eastern and Latin Literature)“. This independent collaboration was under the supervision of the Department of Culture & Theology of the Logos University College (Tirana) and its results will be published in a special issue of the academic Journal of the Department “Theology & Culture” (ISSN: 2708-6755). The panel deals with the way in which the term “religion” was presented and interpreted in the Christian literature of the Eastern and Latin Fathers in order to highlight society’s perceptions of religion from Early Christianity until Medieval Times. The panel seeks to highlight how to understand and interpret this term during a period when “religion” was not a clear and distinct conceptual category, as it is now understood in the Western world from the Enlightenment onwards. Every participant of the panel will focus on a specific period and try to observe interpretations, mentalities and interactions via several sources of Christian Literature that talk about religion or specific religious interactions. Through the study of the sources of Christian literature we seek to present more data that will help to understand the mentality of the people of the time periods each one of us studies and to highlight the evolution of thought on the subject of “religion”. Another goal is to point out what practices or concepts are associated with “religion”, to decipher when the meaning of the term differs and for what purpose, to find out if some texts or if a Church Father tried to study religion or religious interactions with any scientific approach.
847 Religious Notions about Women during Medieval Times
Konstantinos LithiropoulosOS
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, Greece

Abstract

The present abstract is based on four thematic pivots. The first one is primarily associated with the theological issues that Anthony of Padua (1195-1231) dealt with. We pointed out the main characteristic of his preaching, which was nothing other than the position of mulier (woman) in the teachings of Anthony of Padua. In the second thematic pivot, we studied the stages of spirituality according to his teachings. In the third chapter, we translated and grouped together the excerpts of Sermones that are associated with women. Besides, one of his favourite topics had to do with him admonishing people in order to cultivate virtues that oppose the dangers of passion. Finally, in the fourth thematic chapter we presented teachings as viewed by the medieval tradition.

The Middle Ages is a historical period full of conflict and tension. During this period, social transformation gradually "gave birth" to the anarchists of religious life. In Anthony of Padova’s preaching, the people are embodying the Sequela Christi (following Christ) and striving to live their lives with the gospel morality which was inspired by the Order of Friars Minor movement founded by Francis of Assisi. As a monk with a university education - an oxymoron for the fraternity - he wrote the Sermones to capture the roadmaps of the Christian life that illuminate the historical time period.

His education bears the stamp of the Bible and the earlier Latin Patrology Doctrine. This is made clear in the symbolic way that women are included in his work which became either an example to be followed or to be avoided. In some parts of his writings, women are identified with passionate situations and elsewhere praised for their virtues. The relevant teaching of Anthony, with regard to women, is a key conduit for the exercise of his pastoral care. Anthony does not invent a system or a solid pattern. Instead, he adapts to his audience and draws his instructions using images and symbolism that people can comprehend.

In conclusion, we could mention that, if there is one woman that stands out in his work, that would be the Virgin Mary. The four sermons which he composed for Her feast, are adorned with a multitude of metaphors and images and are an anthem for her mission, her decency and her virtues.

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854 Religious Conflict with the Demons according to St. Augustine
Nikolaos Zarotiadis
Abstract

St. Augustine examines thoroughly the nature of the demons wishing to reveal their deceitful and fallacious character in books VIII and IX of the work *De civitate Dei*. The aim of the current lecture is to give prominence to the teaching of St. Augustine with respect to the deceptive works of the demons. St. Augustine contends that the demons lie behind any magical art and that they are responsible for the organising of the drama contests in Rome, where every lewd, impious and disgraceful act is unravelled in the theatres. He talks about the abilities of the demons and argues that they can deceive the naïve and credulous people, especially those who are not under the protection of God, due to the skills their airy bodies offer them. The demons, being supported by the magical wiles and illusions, take advantage of the weakness of the human senses, namely the limited capabilities of the human body, and lead men to fallacy and misbelief. Furthermore, the lecture will be about the ways the demons use to illude people through magical and oracular practices. More specifically, we will examine how demons instigate every magical act and how they render humans their victims. Then, we will compare the demonology of the saint, as it unfolds in his work *De civitate Dei*, with his other marvellous work, *De divinatione daemonum*.

09:40 - 10:00

**855 The Concept of Religion in Early Christian Literature**

Georgios Gaitanos

College University Logos, Tirana, Albania

Abstract

The paper seeks to highlight how to understand and interpret the term “religion” during a period when “religion” was not a clear and distinct conceptual category, as it is now understood in the Western world from the Enlightenment onwards. Through the study of the sources of Early Christian literature I seek to present more data that will help to understand the mentality of the people of the first three centuries AD to highlight the evolution of thought on the subject of “religion”. Analytical statistics will be presented on the different meanings of the term and how often it was used by the Christian authors. Another goal is to point out what practices or concepts are associated with “religion”, to decipher when the meaning of the term differs and for what purpose, to find out if in some texts or if any Church Father tried to study religion or religious interactions with any scientific approach.

10:00 - 10:20

**857 Homo religiosus or homo ecclesiasticus: A Contemporary Interpretation of Modern Orthodox Theologians**

Georgios Keselopoulos

LOGOS University College, Durres, Albania
Abstract

In modern Greek Orthodox theology of the 20th and 21st centuries, theologians, clergymen and preachers frequently express the opinion that “Orthodoxy is not a religion”. This phrase maybe somewhat perplexing, especially to Western theologians. The current paper attempts to shed light on this theological position.

Man's innate need to believe in something is related to the term religion. But often the god that man believes in is ultimately his own construction. In contrast, according to Orthodox theology, genuine Christian faith does not come from man, but is the product of divine revelation. God is revealed to man in different ways through the various epiphanies in human history. Thus, there is always the phenomenon of divine condescension to man. While in Western scholastic thought man attempts an intellectual ascent to God, the Eastern Orthodox tradition believes in God's descent into the world and His encounter, relationship and finally communion with man. So, man comes to know God ontologically, when he freely opens his existence and comes into communion with the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, the encounter with God is a personal meeting and acquaintance. However, this relationship cannot be separated from the Church, since the Church is, according to the Orthodox tradition which follows the theology of the Apostle Paul, the Body of Christ. Ecclesiastical man is the person who has met Christ and tried to have a personal communication with Him and at the same time has been united with all the members of the Church. However, this relationship does not mean that he rejects people who are outside the Church, since for homo ecclesiasticus every human being is an image of God, whom he is called to love. Ultimately, according to this point of view, homo religiosus is the person who creates his own god, in whom he believes ideologically, while homo ecclesiasticus is the person who has truly (ontologically) known Christ, as He is revealed in the Church.

ISC 9 Modern and Contemporary Judaism (Individual Short Communications)

09:00 - 10:40 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

Arturo Marzano

290 The Motif of Gathering the Good from Evil, as a Resilience Component in the Jewish Tradition of Generations

Daniel Nikritin, Menachem Katz

Hemdat College, Sdot Negev, Israel

Abstract
The known model of mourning-stages of loss presented by Kobler Ross ends with the acceptance stage, related to the cessation of struggling and trying to deny the very fact of the occurrence of loss. Nevertheless, there is a discussion regarding the tension between the need to let go the lost and moving on, and the effort to gain internalized and balanced memory (Rubin, 2015).

Jewish history has experienced and dealt with personal and “local” traumas, alongside coping with the great national loss of the destruction of the temple and the expulsion of the Jews from Spain and Portugal, formulated tools of resilience and coping the absence.

In our lecture, we will seek to demonstrate some of the guidelines drawn in Jewish tradition to distinguish between prophecy of sober hope and false prophecy. We will refer a motif dating back to the Bible, and continues throughout the ages - the motif of the good culling out of evil, demanding sober recognition and acceptance the existance of evil (Kato, 2012).


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385 Rabbi Dr. Raffaello Della Pergola’ Greetings Before the Induction of the Jewish Battalions, Alexandria 1915: A Characteristic Case Study of Resilience

Nahem Ilan

Hemdat Hadarom College of Education, Sedot Negev, Israel

Abstract

Thousands of refugee Jews from Palestine and Syria reached Alexandria several months after WW1 broke out while Rabbi Dr. Raffaello Della Pergola served there as the Chief Rabbi. When the British government agreed to establish two battalions of Jewish soldiers who volunteered for the war against the Turks, round 350 refugees and 150 local youngsters volunteered to join the first battalion. In Passover 1915 the Jewish community arranged a farewell ceremony and Rabbi Della Pergola delivered a short speech in Hebrew (685 words). He spoke about duty of compliance to the officers, the valuable gruelling workout, the importance of friendship and brotherhood, the historical meaning of this status and the personal, social and national significance of the decision to volunteer to join the British army. He started his speech with “You are
stationed here today all of you” (Deut. 29:9) from the covenant status at Moab Bail and finished with several verses of a utopian vision. He integrated a lot of biblical phrases in his speech so he provided the status of covenant event with biblical validity. The speech was printed in a small booklet (11x15 cm) so that each one could bear it in his shirt pocket.

In my paper I will analyze this speech from the linguistic, content-related and rhetorical aspects in order to show how he implemented the main features of resilience: a clear vision, posing challenges, plotting an action plan, using positive expressions, trusting his audience and motivating them.

411 Social Criticism: A Call for Social Redress as an Expression of Social Resilience
Ety Gueta
The Hemdat Academy, Sdot Negev, Israel

Abstract

In many general and Hebrew literary works of the Middle Ages, there is an affinity between the fictional reality and the historical-social-cultural reality.

In works such as Geoffrey Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales in England, Giovanni Boccacio’s Decameron in Italy, the Al-Hariri Notebooks in Iraq, and Al-Harizi’s Tachkemoni in Spain, the authors harshly criticize various public figures, especially those who enjoy important positions and high social status. Fictional reality in its various forms, particularly satire, parody, and grotesque have often served as a means of shaping sharp social criticism.

Social critique in medieval Hebrew literature is directed, among other things, toward figures who represent religious-moral leadership - among them the cantor, the sermonizer, and the spiritual leader of the community. The common denominator in these critiques is that these community figures are actually nothing but hypocrites. The comic element in the characterization of these characters is expressed in the contrast between what they present to the outside world, as opposed to their despoiled interiors.

The central purpose of social criticism is to call for the redress of human attributes and moral distortion. This goal is consistent with the definition of Peled and Sander, (2003), who propose a widely accepted concept of community resilience, defined by them as “a community’s ability to take deliberate action to improve the personal and collective abilities of its residents and institutions, to respond effectively to security, social or economic change and influence its course and future implications for the community.”

Thus, social critique is a deliberate attempt to amend social morality as a basis for improving social, economic, personal, religious and cultural status. Such criticism is an expression of active civic responsibility and moral obligation, which encourages essential and significant conditions for creating community-social resilience. The assumption is that only an activist community can create community resilience over time. This view also integrates smoothly with the concept of “collective indulgence” proposed by Earls & Morenoff, Sampson (1999).
27 Flexible Finnish-Jewish Foodways

Dora Pataricza

Åbo Akademi University, Turku, Finland

Abstract

Finland is often thought to be as distant from Jewish life. Yet, the country has its rich Jewish traditions and still has its unique Jewish communities. Jewish cuisine is a mixture of interactions, reflections, family combinations, and identities. Several factors influence religious commitments to food, ranging from personal spirituality and experiences to social patterns of belonging, ethical and doctrinal convictions. The Helsinki Jewish community has approximately 1300 members, with a growing number of conversions because of various reasons. The current paper aims at presenting the boundary negotiations of Jews living in Finland based on interviews, informal conversations, participant observation and co-cooking. Finnish Jewish responses to the requirements of kashrut range across a relatively broad spectrum. Making food “Jewish” is a constant negotiation between the locally and regionally available food, and Jewish foodways can be regarded as culinary interpretations and adaptations. How are Jewish food choices made in various everyday situations? What kind of sources is available when one decides to observe kashrut rules? How are Jewish identities realised and expressed through dishes? How are meals prepared and where are ingredients bought? The paper attempts to present how Jewish identity is negotiated in Finland through foodways.

775 Rabbinical Fundraising Epistles as Reflections of Inter-Jewish-Communal Mutual Assistance in Morocco

Tamar Lavi

Hemdat College, Netivot, Israel

Abstract

The custom of writing epistles for fundraising purposes emerged against the background of severe riots and decrees against Jews in the Middle Ages. Even earlier, grim living conditions caused the stratum of the indigent to grow steadily and made roving paupers who circulated among the Jewish communities a common spectacle. Fundraising epistles that rabbis placed in needy wayfarers’ hands are called איגרות אורותאיה ("sojourn epistles"), איגרות ערמים ("compassion epistles"), and also איגרות קובзоים ("collection-epistles"). Another kind of solicitation epistle was given to shadarim, rabbinical emissaries from the Land of Israel; these were authored by rabbis as well.

Roving paupers and shadarim also made their way to the Jewish communities of Morocco, where no few impoverished and hardscrabble Jews needed aid and relief even though sources of livelihood were usually available. Concern for the poor was central in these communities’ social endeavors; synagogues installed community chests where donations for the town’s indigent could be placed. However, since it was uncommon to tap these community resources for wayfarers, town rabbis equipped random visiting paupers
with epistles that urged the public to donate to their bearers generously. As for shadarim, every town had special rules that determined the size of the donations and when they should be collected for each of the holy cities in the Land of Israel.

Segregated from their host society, the Moroccan Jewish communities enjoyed autonomy in all aspects of managing community and religious life. Outwardly, the authorized leadership maintained sound relations between the community and the authorities; internally, it satisfied various public needs and acted strictly to uphold religious and moral values and appropriate social relations. The power of those in charge to determine the community’s ways was treated with much importance, given that the public was schooled to honor them and heed their words.

In my lecture, I will cite the epistles to demonstrate the responsibility of Jews for each other along two paths: support for wayfarers and support for communities in Eretz Israel. I will show how this sense of mutual responsibility, which crossed borders, abetted both internal community resilience and national resilience. I will also dwell on the rhetorical manipulations used in the epistles to induce the public to give generously.

300 Speaking for Islam in Europe

09:00 - 10:40 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

Simon Stjernholm

On a variety of levels and occasions, many Muslims in Europe speak “for Islam”, thereby claiming and attempting to embody some kind of representative position. Some have actively sought a public role, including religiously defined roles as preachers or imams with a media presence, or political roles as participants in advocacy groups and public debate. Others are active in less public yet highly important roles, including as teachers or instructors in local mosques, study groups and communities. This workshop session investigates different types of Muslim actors in Europe who speak for Islam in various capacities. The session builds on a comparative framework for studying these different actors that takes inspiration from David Scott’s concept “problem-space”. The concept helps to highlight not only how specific actors respond to the particular questions they face - for example through producing articulations of Islam - but invites an investigation of the larger ‘ensemble’ of questions and answers that historically, generationally, and politically situated actors inhabit. How do particular questions related to Islam come to be seen as in need of answers? How do different contexts make certain questions relevant, and particular answers and interpretations possible to articulate? Closely related to these processes is an attention to authority, which is relational and always in flux. How do Muslims attempt to successfully articulate Islam in the problem-space they inhabit? What obstacles are there to being able to speak authoritatively to their audiences - Muslim as well as non-Muslim? These questions are important to address not least due to the contested status of Islam and Muslims in European contexts. Through authoritatively articulating Islam within the current problem-space, Muslims who speak for Islam can contribute to the resilience of both Muslim personal piety and collective identity in the face of difficulties. The session’s papers analyse these issues in local as well as transnationally connected settings.
306 Constructing Islamic Knowledge in Class Interactions. Cases from Danish Muslim Women’s Educational Activities

Maria Lindebaek Lyngsee

Department of Cross-Cultural and Regional Studies, University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen, Denmark

Abstract

This presentation engages with ethnographic material on Danish Muslim women’s engagement in Islamic educational activities collected in 2019 and 2020. I present specific cases of class interactions in mosques or Islamic institutes, with female teachers and students, and examine how knowledge is articulated, negotiated and becomes established in these classes. I look into the effectiveness of certain speech and discourse and ask “what works and why?” Answering these questions, I show that different kinds of knowledge as well as different modes of being knowledgeable are at play in the class interactions. To talk effectively in local Danish contexts of Islamic education, I argue, is to draw on a broader repertoire of knowledge and experiences that will convincingly answer the relevant questions of and relate to the problem-space that Danish Muslim women inhabit. Providing such answers relies on abilities to refer to proper knowledge on Islamic history, core texts, and the performance of rituals, but importantly, also to draw on various other reservoirs of knowledge, for instance, knowledge and experiences than enables one to prompt feelings of relatability and intimacy. In some cases, Islamic education thus also comes to concern the building of psychologically capable individuals who can resist and overcome the difficulties of daily life by drawing on resources of Islamic knowledges.

Capturing these dynamics of knowledge production, I suggest to conceptualize Islamic knowledge as an assemblage, and argue that it becomes established in multifaceted processes of interactions in locally situated contexts, and that the specific locality and situation, i.e. the specific problem-space, influence what becomes effective Islamic discourse. The presentation thus also provides reflections on how religious knowledge production can appear on a micro-scale.

304 Expanding Horizons of Higher Islamic Education

Maximilian Lasa

University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen, Denmark

Abstract

Research on higher Islamic education increasingly focuses on career opportunities for Muslim students. In particular, many European researchers discuss the benefits of higher Islamic education regarding its resulting professions, which could serve the ends of integration and security issues. However, this perspective only offers a limited understanding of the potentials of higher Islamic education. Drawing on interviews among German Muslim students from the International Theology Program in Turkey and the affiliated German branches of the Al-Mustafa International University in Iran, this paper will argue for a broadened understanding of the potentials of higher Islamic education. It will discuss the need to rethink
and expand our understanding regarding the horizons of higher Islamic education for Muslim students by examining students’ motivations to seek higher Islamic education and putting their different expectations and experiences into perspective. Thereby, it will emphasise the different trajectories and strategies that the students envision related to their studies of higher Islamic education.

813 Muslim Representation and Lobbying within EU Institutions
Kasper Ly Netterstrøm¹, Michal Matlak²

¹University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen, Denmark. ²University of Lodz, Lodz, Poland

Abstract
Since the foundation of the European Community, the Catholic Church and Protestant organizations have been present in Brussels and sought to influence the political decisions – be it in the parliament, the council or the commission. Muslim organizations are, however, despite Islam being the second largest religion in Europe curiously absent. Some minority groups (Alevi, Ahmedidiyya etc.) are present, but mainstream Sunni Islamic organizations are rare. This article will seek to explain why that is the case, and try to look at other ways Muslim interests might be represented in the EU.

303 Being/Having a Muslim Voice: Speaking for Islam in Denmark
Simon Stjernholm

University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen, Denmark

Abstract
This paper investigates attempts at speaking for Islam in Denmark in recent years with special attention to the notion of “voice”. While researchers have noted the contested status of Muslim institutions and practices in Denmark, less attention has been paid to what Muslim public or semi-public figures, such as preachers and teachers, actually say and do when articulating Islam through public channels. The paper asks: In what ways do various Muslim figures attempt to be or have a distinct Muslim voice? How are their articulations of Islam related to the particular problem-space they are simultaneously responding to and co-constituting? How can a theorizing of “voice” that includes both material and discursive aspects help to illuminate these articulations? The paper will analyze examples taken from several Danish Muslim figures who distribute recorded speech online. These examples will be supported by interview material focused on these speakers’ motivations and strategies when speaking for Islam in public. The paper’s analysis will relate itself to recent research on Muslim preaching, religion and mediation, and Islam in Europe.
40-I Resilient Modalities of Religion in Chinese Societies

09:00 - 10:40 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

Magdaléna Rychetská, Kai Shmushko

All religious groups are greatly influenced by their social, economic, and political context. Religion often played a significant role as a resilient tool or as a tool for resilience. These processes play a strong role in Chinese societies. Until the twentieth century, religion was closely connected with the political and social sphere as the Chinese emperor held power to the religious landscape. Later, in modern Chinese societies, assimilation to different nation-states also shaped Chinese religions in various forms, encouraging religious actors’ resilience.

While the modern secularist projects have been employed in Chinese societies, they have never been truly secularized. Some traditional forms of religion have declined, some forms of religion have re-flourished and re-molded, adapting to modernity. Furthermore, it is often impossible to separate the religious from the secular within this cultural context. Different interpretations, tensions, and negotiations occur between social locations and forms of religion. Religious groups have developed various strategies to adapt or counteract the rapid transformation Chinese societies have faced within the last century.

This panel aims to present some examples of how the religious groups and institutions in Chinese societies constitute and contribute to resilience. We are interested in the transformations of the religious landscape and the impact of the modern Chinese world’s overall social, cultural, political, technological, and economic changes. We aim to view who and what are the agents of resilience in religious continuity and construction. By Chinese societies, we consider all populations under Chinese cultural influence, whether historical, ethnic, linguistic, or geographical. Therefore, the panel covers all Sinophone societies, including the People’s Republic of China, Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong, the global Chinese diaspora, and ethnicities under the Chinese influence. The panel welcomes ethnographic, textual theoretical, and other methodologies to entangle the different resilient religion modalities in Chinese societies.

126 Resilience on the Road: The Spread of Religious Beliefs along China’s Belt and Road Network

Tobias Brandner

Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shatin, Hong Kong

Abstract

The Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is a core policy initiative with a major focus on infrastructure development - roads, railway lines, pipelines, and cables for digital transmissions - to enhance global
connectivity. Since its official launch in 2013, it has been a core element of China’s growing footprint in global politics.

In June 2017, two young Chinese nationals were killed in the Pakistan province of Baluchistan where a major project, part of China’s Belt and Road Initiative, is built. The two young Chinese, it turned out, had presumably been there as missionaries. Their tragic death threw light on how the new opportunities that the BRI engendered was also an avenue for the spread of religious faith.

This study discusses how religious agents use the connectivity of the BRI for the communication of their faith. It considers the religion-migration nexus and how these transnational religious networks transmit a growing Christian faith movement within China beyond its borders. Based on contacts to Chinese missionaries, overseas mission agencies, and Chinese Christian communities, it analyzes motives in the Chinese missionary endeavours and how the presence of Chinese Christian missionaries next to large Chinese projects adds a different layer to the complexities of Chinese overseas activities. Used to repressive religious policies at home, these missionaries understand themselves as particularly suitable to operate in sensitive environments and they stand in critical tension to their own government’s policies.

753 Modernity, or Monstrosity? Contemporary Critical Approaches to the Problem of Chinese Modernization
Dušan Vávra
Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic

Abstract

“Modernization” (xiandaihua) belongs among the key terms used in China to conceptualize the process of forming Chinese identity in the 20th-21st c. A lot of research has been done on how modernization shapes Chinese traditions (including religious ones) or how modernization in China is shaped by its traditions. In this paper, I focus on a different aspect of the dynamic relations between tradition and modernity in Chinese context. I address the contemporary forms of the strain in modern Chinese thought that questions the process of modernization as something alien to Chinese culture and society. I use selected essayistic and fictional works by authors of two periods - beginning of 20th c. and beginnning of 21st century - to show the continuity of a peculiar sentiment in Chinese thought - the problem of China’s monstrosity vis-à-vis modernity.

145 Religion as a Vehicle of Social Ties in the Chinese Catholic Diaspora in Europe
Eva Salerno
Groupe Sociétés Religions Laïcités (GSRL, CNRS-EPHE), Paris, France. Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation for International Scholarly Exchange, Taipei, Taiwan
Abstract

The Chinese Catholic communities living in Europe have been shaped throughout the 20th century by the fluctuations of migratory movements from the Asian continent. Far from their country of origin, a large proportion of Chinese migrants in Europe work in trade-related sectors. While their economic establishment in the host country proves to be successful, their social integration is more uncertain. Although the diaspora shows solidarity with its members, the counterpart is that they are sometimes excluded from the national society. In order to overcome this structural isolation with natives and the distance from their families, religion is often a factor of connection and resilience for these people. This is particularly the case among Chinese Catholics in Europe, who through the establishment of specific parishes recreate links not only with their peers and their roots, but also with the local population they meet at church. Based on an ethnographic survey carried out within different Chinese Catholic communities in France, Italy, Germany and the United Kingdom, this presentation will aim to analyse the socializing role of religion in the migratory journey of the Chinese faithful. We will focus in particular on the social support function that parishes play, as well as on the motivations behind the religious practice of the Chinese believers, whether they are new converts or coming from traditionally Catholic families.

162 Resilient Catholic church in China? Various Church's Strategies for Adapting to Changing Environment

Magdaléna Rychetská

Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic

Abstract

The paper examines the dynamic processes of the various social, political and cultural negotiations that the representatives of the “open” Catholic church encounter within authoritarian Chinese societies, where Christianity is a ‘foreign’ religious system brought to China by “colonial powers.” Even today, some Chinese refer to Christianity as yangjiao洋教, a term meaning “foreign religion.” Conversion to Christianity is highly problematic for many people in China. Acceptance of a foreign system can mean a violation of the norms of family life and can harm relationships with other family members; Christian priests and missionaries living in Chinese societies are well aware of this. The aim is to observe the Catholic church’s ability to find what best suits the transforming environmental conditions; and an awareness of how to cope with them.

Developing on Anthony Gill’s (1998) suggestion that one of the primary aims of religious groups is a maximization or at least retention of believers, the paper seeks to answer the following question: How does the Catholic church attempt to protect and promote its interests in the People’s Republic of China?

The first Catholic missionaries came to Asia with the desire to introduce their faith to the local population. We can, therefore, assume that “successful mission” is an essential part of Christianity. To fulfill this ambition in Chinese societies, the church has had to adapt to the local environment, that is, to create a local church (to some degree, small or large). However, this is an ongoing issue, and the church still needs to adapt and localize its dogma and rituals to survive and continue its mission. To achieve its aim of establishing itself on a lasting basis, the church also negotiates with the government. Especially in recent years, the promotion of a political program of sinicization (PRCization) of religion (zongjiao zhongguohua宗教中国化) created a new obstacle for the church.
Resilience and Revival of Chinese House Church

Jie Kang
Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, Goettingen, Germany

Abstract

Chinese Protestant Christianity in the form of underground house churches is one of the most suppressed religious groups in China. However, it is also among the fastest growing. An important strategy of the house church movement which indicates its resilience has been its policy of non-resistance to government while at the same time remaining independent. This organizational flexibility has enabled it to survive and thrive. This paper shows how years’ of such experience circumventing government repression enabled house churches to adapt to the Chinese state’s recent strict control of its population during the Covid pandemic.

As well as implementing a total population lockdown, the Chinese government introduced the use of digital technology to control the spread of Covid 19, including a tracing system. The aim was to help enterprises connect with each other safely and continue to carry out business during the pandemic. In order to avoid being vulnerable to such severe control and surveillance, many house churches switched rapidly to online from offline worship. While this church reaction was an unintended consequence of the state’s action, the increased internet connectivity available to churches has allowed online worship, training, bible study, proselytization and the circulation of digital Christian textbooks and sermons to continue discreetly.

Facing a Crisis: The Resilience of Catholicism in Poland

09:00 - 10:40 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

Dominika Motak

In recent years, “crisis” became a central concept in public debates on the condition of the Roman Catholic Church in Europe. Liberal and conservative commentators, laity and clergy, including Pope Francis himself, are talking about “the crisis of the Church” or “the crisis in the Church”. The crisis is defined in various ways and denotes a whole range of phenomena, such as the decline in the number of believers, the loss of political and cultural influence, the loss of the authority of the hierarchs, the moral collapse of the institution related to sexual abuse scandals, or problems with adaptation to the realities of the modern world. While the macro-level dynamics of the decline of Catholicism in Europe have been widely studied, we still know very little about the local counter-movements, resistance and resilience among both: the supporters and opponents of the Church.
The proliferation of the narrative about the crisis of the Church in the public discourse forces Catholics to take a stance on this issue. We propose a session focusing on the ways in which groups and individuals relate and respond to the identified crisis. We want to explore the topic by looking at the crisis in specific socio-historical contexts, while accounting for the more universal supra-local trends. We consider a range of factors such as the growth of political right-wing movements, the role of media and the diffusion of the critical approaches to gender as central categories, necessary to reveal the complexity of power relationships driving both - the crisis itself and the responses to it.

The presentations will be centred around the following questions:

How different social actors define the roots and causes of the crisis?

What strategies do they employ in response to the situation?

What is the likely long-term and short-term impact of the crisis for the Church and lay Catholics?

What are the implications for the broader debates on the secularization, privatization and re-publicization of religion?

578 The Battle for Symbolic Power: Krakow as a Stage of “Women’s Strike” against the Catholic Church

Joanna Krotofil, Dominika Motak, Dorota Wójciak

Jagiellonian University, Kraków, Poland

Abstract

Poland continues to be described and referred to as a “Catholic country”. However, the level of identification with the Catholic Church in Poland has been gradually declining in the last three decades. In this paper we explore the recent wave of contestation which began in October 2020, as a reaction to the decision of the Constitutional Tribunal which declared one of the three exceptions allowing legal abortion unconstitutional. Following this announcement thousands of people took to the streets to participate in what became known as “the Women’s Strike”.

The protesters not only rejected the ruling right-wing Law and Justice party but also objected to the strong influence of the Catholic Church over the Polish state. The case study presented here focuses on the events that took place in Kraków, particularly the protests in front of the headquarters of the Kraków Archdiocese and it’s famous “Pope’s window”. We identify the symbolic tools used by the protesters and explore the connection between “Women’s Strike”, the emergent discourses on the poor handling of the sexual abuse problems in the Catholic Church by the late Pope John Paul II and his close associates, and the growing contestation of the Church’s position towards LGBTQ+. We employ the notion of crisis and resilience to discuss the implications of the mass protests for the transformation of the religious landscape in Poland.
Strategies of Lay Catholics Dealing with the Crisis of the Church in Poland: Analysis of Media Discourse

Dorota Wójciak
Jagiellonian University, Kraków, Poland

Abstract

“The crisis of the Church” is a phenomenon recognized and discussed in all Catholic circles in Poland and accepted across the internal divisions within Polish Catholicism. It is defined in various ways and associated with diverse phenomena, such as the loss of Church authority; the decline in the number of believers; the moral decline of hierarchs involved in financial and sexual abuse scandals). Some Catholic journalists attribute the causes of the crisis to external factors, but there is also a growing acknowledgement of internal issues as a potential root of the problem. The focus of my presentation are the narratives about the internal causes of the crisis in the Catholic Church constructed by the Catholic conservative press and the Catholic YouTube influencers. I centre the analysis of the discourses around the "Women's Strike", which sparked protests in front of churches all over Poland. I will discuss in detail three main strategies adopted by Catholics dealing with the internal crises identified in the discourse analysis:

1) the recognition of the internal enemy; 2) the denial; 3) the purification of the community.

During my presentation, I will characterize the above-mentioned strategies and present examples of their use. I argue that in order to understand better the contemporary Polish Catholicism, especially in the context of its internal pluralism, we must take into account the various attitudes to the crisis of the Church.

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“God Gave us Free Will to Use”: Catholic Women and the Abortion Ban in Poland

Agnieszka Kosiorowska, Natalia Pomian
University of Warsaw, Warsaw, Poland

Abstract

The commonly named abortion compromise that had existed in Poland since 1993, allowed the procedure to be performed in only three situations: when pregnancy was the result of a criminal act, when a woman’s health was endangered by continuing the pregnancy, and when the foetus was seriously and irreversibly impaired. However, on October 22 of last year the Polish Constitutional Tribunal adjudged the lattermost exception to be unconstitutional. Despite the mass demonstrations against this verdict denouncing both the government and the Catholic Church, many devout Catholics joined the protests. Drawing on ongoing archival and ethnographic research, we address a number of issues relating to Catholicism and abortion. Why have so many Catholics decided to participate in marches openly opposing official Catholic teaching? What were their motivations? And - finally - what are the genealogies of the concepts underpinning these motivations? To answer these questions, we explore the opinions relating to abortion of three generations of Polish Catholics. We present strategies they have employed to negotiate with the Church’s stance on
abortion, including emphasising both the importance of acting on one’s own conscience and the subjective situations of individual women’s lives, as well as insisting that abortion law is not a matter in which the Church should intervene. Finally, we discuss the notion of a “mature rebellion” against the Church, a concept that appears in the accounts of several Catholic protesters.

453 Contents and Social Places of Religion-Based Healing and Personal Growth Services

09:00 - 10:40 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

Ricarda Stegmann

Parallel to secular therapy and counselling options, there is, within European societies, a broad spectrum of so-called religious or spiritual offers for coping with illness, crisis situations of all kinds, or for assistance on the path of personal growth and self-realization. Demand for these offers appears to be growing at a considerable rate. Concrete practices such as healing rituals or meditation courses are run alongside a variety of more or less theorized worldviews and concepts of humanity, the cosmos, or the nature of good and evil. These offers are found in various social locations. First, migrants import and transform practices and ideas, such as Islamic Djinn exorcism or the sale of Koranic protective amulets. Second, established religious institutions offer practices with long traditions such as pastoral care or exorcism, but in some cases change the form and interpretation of these in reaction to changes in society. And finally, there are the various spiritual healing and transformation practices inspired by the so-called New Age Movement which either draw on established religious traditions such as Buddhism or Islamic Sufism, and which see themselves as outside of these. They can take the form of international spiritual movements or religious organizations into which one must be initiated, or of spiritual therapy sessions which can be booked by anyone who pays for the service.

This selection of religious offers to help people overcome difficulties and deal with the challenges of postmodern societies raises various questions: What theoretical concepts and practical methods do they rely on? What leads people to make use of them instead of or in addition to established non-religious methods? What is their relationship to secular therapy on the one hand, and to established religious traditions on the other? How are they institutionalized?

The contributions to this panel will discuss these questions using case studies from a range of religious-spiritual healing services such as contemporary Islamic and Catholic exorcism as well as in popular (Sufi-)spiritual lifestyle guidebooks.

454 The Integration of Secular Psychology into the Path of Spiritual Transformation within the Sufi Qadiriyya Budshishiyya

Ricarda Stegmann

Aarhus University, Aarhus, Denmark
Abstract

The search for a spiritual path of self-development has driven many Western seekers of the 20th century to join a Sufi sheikh or a Sufi tariqa. Currently, the topic of an inner transformation process in general, and of sacralized psychological techniques and problem-solving strategies in particular, is still a central theme especially among those Sufi groupings in which mainly Western converts are found. Thus, conferences, workshops, and publications with titles such as Therapy of the soul (La thérapie de l’âme, Khaléd Bentounès) or A Sufi psychology (Une psychologie soufie, Eric Geoffroy) are still expressions of a typically Western interest in Sufism.

This paper shows how popular authorities of the Qadiriyya Budshishiyya currently present the Sufi path of self-transformation as a much more comprehensive matter compared to secular offers, yet how they do not reject secularized offers such as therapies or coachings, but integrate them and their premises as a legitimate stage on the spiritual path.

It is argued that this compatibility with secular offerings and lifestyles of Western society is an important prerequisite for the popularity of Sufi teachings among its Western disciples.

455 Exorcism as Post-secular Healing: The (De)Medicalization of Exorcism Practices in the Roman Catholic Church
Nicole Bauer

University of Innsbruck, Innsbruck, Austria

Abstract

Exorcists are once again in demand for their very specific set of skills in religious healing. The founding of the International Association for Exorcists (AIE), the development of the Exorcism and Prayer of Liberation Course at a Vatican university and countless publications from the ranks of Catholic, charismatic or evangelical representatives are evidence for the relevance of the topic of "exorcism" in Christianity. In 2015, for the first time, a seminar for the training of exorcists was organized at the Ateneo Pontificio Regina Apostolorum in Rome, where the once-marginalized belief in demons is taken up and (re)integrated into Christian healing practice. To understand the connection between healing and religion in post-secular society, the following developments underlie the main thesis. Illness, health and healing are deeply anchored in the worldviews of Christian traditions. Secularization and social differentiation has increasingly shifted healing to the realm of medicine. While mainstream churches come to terms with the prevailing paradigms of modernity - namely the separation of religion (salvation) from medicine (healing) - healing practices are (once again) gaining importance on the margins. This paper shows how Christian narratives are ‘translated’ to a psychological/medical context as part of a legitimization strategy and seeks to examine the connection between religious healing and questions of power with regard to psychology and medicine in current-day Christian healing discourses.
A Wounded Healer for the Postsecular Age – Jordan Peterson’s Battle with Dependency and “12 More Rules for Life”

Dimitry Okropiridze

Heidelberg University, Heidelberg, Germany

Abstract

This paper examines (in)famous psychologist Jordan B. Peterson’s recent battle with dependency from anxiety medication and his employment of a narrative of spiritual suffering towards the formulation of a therapeutic ethos for a larger audience of recipients. The therapeutic ethos is presented in Peterson’s latest monograph “Beyond Order: 12 More Rules for Life”, which is a continuation of Peterson’s bestselling “12 Rules for Life: An Antidote to Chaos”. The paper focuses on Peterson’s self-display as a ‘wounded healer’ in the Jungian sense, which implies that an individual aware of his/her own psychological wounds and spiritual lacunae can be better suited as a therapist/spiritual guide for others. The paper concludes that this archetypal self-presentation by Peterson serves a popular demand in postsecular societies, where the uncomfortable simultaneity of religious and secular discourses combined with a normative imperative to self-optimize with an unequivocally positive outlook, has left many individuals incapable of addressing their psychological suffering.

Demonic Possession and Curative Exorcism in Contemporary Jordan

Assia Harwazinski

DVRW, AKRM, Tübingen, Germany

Abstract

The contribution is based on the documentary of young Jordan journalist Dalia al-Kury “Al-Mamsussin” of 2014. It shows the persistent resilience of belief in demonic possession as well as traditional forms of curative exorcism due to the lack of a wide-spread, well-established, and functioning modern medical system of psychotherapy which is basically still hardly accepted in Arabian countries. In presenting several examples of modern practices of traditional exorcisms of an active healer, Shaykh Ayesh, it shows his dedication to adopt modern forms of curative elements, such as Reiki, to include them in his traditional exorcism-concepts. Al-Kury emphasizes the growing market of esoteric literature in Amman, obviously satisfying some need in society. Her documentary aims at presenting and questioning the persistency of religious thinking up to the point of legitimizing criminal acts - in this case: the killing of a little girl - with the father’s argument of her “being possessed by a dschinn” and, therefore, necessary self-justice to restore the socio-religious frame, the murder-father finally being reintegrated into the family. Thus, the documentary challenges self-reflection on traditional religious beliefs as well as legal arguments within the background of Islamic thinking. Al-Kury concludes that the established traditional educational system is responsible for the persistence of such religiously motivated behaviour, because it neither reflects nor questions the traditional Islamic framework of education, starting in the “kinder-garten”, and elementary schools still educating on the basis of uncritical religious thinking and figures, such as “shaitan”, the latter
being responsible for all evil deeds of mankind. Change would require critical reflections on religion-based education and acceptance of secular scholarly medicine where traditional healing fails.

643-I Resilient Esotericism

09:00 - 10:40 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

Henrik Bogdan

Western esotericism has often been described as a religious and philosophical phenomenon that has had a difficult relationship with mainstream culture and institutions for large parts of its history. Perceived as being based on forms of “rejected knowledge”, it is not difficult to find historical examples of marginalisation or even persecution of esoteric ideas and practices. With the Enlightenment, esotericism was often equated with superstition, quackery and misguided enthusiasm, and it was given for granted that eventually the progress of reason and science would have dispelled the dreams of spiritual visionaries and the secrets of self-styled initiates. However, esotericism has been able to survive marginalisation and has proven the predictions of Enlightenment thinkers wrong. It is very much alive in our societies today and it has travelled far and wide. Its pervasive presence in popular culture has been described with the term of occulture, and its participation in the entangled history of globalisation has led some scholars to reject the idea that esotericism is a “Western” phenomenon at all. Esotericism has therefore proven resilient in many ways and in different periods of its history. It has endured all sorts of challenges and difficulties and has reacted to them by adapting to new situations and taking on ever-changing forms. This panel focuses on various aspects and contexts of esotericism’s resilience.

09:00 - 09:20

756 Resilient Conspiracy in the Romanian Orthodox Church: From Anti-Masonic Discourse to Orthodox Occulture

Ionut Daniel Bancila

Seminar für Religionswissenschaft ssenschaft, Erfurt, Germany

Abstract

The academic Study of Religion and still less the Study of Western Esotericism is only rarely concerned with national or global Orthodox Christianities, thus failing to take into account a fascinating field of study, the multilevelled religious dynamics which still await their proper contextualization. Due to their historical marginalization on the geo-political map, Orthodox nations together with their local Orthodox Churches were prone to develop anti-Western narratives of superiority, blaming occult machinations of the Great Powers for their socio-political condition. In Romania such discursive complexes developed rather slowly, reaching their peak in the inter-war period, when the Church adapted various Anti-Masonic narratives of the
European conservatives to its purposes in order to make sense of and oppose Modernity. After a period of forced political secularization of conspiracy theories during the Communist regime, various Orthodox groups (mostly pertaining to Monasticism) began to develop much more sophisticated conspiracy narratives in order to make sense of the recent dynamics of the global world. The aim of this paper is to highlight the complex dynamics of the conspiracy narratives in the Romanian Orthodox Church from a historical point of view and to contextualize them in their socio-political climate. Furthermore, it aims to sketch the profile of the emerging “Orthodox Occulture”, in which such narratives play a significant role.

09:20 - 09:40

827 The Poet-Mystic and Poetess-Medium: Spiritism and the Polish Romantic Paradigm

Joanna Burdzel

Harvard University, Cambridge, USA

Abstract

From scholar Marcin Lul’s study of Józef Ignacy Kraszewski’s Trapezologion: historyka (1855) – the earliest appearance in Polish literature of a Spiritist séance, though “tragic-farcical” – one can draw a line to Olga Tokarczuk’s early novel E.E. (1995), and trace the evolution of the representation and function of the séance in the Polish literary imagination. But mere representation is only a fragment of a much larger story, as the underlying mechanism behind the séance – the conjuring of spirit(s), the role and state of the medium as “uncontrolled passivity” – is, in essence, the aesthetic technique of the poet-mystic, with clear roots in Polish Romanticism. As a technique enhanced by new devices, technologies, and other media in the 20th century, it reaches from theatre into cinematography, and encompasses even the spoken memoir. Tokarczuk’s novel thus affirms a continued presence of Spiritism in late modernity, but points to the perspective of the poetess-medium as one of immanent, intimate perception, rather than one of transcendence or historical-poetic messianism. Ultimately, it seems that enabling categories have been constructed in order to define the poet-mystic, but the poetess-medium is only now receiving due attention. I will therefore anchor my paper in a historical chronology, reaching from Narcyza Żmichowska (1819-1876) to Maria Pawlikowska-Jasnorzewsk (1894-1945) to Olga Tokarczuk.

09:40 - 10:00

251 Late Soviet Esotericism as a Counter to State Secularism

Ruslan Khalikov

Workshop for the Academic Study of Religions, Kyiv, Ukraine. Ternopil Volodymyr Hnatiuk National Pedagogical University, Ternopil, Ukraine

Abstract
The esoteric movement in the late Soviet period was one of the ways spiritual needs could be satisfied under the pressure of the secularist ideology espoused by the Soviet State. Its popularity was facilitated by a key difference with “official” religious movements: belonging to the official religions usually required some sort of open confession of faith, while belonging to the esoteric spiritual movements normally required hiding this fact. The secrecy allowed combining spiritual growth together with official work in state institutions. Participants in the movement commonly self-identified as “mystics” or “third culture” members. The esoteric movement was structured into interconnected networks of individual spiritual seekers rather than having organizations with strict rules and official membership. Esotericism thus contributed to the resilience of spirituality until the fall of the Soviet Union. After the Iron Curtain was demolished, however, it lost importance as many of the Soviet mystics joined various non-esoteric religions.

10:00 - 10:20

731 Maintaining Integrity Under Anomie: The Ethics of Post-Soviet Esotericism
Kateryna Zorya
Södertörns högskola, Stockholm, Sweden

Abstract

The fall of the Soviet Union brought with it a notable example of religious transformation: the post-Soviet occult revival (Kasavin 1990). During the Soviet Union, occult and esoteric currents largely resided on the wider intellectual underground, existing in the form of informal social networks and small groups and inhabiting the same spaces—including prisons, madhouses and boiler rooms—as the wider networks of religious and national dissidents. After 1990, all of these networks emerged out into the open, and esotericism occupied an unusual position of mainstream interest and acceptance. This paper argues that such acceptance was not only due to its status of former “rejected knowledge”, which returned into society as the system that had been doing the rejecting was itself rejected, but also because post-Soviet esotericism promoted identities and systems of ethics which had been remarkably well-adapted to conditions of anomie characteristic for post-Soviet countries. Multiple source texts of post-Soviet esotericism present an idealized picture of a practitioner who is, above all, learned and in control. “Learnedness” refers to someone who is willing to go to great lengths to acquire knowledge, implying both great perseverance and facility in navigating the chaos of post-Soviet markets. “Being learned” also implied an idealized picture of scientific exploration that stemmed from 19th century positivism, portraying solitary scholars capable of changing scientific consensus, which was an effect of the rejection of Soviet academic paradigms. “Control” refers to both internal and external control: control over one’s own personality and a more literal magical control of the outside world. In fact, the two aspects of “control” mirrored each other: it was often implied that loss of control over one’s personality would also lead to a loss of control over the mundane world. The reverse was also true: gaining control over one’s own self would lead to external synchronicities in the practitioner’s favor—likely an impact of Protestant ideas from the West. Both “learnedness” and “control” could be seen as internally-focused cognitive and ethical strategies aimed at survival in a time of widespread social collapse. Their focus on the practitioner’s own self as opposed to the enactment of wider social change can be read as part of the post-Soviet social reaction against Communism and its attempts to socially engineer society.
81-I Resilience of Tantric, Magic, and Shamanic Practices at the “Margins” of South and Southeast Asian Religions

09:00 - 10:40 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

Andrea Acri, Paolo Eugenio Rosati

Tantra and “folk”/“tribal” traditions in South and Southeast Asia often highlight intersections, stratifications, and superimpositions of liminal and transgressive practices, as well as a tension between the “margins” and the “centre(s)”. Transgression and danger have been part of the ritual praxis at the social and geographical “margins”, although they were often appropriated by kingship to spread and legitimate cultural and political ideas.

Liminal ritual praxis led the adept to a worldly self-realisation also through magic-shamanic performances, which often induced ecstasy, possession, trance, religious hysteria, shapeshifting, healing capacities, “white” and “black” magic powers, etc. Evidence of these performances is attested in myths, folk and oral traditions, visual and performative arts, rituals, and festivals in the Tantra-influenced “marginal” cultures of South and Southeast Asia.

Tantric traditions challenge the dualistic view of the cosmos as an opposition between purity and impurity. They violate and subvert what is perceived as orthopraxy by the mainstream Indic religiosity, thereby emerging as an inestimable source of power. Transgressive and dangerous performances mirror the resilience and the memory of a cross-cultural negotiation between indigenous people and mainstream traditions that culminated in the rise of various regional and supra-regional/cross-cultural cults across South and Southeast Asia.

Through a multidisciplinary approach, this panel aims to shed light on experiences, practices and practitioners that have been frequently alienated and marginalised in the mainstream Indic religious discourse across South and Southeast Asia, and also insufficiently studied by modern scholarship. Particular attention will be paid to the cross-cultural dialectic between mainstream and intersecting magic-shamanic “marginal” phenomena across history and geography, and their instantiations in textual corpora, myths, folk and oral traditions, visual and performative arts, rituals, and festivals.

122 Himalayan Traditional Healers: A Tantric-Shamanic Dialogue

Jarrod Hyam

University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire, USA

Abstract

This paper draws from ethnographic fieldwork conducted with tantric practitioners in rural West Bengal and Sikkim, India, including Nepali traditional healers known as jhākris and mātās. The uniquely situated cultural contexts of Nepali traditional healers who live in the Indo-Nepali borderland areas of the Darjeeling
Hills and Sikkim encourage distinctly localized forms of healing praxis. Similar to other tantric practitioners throughout South Asia, traditional healers in the Indo-Nepali borderland region are ambivalently viewed by local residents as having the ability to heal as well as the ability to curse or to inflict harm, due to their association with what are perceived as questionable tantric methods.

Drawing from oral narratives and ethnographic fieldwork, I explore the dialectical intersection of indigenous magical-shamanic orientations with the syncretic Vajrayāna Buddhist and Śākta-tantra systems adopted by Nepali traditional healers. This paper thus presents reflections on South Asian village-based forms of folk tantric healing, which intersects with indigenous Himalayan shamanic healing modalities.

This paper is part of the panel RESILIENCE OF TANTRIC, MAGIC, AND SHAMANIC PRACTICES AT THE ‘MARGINS’ OF SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST ASIAN RELIGIONS, SESSION 102

102 Singing Tantra: Aural Media and Sonic Soteriology in Bengali Esoteric Lineages

Carola Lorea

Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore, Singapore, Singapore

Abstract

This paper discusses how Tantric conceptions of sound, and sonic manifestations of Tantric ideology, are embodied and performed in contemporary Bengali lineages.

Tantric traditions have been predominantly studied through the analysis of (primarily Sanskrit) texts. Indological scholarship has the pervasive tendency to locate ‘authentic’ Tantra in a lost, premodern past.

Music and dance, songs and sung stories, in a variety of languages, represent an important component of lived religion in Tantric communities. Attempting to understand Tantric traditions solely through philology and iconography, will miss out on those sensory media and technologies of communication that are often most central to the practitioners themselves: the aural fields of Tantric expression.

Singing features ubiquitously in the history of Tantric communities as well as in the living practices of contemporary lineages, urging us to take aural media into serious consideration for a global anthro-history of Tantra. This is especially relevant when dealing with Bengali esoteric lineages. Esoteric lyrics, in the form of dohās, padas, and gān, have accompanied the development of Bengali literature (Cakrabarti 1990, 13). These songs are often studied as ‘poems’, i.e. as objects rather than events, although they are frequently preceded by musical indicators (rāgā, sur, tāl).

Sounds have been often treated as ornamental or secondary in the study of religions. However, citing Ruth Illman (2019): “We need to realize that music, and the arts in general, are not just ornaments or illustrations of something more profoundly important to religion, but they are aspects of religious engagement in their own right”. Religion scholars interested in sound studies are giving a new emphasis on aural media,
encouraging a "sonic turn" in the study of religions (Hackett 2012, 2018). This paper is theoretically embedded in this debate in the academic fields of religion and multisensory research (Van Ede 2009). In modern Bengal, aural media, oral literature, and Tantric religiosity are inseparably interwoven. Primarily studied by ethnomusicologists and by area specialists, aural-oral aspects of Tantric ideologies in Bengal rarely enter wider debates in the field of Tantric studies, remaining at the margins of Tantra scholarship. In this paper, (1) I propose some reasons why aural media have covered a marginal role in the study of Tantric traditions; and (2) I address aural media as practices of sonic liberation that are embedded in Tantric ideology. I suggest that embodied techniques of the voice, dancing body and percussion instruments, produce ecstatic states referred to as samādhi. A complex religious acoustemology rooted in Tantric conceptions of the body and cosmic vibration (nād) will emerge through Bengali sources as well as from ethnographic material drawn from extensive multi-site fieldwork (2011-2019) among singers-practitioners in West Bengal, Bangladesh and the Andaman Islands.

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**92 Body, Alchemy, and Tantra in the Cult of Kāmākhyā**

*Paolo E. Rosati*

Independent scholar, Rome, Italy

**Abstract**

Around the Tenth century, the Kaula Tantra praxis switched from blood sacrifice to a mystic-erotic ritual centred on the *yoni pūjā* (worship of the vulva). This esoteric sexual path emerged as a homologation of the blood-centred path. Both had their roots in the Purānic myth of Sati’s sacrifice, which also provides the narrative for the origins of the śakti pīṭhas (seats of power) across the Indian Subcontinent. In Assam these two Tantric paths aimed to gratify the goddess Kāmākhyā, whose symbol is the *yoni* preserved inside her shrine on Nīlācala—a mountain famous for its connection with death, magic, and the alchemical tradition.

Blood offerings and erotic rituals focus on the human body as a source of sexual fluids necessary to obtain *siddhā* (accomplishments). In this paper, the connection between Tantra and the alchemical tradition of Nīlācala will be discussed in order to explain the encounter between Brahmanism and magic. Firstly, the concept of *siddhā* as ‘magical power’ will be examined in the light of studies on witchcraft and magic (e.g., Ronald Hutton 2017); then, the intersection of ‘folk’ magic and Brahmanical ritual praxis in Assam will be considered as the source of the peculiar cult of the *yoni* of Kāmākhyā. From this discussion, Assamese Tantra will emerge as a religious phenomenon that crosses socio-cultural boundaries and encompasses apparently irreconcilable categories.

**496 Doing (Field) Research in a Pandemic**

09:00 - 10:40 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021
Ariane Kovac, Leonie C. Geiger

With our whole lives turned upside down by the Covid pandemic, many researchers found themselves confronted with circumstances they could not have taken into account while planning their research. While many at first intended to postpone fieldwork or archive visits, in the past months it became increasingly clear not only that “sitting out” the pandemic would take more time than expected but also that “going back to normal” might not be an option. Although “post Corona” has become a hopeful part of our vocabulary, we cannot predict the end and much less the long-term consequences of the pandemic.

As researchers, we have been confronted with diverse challenges. The pandemic has forced us to lay aside or modify those of our “usual“ research methods that depend on presence and proximity and to omit travel plans or archive visits. Many researchers are now exploring virtual methods with all the challenges and advantages these entail. At the same time, our research subjects have adapted to the current situation as well, which gives us interesting new avenues for research. Even in situations where changes do not seem obvious, the current developments have revealed frictions, vulnerabilities, and dependencies that need to be taken into account. And, of course, all of this happened in a situation of insecurity and stress for us as researchers and individuals. The pandemic has also intensified inequalities in academic contexts, as research projects with tight timeframes or researchers with children have been disproportionally affected.

In this panel, we gather a broad variety of approaches along the field of religious studies, including historical, ethnographic, sociological, but also theological approaches, and discuss differences and common ground, exploring the consequences for religious studies as a whole. How has research been affected by the current situation, and how have researchers adapted? Which ideas could be adapted easily and which had to be laid aside? Which virtual methods have been explored and how can we evaluate these, on their own and in contrast to “traditional” methods? What are the consequences for a future “post corona” - is it possible or even preferable for researchers to go “back to normal” as soon as possible, or will we have to adapt to a “new normal”?

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619 Escaping into Theory? The Challenges of Researching Everyday Life and “Religion” in a Pandemic Society

Leonie C. Geiger

University of Bonn, Bonn, Germany

Abstract

What is the use of the concept of everyday life have in a (post-)pandemic society? Indeed, a different, a new everyday life has become established by now, new routines have emerged: Wearing a mask in many public and semi-public spaces, less social contact, less to no physical contact, no handshaking as a greeting. Meyer (2021) points out an interesting transformation in social interactions in everyday life: Shaking hands and showing one’s face - until recently listed as culturally deeply rooted features of European culture against Muslims who refuse to do so on the basis of their beliefs - are now considered “particularly dangerous acts” (Meyer 2021:151). In my dissertation project, I deal with everyday negotiations of religious diversity in Germany. Yet, researching everyday negotiations of secularity in a post-migrant society proofs to be challenging in a pandemic. The already planned and organized research at a primary school could not take place and therefore - while not being allowed to do research in my field - I “escaped” into theory to advance my dissertation project. In this presentation, I will not only reflect on the challenges of researching everyday
life and religion in a pandemic society but also discuss this shift from an empirical to a theoretical focus in my research, which was originally designed as an ethnography.


653 Underscoring the "Normal"? What the Corona Pandemic Reveals Regarding Power Dynamics and Vulnerability of Houseless People
Jan Harten
University of Hamburg, Hamburg, Germany

Abstract
In many fields of qualitative research the coronavirus pandemic prevents researchers from conducting interviews or entering the field. This is, however, not the case for my research in the field of pastoral care with houseless people. Although participant observation has become quite complicated and partly restricted, it is still possible in general. This is quite a privilege for me as a researcher. However, the ongoing accessibility of my target group - people living in public sphere - implicates a lot concerning their vulnerability and structures of dependency in non-pandemic times. In my presentation I will on the one hand reflect upon what the Corona pandemic shows about power dynamics and the conditions of life in public sphere. On the other hand I will illustrate how characteristics of the field crystallize in the pandemic.

497 “Now it’s getting really personal”: Breaching the Front Stage in Videocall Interviews
Ariane Kovac
Leipzig University, Leipzig, Germany

Abstract
What happens when faith healing fails? In my dissertation project, I ask how charismatic Christians deal with the experience that some prayers just don’t get answered. Departing from the hypothesis that non-healings and unanswered prayers evoke disappointments or dissonances, I analyze the strategies congregations and individual believers have developed to confront these experiences, focusing not only on narratives, communication, and negotiation, but also on emotions and bodily experiences. While my research was intended to depend mostly on participant observation in home groups and healing rooms, the covid pandemic has thwarted these plans. Instead, as the congregations had taken healing and prayer into Zoom calls and livestreams, I also started to explore online research methods such as videocall interviews. In my presentation, I want to reflect on my experiences and on the implications of this choice in methodology when dealing with topics as sensitive as failure, suffering, anger, or doubt. Is it even possible to breach the
front stage of positive, confident self-presentation when we cannot meet our interview partners in person? How can we as researchers explore negotiation processes or possible discrepancies when stuck behind our laptop screens? What helps to build up trust in online research environments? How do interview approaches need to be rethought to fit the videocall format? And what do we need to take into account when relating results from online research to those from “normal” in-person research, once the latter will again be possible?

800 XII The Hanged Man: Pandemic-Related Changes of Perspective in the Research on Mexican Neopaganism

Maria Papenfuss
University of Leipzig, Leipzig, Germany

Abstract

The tarot card “The hanged man” is often interpreted as a change of perspective, no matter if it is about an intrinsically necessary one or caused by external circumstances like the current pandemic. In case of my field research focussed on Mexican neopaganism, the pandemic-related change of perspective includes a shift from on-site interviews and participant observation in Mexico City to online-only interviews, generating methodological and epistemological issues that have to be addressed. On a practical level, the shift also caused not only technological but also interpersonal challenges: although neopagans often identify as tech-savvy and prone to online interaction, our screen-based interaction often lacked the experienceable factor of events and locations while other aspects turned out clearer online than they would have in situ. This has led to a distinct set of data and therefore requires at least reflections, if not major adjustments in terms of structure, theory and method of the research project. Consequently, the questions I would like to consider in my presentation are: How to deal with those changes in perspective caused by online-only qualitative research? In detail: How does the lack of in situ field research affect the collected data and how to deal with this data methodologically as well as in terms of visibility/invisibility of certain information? And in a nutshell: Which opportunities does the hanged-man-perspective actually offer?

698 "The Magic of the Internet?" - Pros and Cons of Online Interviews in Cross-cultural Research

Januschka Schmidt
University of Groningen, Groningen, Netherlands

Abstract

In my PhD project, I research the relationship between local well-being and place attachment at the case study of tourism to sacred heritage sites in Kyoto, Japan. I do so by examining how place attachment relates to experiences of well-being and how place attachment for local visitors at sacred heritage sites depends on their perceptions of whether the place can still fulfil traditional functions. At the start of my PhD in 2019, I planned to conduct on-site observations and interviews with Japanese visitors of two sacred sites in Kyoto.
Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, I shifted my methods from in-person interviews to online interviews and from on-site observations to analysing the online presence of my case studies on their websites.

In this workshop, I would like to talk about the positive and negative consequences of online interviews and substituting observations with the analysis of online sources. For example, while recruiting participants on online platforms allows us to minimise the role of gatekeepers and potential harm for our participants, it also requires us as researchers to engage with GDPR related data protection laws. Moreover, I would like to talk about alternative interviewing methods that make use of the online format.

579 “Have you already surveyed that in the official archives?” Dealing with Shut Down Institutions and Informal Structures in a Pandemic

Manuel Simon

Georg-August-Universität, Göttingen, Germany

Abstract

In 1988 the German magazine Der Spiegel reviewed a book on religious members of the Green party, surprisingly stating their words came from genuine politicians, not from sect members. Once I properly started my research on this “religious” discourse in the newly founded German Green party in the 1980s, the relevant archives were shut down due to Covid. Even in the brief period in 2020 where archival research was possible, the limits set remained rather restrictive. Whereas my initially planned archival session demanded a stay of about half a month, research in situ was limited to four days with six hours each. Trying to acquire alternative sources to uncover the party’s “religious” structure, I contacted various local offices and former activists and asked for printed information from the respective time. While some relegated to the party’s official archive, many informants were quite happy to both tell me their story and to revise their personal archives. Especially newly emerging collectives like the Greens only conserved data that were considered important at the time, as is true for most archival collections. In this respect an approach adapted to the pandemic situation may discover unexpected sources that are not only hard to find in regular queries but are also barely available in official libraries and archives. The presentation will reflect both on my previous stays in public archives in Amsterdam and Berlin and on the changing conditions in archival research in general.

649 Teaching Based Research by Message Games. Staying Safe, Sane and Consensual in a Pandemic and Beyond?

Petra Tillessen

FIW, University of Bonn, Bonn, Germany

Abstract

I am doing my doctoral thesis on teaching ‘religion/s’ as a negotiated variable by (message) games and what we may learn from these games vice versa. Teaching by games is one option to create an ‘inter-space’, devoted to critical reflection and academic argumentation but also a place to include the level of personal
convictions, affects and associative creativity as well. Here students can challenge their (and ours!) taken-for-grantedness about ‘religion/s’, but without the immediate pressure of ‘coming out’ with them.

To this end such games require to make explicit when taking and discarding a role and to take personal challenges of participants and safety tools serious.

As I normally work with face-to-face (message) games, it is a challenge in itself to move my competences to the digital sphere, to experiment with new forms of games reflections online. But as being online these days is our ‘normal’ contact, it turned out with some benefits for me, like it was much easier to record the game for the joined reflection on it afterwards. Non the less digital teaching revealed a whole horizon of unanswered questions: How to consider technical challenges, limitations of time and access, Zoom-policy or data security? What does it really mean, to take this extraordinary situation serious? The situation of students - and my own? How to encourage students to take part, but not put them under pressure? And most of all, what could it mean to take power relations serious and to mark them as relational (classroom)?

409-I Geographies of Encounter: Multi-religious Spaces ONLINE

09:00 - 10:40 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

Safet Hadzimuhamedovic

This session rises from the project “Geographies of Encounter”, whose result is a volume (Palgrave 2021) which explores forms of multi-religious cohabitation as well as the spatial arrangements that underpin and shape them.

By spatial arrangements we understand the territorial and nonterritorial configurations that intentionally or unintentionally emerge from sustained social interactions and which may have multiple scales of representations. Such spatial arrangements are outcomes of practices of imagination, symbolization and institutionalization. They can result from either the religious visions and political utopias of elites or from everyday religious routines of ordinary people, through a dynamic practice, made by compromises, accommodation, tolerance and resilience.

Focusing on interactions between different religious groups and tradition, we conceptualize three types of spatial arrangements and explore how they operate as geographies of encounter: multi-religious places, multi-religious cities, and multi-religious landscapes.

Composed of case studies, authored by a group of historians, sociologists and anthropologists, the book demonstrates the multiple ways in which geographies of interreligious encounters and forms of multi-religious cohabitation have changed across history as an outcome of their embeddedness in different frameworks of political organization (e.g. empires, city-states, nation-states, and global cities), shifting religious ideologies as well as changing forms of human mobility.
The “Casa delle religioni” of Turin: A multi-level Project between Religious and Secular

Luca Bossi¹, Mariachiara Giorda²

¹University of Turin | Department of Cultures, Politics and Society, Turin, Italy. ²University of Roma Tre | Department of Humanities, Rome, Italy

Abstract

The Casa delle religioni in Turin, Italy is an excellent example of a multi-religious place. Designed in 2016, it has yet to be realized. Plans for the Casa delle religioni involve a 300 m² room located in one of the three wings of a 4,000 m² post-industrial building called the “Ex-Incet.” Beginning in the late 19th century, the Incet was an electrical cable factory; following its closure in 1968, the building was abandoned. The site’s requalification started in 2009 as part of a municipal set of strategies for generating and promoting innovative activities. The idea of a place for minorities was initially promoted by two public administrators who, despite their mutual commitment to inclusion policies and diversity governance, could not accompany the project due to political changes in the city government. The public call was devised as a partial response to the lack of suitable places of worship for religious minorities in the city. Insofar as religious groups have agreed on procedures, economic issues, and architectural planning activities, the clash between religious and secular (both political and economic) interests seems unconceivable. The ghosting behaviour exhibited by political authorities has widely contributed to the failure of this inclusive project. The city has neglected its commitment, both as the formal client of the project and the neutral, institutional actor called to mediate between religious and secular (as well as common and private) interests. In a national and local context marked by de jure and de facto inequalities, the public and political institutions’ role is crucial, both in promoting pluralistic, inclusive policies and in ensuring a fair balance of interests. What remains today is an empty space in a building that has not become a pole of social innovation, as was promised; on the contrary, it is an urban waste. As recent debates show, this failed project is a missed opportunity for lay and religious mediators who have played a crucial role in recent years; the only goal they have achieved is a more reliable network among them. From a material perspective, the Casa delle religioni is in a way an invisible failure, as it is quite impossible to perceive the emptiness of the 300 m² room in a half-empty building.

This research is based on a plurality of sources and the application of different investigation techniques, including documentary study, participant observation and semi-structured interviews with participants, and institutional, religious, and private representatives. The planned Casa delle religioni represents a multi-level project in which bottom-up, meso-level, and top-down dynamics coexist: we decided to focus on the meso and macro levels, including internal relations (i.e., among different public/political institutions or among different religious/secular organizations) and external relations (i.e., between meso and macro levels).

Touristification as a Strategy for Peaceful Coexistence: The Case Study of the Sveti Naum Monastery (Macedonia)

Evelyn Reuter

Friedrich-Schiller-University, Jena, Germany
Abstract

The Sveti Naum monastery is one of the most famous touristic destinations in North Macedonia which has been visited by Christians and Muslims in the Ottoman time. In socialist Yugoslavia, the monastery was expropriated, and converted into a museum and thus into a touristic site. With Macedonia’s independence, at the beginning of the 1990s, the expropriated monastery was returned to the Orthodox Church which re-established it as a religious place. Due to the previous non-religious use, the ambiguity of the monastery increased. The chapter shows how various actors currently deal with the historical heritage of the monastery and how the relationships between the actors are formed. The perception of the monastery as a shared sacred or multi-religious place will be questioned in terms of sharing common (religious) practices and perspectives. Drawing on empirical, qualitative research data, the merging of religious and secular dimensions of the monastery becomes obvious.

814 Multi-Religious Places by Design: Space, Materiality, and Media in Berlin’s House of One
Marian Burchardt
Leipzig University, Leipzig, Germany

Abstract

Drawing on an analysis of the multi-religious architectural project called “House of One” in Berlin, this paper explores the spatial dynamics surrounding multi-religious places by design. My central questions are: How are liberal notions of tolerance, religious sharing, and diversity addressed and translated in the medium of architecture? And what are the spatial dynamics that facilitate the formation of urban, national, and transnational publics in which understandings of shared sacred space are negotiated? I suggest that emblematic architectural projects such as the House of One acquire their material shape and political meanings not only through design practices but also through media-driven processes of communicative construction and the ways in which affect dispersed audiences by animating their fantasies of peaceful coexistence. Inspired by theories of iconicity, research on urban religion and studies of interreligious dialogue, I explore the narratives and material practices that turn the House of One into a new urban emblem. I argue that as a socio-material energy that is fundamentally relational, iconic force emerges from the ways people attach their vision of interreligious peace to buildings such as the House of One, begin to see them actualized through the building itself, and develop affective ties to it.

424 Jerusalem Sacred Landscape: Between Coexistence, Contestation, and Mutual Disregard
Nimrod Luz
Kinneret College on the Sea of Galilee, Zemach, Israel

Abstract
This paper explores the development of religious materiality in Jerusalem as both a crucial factor of urban development and as an explanatory mechanism for its highly contested geography. I theorize the city’s particularity and yet promote the notion that its uniqueness notwithstanding the city and its religious landscapes may well serve us towards a much sought after global urban theory. Against legions of scholarly works that delineate the city’s history and present religious conflicts as its main problem I adopt a longue durée approach to suggest that these unique circumstances and urban history as well as the spatializations of encounters that ensued, are the generators of the city’s uniqueness and the fundamental reason why it has become not only a case of exceptionalism but rather a paradigmatic example for comparative urbanism and urban theories.

354 Religion Entangled: Theoretical and Methodological Reflections

09:00 - 10:40 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

Simon Michel, Christina Wytttenbach

This panel challenges the idea of an autonomous religious domain and calls instead attention to the entanglements between religion and other societal spheres such as science, politics, economy, media, medicine or art. In this perspective, the persistence and change of religious institutions, discourses and practices depends on their relations to a broader social environment. Accordingly, the resilience of religious actors confronted with social changes builds considerably on their connection to institutions and discourses in other spheres. Taking this proposition as a starting point, the panel seeks to elaborate on the following questions: How can the entanglement of religion with other social realms be conceptualized theoretically? Which approaches in the study of religion or neighboring disciplines address religion as related and interwoven with other fields? In which way does an approach in terms of entanglements contribute to the analysis of changing or enduring elements of religion? Finally, how can we make such a perspective fruitful within specific case studies? Examples of theoretical and methodological approaches dealing with the question of entanglement include, for instance, socio-anthropological perspectives on “boundary-work”, “field theory”, “interpenetration”, and the “Histoire croisée” approach in the historical science. Most of these conceptions rely on a relational mode of thinking, where religion presents itself not as an essence but rather as reality in the making. The panel welcomes theoretical and methodological reflections as well as empirical applications based on case studies from the 19th to 21st century.

361 Beyond “Entangled” and “Connected”? A Relational Perspective and a Praxeological Approach

Eva Spies

University of Bayreuth, Bayreuth, Germany

Abstract
Inspired by such diverse sources such as relational sociology, hermeneutics and new materialism, the paper proposes a relational perspective which focuses less on the connections “between” religion and other societal spheres, but more on the continuous processes of relating in and through which religion and its others emerge. This attempt to look at processes of becoming rather than at the connections between given "relata" implies a study of relational practices and the work of relating. Taking the example of activities of contemporary Pentecostal churches in West Africa, the contribution deals with the relational constitution of religion, development and an ethics of societal transformation. The paper presents work in progress; it introduces the research project “Religious engineering. The making of moralities, development and religion in Niger”, showing that Pentecostal ways of doing development go hand in hand with doing ethics and creating lifeworlds.

393 The Entanglement of Religion and Science: A Theoretical Framework

Simon Michel
University of Bern, Bern, Switzerland

Abstract

The relation between religion and science was mainly examined in terms of religious belief versus scientific knowledge (e.g. Habermas, Küng) or in the encounter of a system of religion with a system of science (e.g. Parsons, Luhmann). In both cases, in the end the decisive question revolved around the difference between religion and science. This paper wants to turn around this question and look, on a theoretical level, for mutual entanglements between religion and science. It will be argued that the main factor for the resilience of religious institutions and discourses lies in their entanglement with other social spheres rather than in a process of differentiation from them. This proposition is rooted in the socio-historical observation of the international emergence of disciplines like church sociology or pastoral sociology after the Second World War. Within these new disciplines, social research took place in a conflicting field between the methodological standards of the researchers and practical interests of the churches. The main question of the paper is how to conceptualize on a theoretical level the empirical fact that sociologists and clergymen could cooperate in spite of their various backgrounds and different perceptions of the modern world. Accordingly, the paper provides a theoretical framework to connect the social structures of ecclesiastical institutions, on the one hand, and the cognitive structure of social research, on the other hand. In doing so the paper argues, in analytical perspective, that both the social structure of ecclesiastical organizations as well as the cognitive structure of social research share a common element in the form of so-called guiding ideas (in German “Leitideen”). This term refers to a set of general concepts that, because of their abstract nature, are open to different interpretations and can transcend the limits of certain social spheres. Thus, guiding ideas can provide a bridge between religious institutions and social sciences and allow for their entanglement. Due to the entanglement through guiding ideas, ecclesiastical organizations will turn out to be more resilient in a “secular” social environment.

413 Dissolution and Entanglement: The Field of ‘Cult Watching’ in Switzerland since the 1960s
Christina Wyttenbach

University of Bern, Bern, Switzerland

Abstract

In 1987 Pierre Bourdieu published an article titled «La dissolution du religieux». Therein he described the dissolution of the religious field within a broader field of health and healing providers. In this new context, religious actors and concepts become entangled with therapeutic and scientific ones. This paper demonstrates how the emergence of ‘cult watching’ groups from the 1960s onwards constitutes a telling example of this process of dissolution and/or entanglement. When church experts on cults started to react to the religious change of the Long Sixties, they quickly began to relate to different experts in the fields of psychology, sociology and the study of religion. Conversely, psychologists dealing with new religious movements in the 1990s drew on the early works on alternative religiosity by theologians. Drawing on Bourdieu’s field theory, this paper discusses how the proliferation of ‘cult watching’ exemplifies the emergence of a new microcosm at the crossroads of various fields. It will be argued that the cooperation between church experts on cults and scientists contributed to the resilience of the mainstream churches view to the effects of the religious change since the 1960s. Finally, the paper will reflect the heuristic value of a field theory approach to analyse entanglements between religion and other social realms. On a theoretical level, the paper discusses how Bourdieu’s concept of ‘relationality’ can be applied not only on the microlevel by looking at cooperating and competing actors but also on the macrolevel of social fields.

635 Conceptualizing “Hybridity” and “Hybridization” as both Premises and Fundamental Features of Transformation Processes in “Religions”: Presenting an Analytical Tool for Identifying such Processes of Resilience

Yves Mühlematter

University of Freiburg, Freiburg, Switzerland

Abstract

“Hybridity” and “hybridization” are terms which lack the ability to differentiate, because the concept of hybridity does not provide a language that describes division and distinction. As such, the multifaceted modalities of “hybridities” cannot be grasped using the conceptual vocabulary associated with the term itself. As I will argue in this paper, the notions of “hybridity” and “hybridization” are rather figures of thought, non-concepts which aim at triggering a thinking that goes “beyond.” Accordingly, they are not conceptualized as analytical tools. In the article, I will propose a systematization of “hybridization” and will develop an analytical tool which allows for the identification of “hybridization” on the textual level. Drawing from the global history approach I will propose to conceptualize entanglement and encounters as preconditions for “hybridization.” Discussing appropriations and alterations of elements and structures in the emergence of “new religions” especially in relation to European “esoteric” traditions such as “Spiritism” and “modern Theosophy” in the context of “new religious movements” will demonstrate the usefulness of that tool in terms of describing transformation and resilience.
Religion Entangled: Theoretical and Methodological Reflections

Simon Michel¹, Yves Muehlematter², Eva Spies³, Christina Wyttenbach¹

¹University of Bern, Bern, Switzerland. ²University of Fribourg, Fribourg, Switzerland. ³University of Bayreuth, Bayreuth, Germany

Abstract

Religion Entangled: Theoretical and Methodological Reflections

This panel challenges the idea of an autonomous religious domain and calls instead attention to the entanglements between religion and other societal spheres such as science, politics, economy, media, medicine or art. In this perspective, the persistence and change of religious institutions, discourses and practices depends on their relations to a broader social environment. Accordingly, the resilience of religious actors confronted with social changes builds considerably on their connection to institutions and discourses in other spheres. Taking this proposition as a starting point, the panel seeks to elaborate on the following questions: How can the entanglement of religion with other social realms be conceptualized theoretically? Which approaches in the study of religion or neighboring disciplines address religion as related and interwoven with other fields? In which way does an approach in terms of entanglements contribute to the analysis of changing or enduring elements of religion? Finally, how can we make such a perspective fruitful within specific case studies? Examples of theoretical and methodological approaches dealing with the question of entanglement include, for instance, socio-anthropological perspectives on “boundary-work”, “field theory”, “interpenetration”, and the “Histoire croisée” approach in the historical science. Most of these conceptions rely on a relational mode of thinking, where religion presents itself not as an essence but rather as reality in the making. The panel welcomes theoretical and methodological reflections as well as empirical applications based on case studies from the 19th to 21st century.

Closed Session

Organisers: Simon Michel (University of Bern), Christina Wyttenbach (University of Bern)

Authors: Simon Michel (University of Bern), Yves Muehlematter (University of Fribourg), Eva Spies (University of Bayreuth), Christina Wyttenbach (University of Bern)

The Resilience of the Science of Religion(s) between Hermeneutics and History

09:00 - 10:40 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

Giuseppe Maiello
It is a common attitude to consider the Science of religion(s) as having a theory and a method different from that of other humanities disciplines. The research method of the historian of religions, on the other hand, can be considered as that of any other historian, an empirical-philological method that pays due attention to the perspectives of the so-called social sciences.

The Science of religion(s) is more distinctly specific in its approach than other disciplines that may deal with religious facts or phenomena. Its specificity lies in the questions it poses, different from those posed by psychology, anthropology, sociology, the geography of religion, or even the history of individual cultures or individual areas that pay attention to the religious aspects of human creations.

That being said, we are interested in recalling how various scholars have developed and interpreted the methodological legacy of Raffaele Pettazzoni conceived phenomenology and history as two complementary and essential aspects of a single religious science. The influence of Pettazzoni’s approach (and Ugo Bianchi’s on his wake) can be contrasted with that of Mircea Eliade, who instead privileged the perspective of hermeneutics without excluding history. However, Science of Religion(s), at the moment of its greatest academic fortune did not refrain from adopting, besides the traditional comparative-historical method functional, social scientific, and, of course, hermeneutical approaches. Like other humanities branches, the science of religion(s), however, entered into a crisis at the academic level at the turn of the century. Over time, the interest of students waned, even if the quality of some studies was not apparently inferior to that of the past. In fact, preserving a universal and cross-cultural perspective and tension towards a clearly stated interpretive objective, it is still possible to envisage a future for the science of religion thus proving the resilience of this science. Scholars of religion can therefore be still interested today in the individuation of cultural traits identifiable as religious through the instrument of analogy. An interpretation of these traits should take into account the emic perspective, without allowing to be overwhelmed by it.

Therefore, papers are invited to address any of the following items:

methodological issues concerning the relationship between history and hermeneutics as explanatory strategies;

case studies stressing the vitality and the resilience of the science of religion;

case studies dealing with specific situations of crisis or attempts to overcome the crisis within the context of individual academic institutions;

case studies concerning the risks for the science of religion(s) deriving from confessionalism or assimilation to global irenic visions;

the resilience of the religious scholar with respect to the restrictions posed by the mercification of academic disciplines through the presentation of scholarly achievements freed from the surrounding contingencies imposed by mainstream tendencies and academic restraints.

337 The Resilience of the History of Religions in the “Reconstruction” and Interpretation of the Religions that Arose in Ancient Mesopotamia between Philology, History and Hermeneutics
Abstract

The presentation will focus on the challenges that current knowledge of so-called Mesopotamian religions and cultures poses to scholars - issues that challenge the historical-comparative method, the universal views and intercultural and intercultural perspectives advanced in the last century, as well as the relationship with the anthropological and ethnological sciences.

This, however, does not mean an irreversible crisis for the field but rather an opportunity to revisit theories that have often been built “a priori” for example on “a philosophy of history” and that new knowledge and the progress of studies have questioned.

351 Political Apocalipticism or speculative Eschatology: Recent Trends in the Study of Zoroastrian Eschatological Literature

Carlo G. Cereti

Sapienza - University of Rome, Rome, Italy

Abstract

The author intends to present and critically discuss recent trends in the study of Zoroastrian eschatological texts with a focus on collective eschatology and apocalyptics. A brief survey of relevant texts in Avestan, Middle Persian and New Persian will be presented and compared with other religious traditions. The main positions in today’s academic debate will be outlined and critically discussed in the framework of recent interpretative trends. The narration of the events that will take place at the end of each of the last three millennia of the Mazdean 12000 years time span are part of Zoroaster’s legend and play an important role in cosmological speculation. The identification of the events which, according to Zoroastrian speculation, introduce the events leading to Ushesdar’s millenium is an important key to the historical interpretation and understanding of Mazdean apocalyptics and will also be discussed in the paper.

900 La Resilienza e Altro: Oltre l’Etimologia

Maria Lucia Sancassano

Europaeische Schule, Frankfurt am Main, Germany

Abstract

Muovendo da un’analisi etimologica del termine, anche in prospettiva storica, nel mio breve intervento verrà gradualmente circoscritto il campo concettuale di indagine, nelle cui coordinate va a collocarsi la portata semantico-simbolica del sostantivo che significativamente condensa l’obiettivo implicito al convegno stesso: “Resilience/resilienza”.
Reagire con duttile elasticità alla “Crisis” pluriramificata in cui si oggettiva il nostro presente più quotidiano è - ovviamente - la vera sfida del nostro tempo, metodo e insieme fine di ogni attività di *otium* o di *negotium*. L’origine latina della parola visualizza, in quest’ottica, un’attività fisica che attraversa il corpo e diventa rito, atto religioso codificato. I “salti” dei *Sălii sodales* - come ha recentemente mostrato Giorgio Ferri sulla scia del Latte - evidenziano una modalità rituale focalizzata sul movimento di danza, a sua volta denso di ancestrali valori religiosi.


Una possibile risposta, naturalmente aperta, anche cercando tra le pagine di Goethe e Peter Handke, può forse muovere di qui, da quel *Carmen saliare* tanto arcaico quanto misterioso che accompagna l’intera storia della romanità.

**Selezione bibliografica**

*Dictionnaire etymologique de la langue latine. Histoire des mots*, par A. Ernout et A. Meillet, Paris, 19523, s.v. salio

K. Latte, *De saltationibus Graecorum*, Gießen 1913


A.Brelich, *Paides e parthenoi*, Roma 1969


893 Se Esista Resilienza negli Scritti Attribuiti a Donne Legate alla Scuola Pitagorica

*Noemi Lambardi*
Docente in quiescenza, Firenze, Italy

Abstract

Tra gli scritti attribuiti a Pitagora o a membri della famiglia o alla cerchia dei discepoli (pseudepigrapha o pseudopythagorica), probabilmente composti per la maggior parte in Magna Grecia tra l’età ellenistica e l’età imperiale da autori anonimi, per i quali G. Reale propose la denominazione di “Mediopitagorici”, volendo distinguerli dagli antichi Pitagorici e dai Neopitagorici di età imperiale, si può notare un piccolo numero di testi attribuiti a sei, forse sette donne, i nomi di quattro delle quali si ritrovano tra le donne dell’elenco di diciassette fornito da Giamblico a conclusione del catalogo di Pitagorici noti (Vita Pythagorae 267).

Nell’unica raccolta ed edizione complessiva novecentesca di questi scritti approntata da H. Thesleff, è agevole osservare:

1) le autrici sono presentate attraverso la relazione di parentela con uno o più Pitagorici o, in un caso (Perittione), attraverso l’omonimia con la madre di Platone (e Reale, ma non Thesleff, avvalora l’origine ateniese);

2) se i titoli di alcuni scritti alludono a tematiche religiose (per esempio, le Cerimonie iniziatiche di Dioniso di Arignota, peraltro non conservato) o se qualche estratto dimostra di appartenere a un orizzonte speculativo di polemica filosofica (così le cinque righe provenienti dal De pietate di Teano il cui tema, in singolare contrasto col titolo, riguarda una errata interpretazione corrente della filosofia di Pitagora), tuttavia non c’è dubbio che l’interesse largamente predominante si appunti sulle virtù femminili;

3) “Alcuni testi neo[=medio]pitagorici che discutono appunto il corretto comportamento delle donne sono giunti fino a noi e alcuni sono attribuiti a scrittrici. È almeno altrettanto probabile che gli autori fossero in realtà uomini, ma ciò non può essere provato in modo conclusivo”. Così Sarah B. Pomeroy, in un classico tra i Women Studies degli anni 70 del Novecento, prima di riportare l’intero testo del De mulieris harmonia attribuito a Perittione.

L’osservazione della studiosa, anche se sembra evidente, merita di essere esplicitata.

Una breve ricognizione all’interno dei testi così individuati potrà dare qualche risultato interessante attraverso la comparazione con altri testi adeguati.

Mario Meunier, Femmes pythagoriciennes. Fragments et lettres de Theano, Perictioné, Phintys, Melissa et Myia, Paris 1932

Claudia Montepaone (a cura di), Pitagoriche. Scritti femminili di età ellenistica, traduzione e note di Ida Brancaccio, Bari 2011
917 Rituality and the Origins of the Phenomenon of Drama in the Aegean Bronze Age

Marcello Tozza

Universidad de Málaga, Malaga, Spain

Abstract

Archaeological data coming from the Aegean Bronze Age sheds new light on the relation between ritual dimension and dramatic representation. During the last twenty years, the discovery and publication of the new Linear B tablets from Thebes imposed a different interpretation of several iconographic data, recognizing a significant continuity between Mycenaean religion and ritual representation in Greek culture: Demetriaic and Dionysian cults generated a dramatic art in the second millennium BC.

Coffee Break

10:40 - 11:00 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

Keynote Lectures (Goossaert)

11:00 - 11:50 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

Chiara Ombretta Tommasi

932 Modern Chinese Elite Religiosity as a Toolkit for Withstanding Disasters

Vincent Goossaert

EPHE, Paris, France
Abstract

A large number of religious handbooks circulated in late imperial and modern China (1600-1950), providing educated readers with a variegated toolkit of ritual and spiritual techniques aimed at dealing with both immediate and salvational concerns. A good part of these texts were instructions from the gods, revealed through spirit-writing. Much of this literature tells about withstanding disasters, at various levels, from individual illness and physical danger, to social breakdown and imminent apocalypse. It offers ways to ensure one’s survival: maintaining mental and physical health, guarding against vengeful ghosts and demons, begetting healthy sons, performing a good death, and securing one’s apotheosis among the gods. The lecture will explore this ritual toolkit and use narratives to show how educated Chinese used it to withstand small- and large-scale disasters.

Keynote Lectures (Klostergaard Petersen)

11:00 - 11:50 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

Stefano Perfetti

Abstract

Hardly any scholars, I surmise, would think of early Christ-religion in terms of resilience. Although few people today consider it a new religion as regards its emergence, it is nevertheless understood by most scholars as a novelty within Israel religion. In this lecture, I turn tables 180 degrees around in order to tease out the analytical advantage of scrutinising formative Christ religion from the perspective of resilience, i.e. in bio-cultural evolutionary terms. Do we gain anything theoretically, in terms of modelling, and with respect to understanding of the phenomenon under examination, by studying it as a token of religious resilience? It may well be that it is a fixed idea only, but I want to risk my neck by pursuing the question in applying a resilience view on a form of religion, which as a default assumption is faintly understood in such terms.

Keynote Lectures (Wiegers)

11:00 - 11:50 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021
Renata Pepicelli

927 The Long Life of Mediterranean Prophecies of Empire: A Case Study in Relational Religion
Gerard Wiegers
University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Netherlands

Abstract

In the Medieval and Early Modern Islamicate and European worlds prophecies of empire played an important role. These prophecies were embedded in dynamics of religion, politics, science and the esoteric readings of nature and history. At times apocalyptic in nature, they were used discursively across the existent religious divides, and other times interpreted polemically. The influence of some of these prophecies extends even into the modern and present-day world, e.g. in visions about the return of a messianic king in Portugal (Sebastianism), the conquest of Rome and the reconquest of Al-Andalus at the end of time in Islamic groups, or the eschatological establishment of Christian rule in Jerusalem among Christian groups.

My contribution will discuss the long life of these prophecies, focusing on the lives Christians, Jews and Muslims in the Early Modern Mediterranean world in the perspective of research on relationality in the study of religion by, for example, Volkhard Krech and Niels Reeh. Building on historical studies by e.g. Cornell Fleischer, Mercedes García-Arenal, Stefania Pastore and Maite Green-Mercado and continuing my own researches on the dynamics of religion in the early Modern Mediterranean, I will focus on a number of cases of eschatological imperial prophecies about the establishment of one sole (universal) religion as a solution for the great religious, social and political divides of the world.

32-II War, Peace and Resilience in the Ancient World Narratives

11:50 - 13:20 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

Marinella Ceravolo
"Reconcile the Gods of Babylonia with Your Gods!": Rewriting of the Past and Storytelling of the Present at the Time of Esarhaddon (681-669 BC)

Marinella Ceravolo

University of Rome "La Sapienza", Rome, Italy

Abstract

The Assyrian Empire is often perceived exclusively as a cruel and bloodthirsty war machine. Although administrative sources belie this conception, the idea of Assyria as a violent land has been largely conveyed by the sources of royal propaganda, especially by royal inscriptions. In these types of narratives, emperors are portrayed as unstoppable conquerors who, thanks to the benevolence of the god Aššur, manage to subdue and overwhelm a multitude of territories. It is therefore not surprising if within these inscriptions particular emphasis is given to the descriptions of the struggles against Babylon, the eternal Assyrians’ antagonist. A decisive change in the Assyrian narratives takes place from 681 BC with the ascent to the throne of Esarhaddon who, unlike his predecessors, establishes with Babylon a policy aimed at inclusion and not at violent submission. To achieve his goal, the king enacted a reformulation of the old Assyrian narrative, rewriting and representing in a different light the violent acts committed against Babylon by Sargon II, his grandfather, and Sennacherib, his father. Alongside this new storytelling of the past, King Esarhaddon constructs a new narrative of the present, making Marduk, the patron god of Babylon, one of the main protagonists of his royal inscriptions. Therefore, this paper will reflect on the changes in the narration of the past and the present within the Neo-Assyrian sources, putting a particular emphasis on the role attributed to the deities within the imperial policies. In order to do so, it will be necessary not only to compare the royal inscriptions of Sennacherib and his son, Esarhaddon, but also to analyze literary texts such as “The Sin of Sargon”. Subsequently, it will be possible to reflect on the role played by the gods Aššur and Marduk in representing the belligerent or peaceful relations between Assyria and Babylonia. Lastly, in the light of Esarhaddon’s actions and his new narrative strategies, the question will be posed: how much can the official sources of the Assyrian emperors give us a faithful picture of their empire and, consequently, how much truth is hidden in the stereotypical representation of Assyria as an exclusively violent and belligerent land?

The Phoenicians’ Impiety in the Narrative Process of Herodotus’ Work: The Theft of the Apollo’s Statue as an Omen of the Barbarian Defeat

Jérémy Bonner

Université Toulouse II Jean Jaurès, Toulouse, France

Abstract

Herodotus regularly uses narrative processes in order to explain peace and war. In this framework, religious elements play an important role, especially in the course of the Persian Wars, when facts cannot be explained. In the stories Herodotus wrote or transcribed, extra-human agents are often the main characters...
of defeat or victory in battles. Sometimes, they even take part in the course of these battles from their beginning to their outcome.

Why do gods take part in battles? As regards the structural analysis of Jean-Pierre Vernant and Pierre Vidal-Naquet, balance is of prior importance: when men lack piety or in the case of pride (\textit{hybris}) their relationship with divinities is disturbed; therefore extra-human agents have to modify the course of events to get back into balance, through several means, all linked to different kind of narrative processes. They rarely intervene through natural events, but more often thanks to other characters. For instance, the Pythia at Delphi announced either the death of Leonidas or the victory of Lacedemonian against the Barbarians before the battle of Thermopylae; the latter turned into a victory for the Spartan city when the Spartan king died. Another example of the will of deities may be visible through fighters’ visions, dreams or particular rites but also by the victims of sacrifices that announce victory or defeat.

The Marathon plain in 490 BCE is another example of the use of narrative techniques in Herodotus’ work in order to explain the Persian defeat at the hands of the Athenians and the Plateans. At first, the divine intervention is described by the means of different characters: the sacrifice of victims as an omen of victory before the battle of Marathon (6.112), the vision of the Athenian Epizelos during the fight that describes a divine fighter (6.117), the dream of Datis, the leader of the Persian fleet (6.118). Secondly, the outcome of the divine intervention is obvious: the barbarians are defeated by the Greeks (6.116). Thirdly, thanks to Datis’ dream, the origin of the disturbance in the relationship between men and gods is eventually identified: it is due to the Phoenicians from the Persian fleet who in fact stole a statue of Apollo on the island of Delos (6.118); the agent is thus also revealed: the god Apollo.

The Phoenicians’ impiety in Herodotus’ work is a typical example of narrative techniques because the defeat of the Persians is explained in the storytelling process by the intervention of an extra-human agent through different means and characters. From the Greek’s point of view, the theft of Apollo’s statue by the Phoenicians is an omen of the barbarian defeat in the course of the First Persian War.

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377 “Heaven, however, Resented This Haughty Spirit”: Religion in the Caudine Forks Narration and Historiographical Interventions

Davide Morelli

Sapienza - Università di Roma, Rome, Italy

Abstract

In 321 BC, the Romans suffered a severe defeat at the Caudine Forks against the Samnites led by C. Pontius. This place, henceforth, became a synonym for military catastrophe, whereas in the traditional narration no Roman soldier died on that day. What is most interesting is the ethical and religious characterisation that some ancient authors gave to this story.

Among the clues that ‘foretell’ this outcome, the Roman \textit{hybris} in dealing with the Samnites in the years before 321 is the most important one. The Romans commanded the Samnites to subdue to Roman supremacy, and Appian clearly points out that the Gods decided to punish their arrogance. Parallel narratives can be found in Livy and other authors: all of them highlight the Roman requests and their lack of respect for the Samnites. Since the main surviving narratives were written in Roman times (even by Roman
authors, like Livy), this element is interesting *per se*, and could witness either the survival of ancient non-Roman traditions, or ethical characterization used by Roman annalists to explain the defeat.

The aftermath of the battle is also presented with a shadow of religious significance: the sight of the defeated Roman army would have been, at Capua, an *omen* of future victory. In the diplomatic exchanges following the defeat, the Roman consuls heroically handed themselves to the Samnites, but they tried to reverse the Roman situation by committing a blasphemy (hitting, as Samnite captives, the Roman *fētiales*, therefore violating the common “law of nations”). The swift Roman response in the year 320, a well-known annalistic invention, closes the narrative: the Romans vanquished all Samnite armies.

This paper aims to present the religious characterisation of the Caudine Forks, before, during, and after the Roman defeat, in order to identify the religious elements behind the many narrations of the event at all levels: historical, historiographical, and rhetorical. At the same time, it is necessary to define how these characterisations influenced the story itself and whether these characterisations can be interpreted as forgeries. Eventually, as the extent of the historiographical characterization emerges, all these clues point towards the direction of reconsidering the narration(s) of the story of the Caudine Forks.

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**612 Anchored in Resilience during Wars: The Eleusinian Mysteries**

Aikaterini-Iliana Rassia

King’s College London, London, United Kingdom

**Abstract**

This study proposes an alternative way to reconstruct worshippers’ participation in the Eleusinian Mysteries by exploring their resilience in the observance of the mysteries during a series of military events. In this paper, I would like to reconstruct the history of some of these aspects by looking at the concrete details of ancient stories of divine signs and support, as well as on how certain military and political actors may have influenced, facilitated or hindered the celebration of the Mysteries during the Classical period. The first part of this study will focus on the myths of divine support that shaped the historic realities and personal as well as collective resilience of the military participants just before the battle of Salamis (Herodotus 8.65). Whereas, the second part of this investigation will attempt to reconstruct worshippers’ resilience by discussing the cognitive implications of Alcibiades’ strategy to provide a military escort for the ritual procession to Eleusis during the Peloponnesian War.

Study after study has shown the incredible capacity of human resilience and the agility to overcome any adversity when hardship strikes. By drawing on recent neurological theories about the development of psychological resilience in uncertain times through cognitive flexible strategies, the main research questions that will structure my discussion are the following:

1. How certain myths of divine support might help us to reconstruct the different nuanced complexities of worshippers’ judgment and respective collective resilience during challenging military realities (e.g. the battle of Salamis)?

2. What were the cognitive implications of the decision of the execution of the ritual procession not by land but by sea during the Peloponnesian War? What are the concrete details in the ancient
storytelling as well as epigraphic record of worshippers’ resilience in the observance of the Eleusinian Mysteries?

26-II Gods Don't Die

11:50 - 13:20 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

Fabio Guidetti, Beatrice Lietz, Nicola Barbagli

295 We Were Sisters: The Development of Moirae, Erinyes and Tyche in Greek Literature and Cult

Leyla Ozbek

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Abstract

This paper aims to shed light on the development of the divinities of fate in Greek literature and cult. From the archaic period onwards, the deities of fate played an essential role in Greek religion, popular imagination, literature, and iconography: a role which has undergone fundamental modifications through time and through different media.

This study will examine the concept and figure of moira/Moira and of the cognate – at least at the beginning - figure of Erinys, highlighting the gradual process of their personification and, at the same time, the differentiation of their spheres of influence. While Moirae and Erinyes were originally related, often sharing their genealogy, places of worship and spheres of influence, they later underwent a process of specialisation, modifying - sometimes dramatically - their aspects, connections, powers and tasks. They are submitted to a continuous process of transformation through different chronological and geographical contexts, against the background of different cultural and religious traditions.

This paper will examine firstly the archaic literary sources which depict these divinities as connected: especially epic and lyric poems and fragments, in which we find their first representation as personified deities. It will then take into account later epic literature, tragic plays, funerary inscriptions and artistic representations. Finally, it will examine instances of these deities in Greek literary works of the imperial and late antique period, in order to shed light on their modifications against the philosophical, cultural, and literary background of these centuries.

Moirae and Erinyes will be also compared to other deities that are associated to them in varying degrees, focusing especially on Tyche: a “fellow sister” of the Moirae who gradually takes on a completely new role in later literature and popular imagination, especially in the post-classical period.
274 Living after the catastrophe. The worship of the goddess Spes in the history of ancient Rome

Melina Iliopoulou
Université Paul-Valéry, Montpellier, France

Abstract

Religion is a tool that helps individuals to adjust to critical situations. Although most of the studies on the connection between religion and resilience are related to the modern psychological and social framework [Drescher & Watson (2011), Pargament & Cummings (2010), Carp (2009)], this mechanism is also present in ancient Rome because of the dominant role of religion. Spes was, indeed, an abstraction personified and divinized, whose cult originated in Greece. According to Pliny the Elder, the introduction of these deities into the Roman religious system was an effort by human beings to resist the weakness of their nature (Nat. 2. 14-16), which is confirmed by the cult of Spes, whose appearance dates back to the First Punic War. In fact, historically, both literary and numismatic sources tend to show that the cult of Spes developed particularly after troubled periods of Roman history, like the Civil Wars of the late Republic and the birth of the Principate or the reign of Nero and the Civil War of 69 AD. The present paper, therefore, intends to study, on the basis of this dual source, literary and numismatic, the political and psychological function of the cult of Spes in ancient Rome.

526 Gods Rising and Falling: The Impact of Rome on Sicilian Religion

Beatrice Lietz
EPHE, Paris, France. SNS, Pisa, Italy

Abstract

The impact of Rome on the religion of its newly-founded provinces has been extensively studied for many different areas and chronological periods. Very little attention, however, has been paid to Roman Sicily during the Republic. This period has often been described as one of stagnation and decline for the island’s Greek culture: a widespread misconception only recently called into question by historians. New research has shown that Sicily continued to thrive and prosper under Roman rule, as various cultural influences came together within the larger framework of Hellenistic “koine”. Within this frame of wider cultural transformations, sanctuaries and cults underwent alterations allowing them to adapt to the new situation in different ways. In this paper, I will show how the Romans played an important part in this process, through their presence in the region and through the intervention of their provincial and central authorities. Roman attention, or lack thereof, often determined the rise or fall of cult places and their gods, both locally and on
the international scene. Local authorities fought to obtain recognition for their sanctuaries, competing to establish connections with the Roman power. The most successful gods earned a place in the greatest masterpieces of Latin literature, which definitely consecrated their fame for eternity. Hence, the Roman conquest of Sicily did not cause the decline of local and Greek cults, but provided a very effective stepping stone for the most resilient of them.

332 “The Prophetic Spirit has Been Quenched”: The Priest Plutarch and the Delphic Mantic in the Imperial Age

Carmine Pisano

Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II, Napoli, Italy

Abstract

In De Pythiae oraculis Plutarch, priest at Delphi for about twenty years, addresses the issue of the decline of the Pythian mantic between the 1st and 2nd centuries AD focusing on a specific problem: “why the Pythia ceased to give prophecies in hexameters and other meters” (402B). The question is of great importance from a religious point of view. Since Apollo presides over poetry and music, how can one believe that the incorrect and prosaic oracles of the Pythia of the time are inspired by the god? Because of these responses there are those who even go so far as to claim that “the prophetic spirit has been quenched” (402B) and that Apollo has left Delphi. Faced with such insinuations, which risk shaking faith in oracles from the depths, Plutarch endeavours to define in theological terms the relationship between Apollo and the Pythia in the enunciation of the responses, formulating an articulated theory of prophetic inspiration. The purpose of this contribution is to show how this theory, produced by the most eminent of Delphic priests, turns out to be a powerful tool of resilience destined to revitalize the oracular practice and to normalize the historical processes of transformation that had invested Greek divination in the Imperial Age.

311 Reexamination of the Enigmatic Cascelia Elegans’ Prayer: Syncretistic Gods Worshipped by Poor People at Rome in the Late Empire

Giovanni Naccarato

Sapienza, Rome, Italy

Abstract

My aim is to reflect on an epigraphic prayer from Rome offered by a servant woman to an unspecified “Eternal Lord” (Dominus Aeternus). In 1973-74 Lissi Caronna successfully excavated a Mithraeum below the church of S. Stefano Rotondo, where once Castra Peregrina stood. The congeries of materials returned a small, marble altar, roughly inscribed all over the four sides. Panciera (1979) made the first publication of the epigraphic material; he was really struck by this text and set his mind to return to it in the future. Consulting his notes, I can confirm that he was attempting to do it, but unfortunately could not. Despite the enigmatic and fascinating character of the text, very few articles were written on it. There is only one other analysis carried out by G. Mussies in 1982.
The main issues I would like to deal with, arise from the text. Cascelia, maybe a soldier’s freedwoman, addresses her merciful and pitiful Eternal Lord, creator of all things with a heartfelt request for protection and help for herself and her loved ones.

The prayer splits into two parts: the classical epiclesis, with the lists of the god’s main attributes, and the effective request, whose satisfaction will be proof of his virtues.

The most fascinating elements are the very attributes addressed to this god. He’s endowed with mercy, piety (per tuam misericordiam…per tuam pietatem), he created all the good things (quidquid boni creasti) and his creation is holy (sal et seminata sacra), if not divine (per terram et marem divinum), he gave to mankind a law Who He himself embodied (per tuam legem vivam). Last (but surely not least), this god is aeternus. He’s not like other gods, he created everything, so he could not have had a birth.

Why should this text raise doubts, if it seems so unequivocally Christian? First, because it was found in a Mithraeum. The Mithraea became, at the end of the IV century, the receptacles for all the pagan material discarded after the triumph of Christianity. For example, two dedications to the Genius Castrorum Peregrinorum were found in the same place. Why was an altar inscribed with a Christian prayer thrown into a Mithraeum? Is it believable that this happened accidentally? Moreover, some linguistic elements also cast some doubt on the certainty that we are dealing with an assuredly Christian prayer. In Christian doctrine it’s not allowed to consider the creation (mare divinum) divine and there’s something like a dualistic (i.e. platonic or Manichean) hue in the expression quidquid boni creasti.

Professor Panciera had his good reasons to reject the Christian interpretation, in favour of the Mithraic one. Mussies followed this road. Nevertheless, the Mithraic reading lecture is as difficult as the Christian. In my paperwork, I will discuss these aspects in detail, preferring the Christian hypothesis and trying to explain the “mithraic” discovery with syncretistic reasons. In such a fluid context, it could happen with a good chance that a deity was charged with epithets of other gods.

375 Pagan Religious Resilience: Reinventing Zeus in Athenian Neoplatonism ONLINE

11:50 - 13:20 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

Ilinca Tanaseanu Doebler

The workshop addresses religious resilience by focusing on the transformations of Late Antiquity. Faced with the increasing dominance of Christianity in the Roman Empire and the corresponding status loss and, eventually, repression of pagan cults, adherents of traditional Greek and Roman religion develop a variety of strategies to cope with the changes and to adapt their understanding of religion and their religious practices to the new parameters. For pagan intellectuals, Neoplatonism provides an institutional as well as theological crystallisation nucleus. Neoplatonism offers a more or less unitary metaphysical frame for reinterpretations of traditional texts, deities, and practices. Its schools provide institutional anchors for...
developing and stabilising a novel pagan identity, marked by a habitus of intellectual superiority vis-à-vis the Christians as well as by a strong sense of being the guardians of an age-old tradition. Especially the Athenian Neoplatonic school develops into a conspicuous institution which marks the intellectual and religious map of the Empire.

The workshop enquires into the various strategies which figures of the Athenian school employ to recast the traditional religion as the superior counterpart to Christianity. While the importance of Athenian Neoplatonism as a stronghold of intellectual paganism is generally acknowledged, further research is needed not only on the individual strategies and their respective dynamics, but even more on their interrelation and conscious combination. To enquire into this interrelation, the workshop will concentrate on one deity, namely Zeus, the ruler of the Hellenic pantheon, and explore his Neoplatonic interpretations. We will retrace how a distinctive and novel philosophical theology is combined with the recourse to authoritative texts and to tradition to create a distinctive profile for Zeus, which at once serves as an intellectually satisfying religious option ad intra, for the pagan peer group, and also takes a clear stance in the conflict with Christianity, as it emphatically departs from pagan approaches which cast Zeus as the one supreme god and thus allow for bridge-building between paganism and Christianity. By concentrating on the comparatively well-documented Athenian school, we will ground our research in a well-defined historical context, situating the aims and strategies of the protagonists in specific urban settings, sacred landscapes and concrete interreligious relationships and conflicts and thus highlighting how religious resilience is intricately linked with other social factors and processes. Beyond shedding new light on late antique pagan resilience, the workshop will repertorise general patterns of religious resilience (e.g. distinctive forms of recourse to tradition or the positive valuation of the minority status creating elite identities) which can serve as a basis for further comparative study and eventually theorizing of religious resilience.

405 How to Save the Father of the Gods: Hermias’ Explanation of Zeus through the Exegesis of Orpheus and Homer

Benedetto Neola

Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Filosofici, Naples, Italy

Abstract

In the hands of late antique Neoplatonists, Zeus becomes a means to expound metaphysical views. In my paper I will explore the reading of Zeus’ figure in Hermias’ Commentary on Plato’s Phaedrus, the only ancient commentary on the Phaedrus that has survived. Hermias was a pupil of Syrianus, who was head of the Athenian Academy, and the co-disciple of Proclus, Syrianus’ successor. He himself taught Platonic philosophy between around 435-455 AD in Alexandria, i.e., in a predominantly Christian city.

In order to forge a new and acceptable religious system and faced with the dominance of Christianity in Alexandria, Hermias endeavours to rescue and save the ancient deities of the pagan pantheon by means of textual exegesis, which now becomes the main tool for pagan resilience. Only by synoptically reading the pagan authorities such as Orpheus and Homer and integrating their deities into a new and coherent metaphysical system could a late antique Neoplatonist like Hermias hope to cope with the changing times. And this also applies to the father of the gods: Zeus. Once a threatening divine figure, now the father of the Olympians is threatened, too, like all his sons and daughters.
In his Commentary on Plato’s Phaedrus (In Phaedr. 87, 5 ff. Lucarini-Moreschini), Hermias unfolds a rich and multi-faced analysis of Zeus, whom Plato had presented as the leader of the twelve gods in Socrates’ so-called Palinode (cf. Phaedr. 243e4 ff.). Indeed, the interpretation of his figure could not be unique: for Hermias needed not only to explain Plato’s Zeus, but also to show Plato’s agreement with other pagan authorities who had talked about Zeus, namely Orpheus and Homer. It is not a matter of anodyne exegesis, but of pagan resilience. Hermias needed to show the mutual interdependence and support of a religious system’s elements, thereby strengthening coherence ad intra. Also, he tries to forge a new religious system mirroring the metaphysical one. This is what is at stake when Hermias says: Ζητήσω δὲ ἐν τούτοις πός ὁ Ζεῦς καὶ πῖνες οἱ δωδεκά θεοὶ (In Phaedr. 141, 25-26). According to what seems to be the official Athenian view (ἡμεῖς), Hermias interprets Zeus by presenting (i) a unique and transcendent Zeus as demiurgic monad, (ii) a Zeusian triad (Zeus, Poseidon, and Pluto), and (iii) a Zeus as being-giver and leader of the twelve gods.

Significantly, this multilayered exegesis is supported by both Homeric verses (cf. Hom., Ἰλ. 1, 534-535; 423-425; 5, 428-429; 15, 187-195) and Orphic theology (namely the doctrines of the Nights and the triad Ouranos-Kronos-Phanes, according to which Zeus would be the king of the hyper-cosmic dimension and the limit of the νοεροὶ θεοί).

I will thus try to bring to the fore Hermias’ complex exegesis of Zeus’ figure, thereby shedding light on the philosophical means whereby pagan philosophers like Hermias endeavoured to react and adapt to a changed religious context that threatened to cast out of the intellectual and religious panorama the ancient deities and those who once tried to celebrate them.

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418 Theology and Religious Resilience: Zeus as the Demiurge in Proclus’ Commentary on the Timaeus and in the Teaching of Syrianus

Ilirca Tanaseanu-Deobler

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Abstract

The contribution will explore the identification of the Platonic demiurge with Zeus in Proclus’ commentary on the Timaeus, a work from the beginning of Proclus’ career, according to the plausible information given by his biographer Marinus. Proclus’ numerous references to the exegeses of his predecessors, mostly crowned by a reference to the teaching of his master, Syrianus, allow us to anchor his equation of the demiurge with Zeus in earlier philosophical tradition and also to gauge his debt to Syrianus and at least partly reconstruct the latter’s doctrine, especially when we compare Proclus’ references to Syrianus to Hermias’ information about their common teacher. In the Timaeus commentary, Proclus attributes to Syrianus a complex scheme which distinguishes the demiurge in an absolute sense (the demiurgic monad) from a lower demiurgic triad, and combines the Timaeus and excerpts from the Orphic Rhapsodic Theogony to identify the demiurge as Zeus. In so doing, Syrianus and Proclus take up an older tradition of philosophical exegesis of an Orphic hymn to Zeus that we can trace back to the fifth century B.C., but fit it into a distinctive metaphysical hierarchy, marked by a multiplicity of levels between the highest principle and the material world and by vertical multiplication of the individual divine figures of Greek traditional religion. Throughout Proclus’ commentary, the identification of the demiurge as Zeus projects his exegesis of the Platonic passages that refer to the demiurge onto the traditional figure of Zeus, adding to Zeus’ Neoplatonic profile. The paper will explore how Proclus links Neoplatonic metaphysics, the exegesis of Plato and poetic quotations to create a theology of Zeus. It will enquire which specific myths or passages
emerge as crucial for understanding Zeus and discuss the comparative scarcity of references to religious practices and realia. Lastly, the paper will outline the implications of the identification of Zeus with the demiurge, which effectively demotes the god to a comparatively low position in the divine hierarchy, for pagan religiosity and pagan religious identities in the increasingly Christianised culture of Late Antiquity. In treating all these points, the paper will attempt wherever possible to retrace the position of both Proclus and Syrianus, as far as it emerges from the commentary. The comparison of the results with the other two papers of the session will lead to a comprehensive perspective on Zeus in Athenian Platonism: the comparison with Hermias’ exegesis of another Platonic passage featuring Zeus will bring out more clearly the Syrianic background which the two philosophers share, and the comparison of the Timaeus commentary with the Platonic Theology, which stands at the end of Proclus’ career, will help gauge to what extent we can speak of a development in Proclus’ thought.

531 From Mythical Figures to Philosophical Principles: Resilience through the Amalgamation of Orphism and Platonism in Proclus’ 
Platonic Theology

Jörg von Alvensleben

Georg-August-Universität, Göttingen, Germany

Abstract

In ages of religious tensions, having sovereignty over the discourses of tradition helps to make sure of one’s own identity. Those who regard themselves as representatives of a long succession of religious doctrines are better able to cope with the tumultuous events of their days. To know that one’s own point of view was never popular in history can cause a feeling of resilience and self-awareness.

This strategy is also used by one of the last pagan philosophers of late antiquity, namely by Proclus, the charismatic head of the neoplatonic school in Athens for almost five decades. According to ancient sources, Proclus and his school were always provided with sufficient capital and property, and his pupils came from affluent families. Athens was regarded as a refuge of paganism against the Christian majority and also Proclus’s writings can be regarded as such a refuge. In his commentaries on Plato and in his many treatises on different subjects Proclus tries not only to establish a demanding theology but also to present the entire early Greek pagan tradition as a theologic unity.

Aside from Plato, Orpheus and the Orphic writings are an integral part of this unity. In his last work, the Platonic Theology, Proclus tries to develop the divine hierarchies that he claims to find in the Platonic dialogues. But his aim is also to prove that they are identical to the Orphic theology. Thus, the oldest (Orphism) and the most universal theology (Plato) become strongly connected. Since Plato makes use of myths, too, Proclus’ interpretation is brilliantly able to oscillate between different theological modes like myths oder dialectic arguments. Pagan myths and protagonists become symbols of resilience that oppose atheistic doctrines as well as Christian assertive claims. If you look at the references to Orpheus in the Platonic theology, it will be manifest that they appear in the books IV-VI which treat the noeric gods under the highest spheres of the One (τὸ ἕν) and the intelligible realm (νοητὶ θεοὶ). The demiurge who is identical to Zeus is part of the intellectual gods (νοητοὶ θεοί). Grouped around Zeus, we find all the mythic figures that appear in the Cretan myths and that surround, save or threaten the young Zeus: Adrasteia, Kronos, Rhea, the Kuretes. But also Kore (Persephone) and the Corybantes (that arose from the eastern cult of Kybele) take on a function in the Platonic theology that is supposed to correspond to their
position in the Orphic theology. The Proclean hypostases oscillate therefore between allegorical mythic figures and philosophical principles and sometimes even multiply one god (as in the case of Zeus and Kore). On the one hand, my paper will discuss the mutual references to Orphic and Platonic theology in the *Platonic Theology* with regard to these Cretan mythic characters. On the other hand I will portray the divine hierarchies which they build together and with the demiurge.

ISC 10 Ancient Judaism (Individual Short Communications)

11:50 - 13:20 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

Alessandro Catastini

177 Emotional and Cognitive Transformation Under the Auspices of the Bible - The Act of Tamar and Yehuda as a Case Study of Resilience (Genesis 38) (in Hebrew)

Orlit kolodni

Hemdat Hadrom, Kfar Maimon, Israel

Abstract

`And the stability of thy times shall be a hoard of salvation--wisdom and knowledge...` (Isaiah 33, 6)

והיה אמון תשך חסן וישעתי חכמת עתיך (י̲שו̲ע̲תִי) (6)

Association Psychological American (2009, APA) - עלップ את האנשים והпередיות לפけば להאריך ולתרום שיעשה החלום של כל אדם, לא מעורר של התשובות ואומר.

ככינ الموجود בבראשית ומייסד הבצלות של העם היהודי יקירו מעמדם של כל האנשים בבראשית ומייסד הבצלות של העם היהודי - ולימים הם נפגשים ומקראו לבראשית ומייסד הבצלות של העם היהודי והם מ=format את האנשים והпередיות לפבא להאריך ולתרום שיעשה החלום של כל אדם, לא מעורר של התשובות ואומר.

בזון נפש אשתות שורות עגלים אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות עגלים אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תмар אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תמר אשתות כהנמות של תмар אשתות כהנמות של תמר א partagerה את האслоוה והדריה.
36 Social Resilience as Reflected in Religious Perceptions of Interior Borders of the Roman Empire: Jewish-Gentile Cross-Border Communication and Cooperation in First to Fifth Century AD, Judea

Tamar Arieli¹, Amos Amos Israel-Vleeschhouwer²

¹Tel Hai College, Tel Hai, Israel. ²Sapir College, Sderot, Israel

Abstract

Borders are critical to interpreting physical and social spaces and their divisions. As a cross-societal interface, borders reflect states of conflict and accommodation ranging from confrontation and exclusion to communication, cooperation and inclusion. Jewish law, like most legal systems, prefers clear spatial separations, and creates dichotomous distinctions in space. Yet, insights from the Talmud, an ancient Jewish legal-religious text, expose pragmatic accommodation towards cross-border communication and enrich contemporary discourses and practices.

Talmudic texts portray cross-border communication and interaction between Jews and Gentiles in multiple social and economic settings of the 1-5 centuries AD in Judea, under the Roman Empire, after the destruction of the second Temple. Despite economic motivations for cooperation, social and cultural ramifications of borders serve as platforms for rabbinical socially oriented directives.

Borders of holy spaces are especially illuminating regarding hierarchies of space. Talmudic texts reveal the centrality of hospitality and sociability as ethically obligatory to religious life. Thus, borders were defined not from inside out - from the holy space and its needs towards the "outside", rather they incorporate needs from the outside, expressing perspectives of sinners, impure people and even of lepers, the ultimate others.

Textual analysis of the Talmud thus reveals surprisingly post-modern insights regarding social and religious resilience reflected in the multi-dimensionality of borders, both physical and symbolic, in defining identity, belonging and holiness and their flexibility and permeability in facilitating communication and interaction. These insights reflect a developed awareness of the nature and potential of communication and its ethical dimensions in religious experience and bear much significance for border experiences in contemporary life.
Abstract

The origins of Rabbinic Judaism are rooted in a historical moment of struggle against the Roman Empire that ended up with the First Jewish War (66-73 C.E.) and the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem (70 C.E.). However, these circumstances had a positive consequence: An open space for the blooming of heterodoxy, the chance for minority groups to develop their thoughts and beliefs without the restraining framework of the orthodox sacrificial cult. One of those minority groups grew stronger and fully arose in the 4th century C.E. as Rabbinic Judaism, and eventually replaced the authority of the Temple cult, its institutions and hierarchies, with a new kind of authority: the centrality of the text.

We will focus on two main features of this change through an analysis of rabbinic literary production from the point of view of Philosophical Hermeneutics. On the one hand, the text is no longer considered as telling the sacred story of the intervention of God in history, instead it is sacred itself, sacred law that must be applied through changing times. On the other hand, even though fixed sacred scripture cannot be amended, within the core of Rabbinic Judaism there is an aim to keep divine revelation alive throughout the interpretation of scripture and its excedent of meaning. Provided that scripture contains all the truth of the universe, it is necessary to squeeze out each and every possibility of meaning contained in it. Thus, this shift to textuality opens the possibility of constant adaptation to changing circumstances.

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Abstract

Une fois détruit le temple de Jérusalem, les Juifs perdent le lieu hautement symbolique auquel tous se rattachaient, plus ou moins directement. Loin de disparaitre, le judaïsme se transforme alors pour perdurer sans le temple, dans une terre de plus en plus peuplée de « païens » puis, progressivement, de plus en plus accaparée par les chrétiens. De communauté dispersée parfois loin de ce lieu « choisi par Dieu pour y faire résider son nom » (Dt 12, 11), le peuple juif affirme désormais plus clairement l’omniprésence de Dieu. On peut lire dans le Talmud, concernant les « païens », que : « ce sont de pauvres étrangers : ils sont ici et leurs dieux sont à Babylone ; ils sont ici et leurs dieux sont à Rome. Mais toi, où que tu ailles, ton dieu est avec toi. » (TJ, Berakhot, IX, 1). En assumant cette déterritorialisation, en la revendiquant de manière polémique comme un gage (paradoxal) de la toute-puissance de Dieu et comme une part de l’identité juive, les rabbins aident à reconstruire durablement l’identité d’un peuple qui a perdu ses repères.
97 Moderate and Radical Muslims

11:50 - 12:50 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

Tomas Lindgren

97 Moderate and Radical Muslims, but for Whom and for What Purpose?

Tomas Lindgren, Johan Eriksson, Hannes Sonnenschein

Umea University, Umea, Sweden

Abstract

Categorizing is an innate human ability which helps us understand and perceive the world around us. In this article we examine the effect this ability has on how and why people, groups, and states around the world categorize Muslims. Our focus is mainly on the categories moderate and radical, and the problems connected to these two distinctions. We argue that what counts as radical as opposed to moderate is always changing, because it is dependent on what is seen as moderate at a specific time and place, and therefore also dependent on existing power arrangements. We also argue that the categorization of radical and moderate is linked to liberal values and liberal politics, rather than theological beliefs.

40-II Resilient Modalities of Religion in Chinese Societies

11:50 - 13:20 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

Magdaléna Rychetská, Kai Shmushko

121 Tibetan Buddhism in Resilient Modalities; Lay Groups and the "Living Hall" (Shenghuo guan 生活馆) Model

Kai Shmushko

Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, Israel
Abstract

The paper focuses on the modalities used by lay people to practice Tibetan Buddhism in Han Urban China. One of the most striking urban Buddhism trends is the spread of Tibetan Buddhist practices, teachers, and texts among ethnic Han Chinese. Alongside the revitalization of Tibetan Buddhism in the past decades, in monasteries in Tibet and Tibetan areas of Sichuan, we are also witnessing an increasing number of lay Chinese who take refuge in gurus (shangshi 聲師) from Tibet, or practice in Tibetan Buddhist institutions or communities.

However, this has taken place alongside severe restrictions on the religion and the society it flourished in. Aware of the influence the monastic institutions once had over Tibetan society and politics, the Chinese government vigorously seeks to maintain control over their activities. Furthermore, the current Chinese government is imposing tighter control over religious groups, including Tibetan Buddhism. As of 2020, new administrative measures are in place for religious groups. Every aspect of religious communities' life, from formation and gatherings to annual and daily projects, can be affected.

The paper shows how an important agent in the resilience of Tibetan Buddhism is, in fact, Han Chinese lay people. Through a case study of a Tibetan Buddhist group based in Shanghai, the article explores the phenomenon of “Living Hall” (Shenghuo guan 生活馆). This is a business model employed to construct their practice against the backdrop of the Chinese state’s towards Buddhism. The article examines the phenomenon relating to prominent perspectives, which are used to view the revitalization of Tibetan Buddhism in Han China, namely: materialism and enchantment. I suggest that the “Living Halls” model is used to assimilate and nuance their religious practice. Within this framework, I argue that these groups are religious entrepreneurs, representing resilience in religion’s delicate dynamics and state control in contemporary China.

905 Buddhism and the Anthropocene: Rhizomatic and Posthuman Religion in the Time of the Fourth Industrial Revolution

dr. Daan F. Oostveen

Institute for Cultural Inquiry, Utrecht University, Utrecht, Netherlands

Abstract

In contemporary religion in East Asia in the time of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, we see the advancement of technological forms Buddhism on a massive scale. Artificial intelligence and smartphone technology have become aids for (Chinese) Buddhists. More people than ever are now meditating using applications on their smartphone. At each moment in time, millions of people are meditating simultaneously, and their progress can be tracked in real time. On the one hand, we live in a time in which the ecological destruction of the planet is unprecedented; on the other hand, spiritual teachings, such as the teaching of the Buddha are now with technological bodies to cause an acceleration of religiosity.

This research aims to explore the question regarding the role and significance of Buddhism and contemporary religion in East Asia in the so-called age of the Anthropocene and its consequences for the philosophy of religion. This question is deduced from two observations: 1) the continued or renewed rise of Buddhism as a social, spiritual or religious phenomenon, both in the Western world as in Asia and 2) the widespread observation that “we” are today living in the “Anthropocene”, a new geological era in which
the activity of homo sapiens, human beings, on the planet has gained a geological significance. In the context of the Anthropocene, there is often an emphasis on the posthuman character of our predicament: to what extent is it desirable to go beyond the boundaries of “the human”, both morally and descriptively? With regards to Buddhism, this prompts the question whether it is a humanism or a posthumanism; or if we should conclude it is the former, whether it could or should be transformed into the latter?

233 “Blessings for the Most Vulnerable”: Devised Lay Buddhist Rites for the Elderly and for Post-Abortion Women in Contemporary Xiamen

Avi Darshani
McGill University, Montreal, Canada

Abstract

Scholars have demonstrated that since the onset of the reform era in the late 1970s, leaders of institutional Buddhism attempted to avert political pressure and to justify the existence and reconstruction of Buddhism in post-Mao China. These leaders sought to present Buddhism as a constructive element in society. Consequently, institutional Buddhism works in tandem with the state to serve its ends of economic development, foreign relations, moral education, and alleviation of poverty, to list the major ones. The collaboration between institutional Buddhism and the state resulted, inter alia, in the religion’s material welfare and its relative favorable position compared to other religious traditions in contemporary China.

At the same time, many lay Buddhist groups, although unfettered by government’s top-down dictates, harness their resources in an attempt to address contemporary pressing social concerns. In this paper, I examine two lay groups that organize Buddhists activities for people in need of emotional support in the coastal city of Xiamen in south-east China. The first one of these groups is devoted to elderly care, while the other one to women who have had an abortion. Largely appealing to different age groups and tackling distinct social concerns, namely the aging of the Chinese population and high abortion rates, both groups employ diverse ritual techniques to offer spiritual solace and foster a sense of community among their members. I also discuss how and why these lay groups serve as an alternative to state-endorsed Buddhism, and argue that Chinese Buddhism resilience in present-day China lies in its ability to adjust, respond and reinvent itself in face of changing social circumstances.

543 Shaolin Temple’s Resilience in the Triangular Game: Kung-fu Tourism Economy beyond Sacred and Secular

Lufeng Xu
Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales, Paris, France
Abstract

The relationship between the Shaolin temple and the local society is deeply marked by cooperation and also by tensions and conflicts. From the Tang dynasty onwards, the Shaolin temple was well integrated into the rural society, and in fact it launched a slogan: “combining Chan and agricultural work”. After the popularization of Shaolin kung-fu in the late Qing period, a dozen “martial arts villages” were formed around the temple. By the end of the 1990s, Shaolin kung-fu had become an economic project that relied on tourism and the cultural industry, resulting in the development of regional economies. During the last two decades, not only the outlying villages, but also the entire southern region of Henan province is seeking to establish relations with Shaolin in order to form an “economic ecosystem” centred on the kung-fu economy. However, for reasons of daily management and distribution of economic benefits, the Shaolin temple has been deeply involved in the complex triangular game with the local government (Songshan Scenic Area Management Committee) and the tourism investment company (CTS International Investment Limited) headquartered in Hong Kong. Even in 2014, Shaolin temple has taken both the local government and the tourism investment company to court on the grounds of unequal distribution of profits from entrance tickets, but it was actually trying to regain more autonomy. Eventually, in January 2021, affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, Hong Kong CTS International Investment Limited, which has been operating in Henan province for 12 years, officially withdrew from the Songshan Shaolin Temple Scenic Area. And the management and operation of the Songshan Scenic Area returned to the hands of the Songshan Scenic Area Management Committee under the local government of Henan. This marks the end of the 12-year-long triangular game between Shaolin temple, tourism investment companies and the local government. This paper attempts to examine what role the Shaolin temple has played in this triangular game that arose around the kung-fu tourism economy, and how the Shaolin Buddhist monks have developed various strategies as resilient tools to adapt to the rapid transformation of local society.

ISC 11 Religion in Poland (Individual Short Communications)

11:50 - 13:20 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

691 Catholic Environmental Movement in Poland and its Key Challenges

Konrad Pędziwiatr, Dobrosława Wiktor-Mach

Cracow University of Economics, Kraków, Poland

Abstract

World religions have in many ways contributed to the numerous issues that are at the heart of today’s environmental crisis. They did so in the past and continue to do so through their cosmologies, anthropocentrism, emphasis on reproduction as well as internal and external conflicts - to name only a few factors. However, religions are also indispensable in addressing the issues of climate change. The proposed
presentation will shed light on the key findings of the ongoing research into the “greening of Polish Catholicism” and the response of Catholics in Poland to ecological challenges. The presentation will shed light on the functioning of the Catholic ecological movement in Poland. It will present the activism of various Catholic groups (e.g. the Polish branch of the Global Catholic Movement for the Environment) in the wider context of ecological initiatives in the country. Using the conceptual tools of the social movements theory (from the theory of resources to the latest approaches emphasizing human agency), the presentation will shed light inter alia on the key mobilization structures, dilemmas and mobilization strategies used by its actors. It will also discuss the relations between the Catholic and secular ecological movements in Poland and the main barriers for the more dynamic “greening” of Polish Catholicism.

523 The Polish Society for the Study of Religions. The People and Ideas Behind the Iron Curtain
Jerzy Kojko1,2, Paweł Kusiak1,2

1 Polish Naval Academy of the Heroes of Westerplatte, Gdynia, Poland. 2 Polish Society for the Study of Religions, Warsaw, Poland

Abstract

The subject matter of this paper is the academic activity of Polish religious scholars connected with the Polish Society for the Study of Religions between 1958 and 1989. The organization was established in 1958 in the wake of political changes which took place after the death of Joseph Stalin. Just before it was launched, the community connected with it started publishing the academic quarterly “Euhemer. Przegląd Religioznawczy” (Eng. “Euhemer. The Religious Studies Review”), the oldest Polish journal on religious studies. It is still published today under the name “Przegląd Religioznawczy - The Religious Studies Review”. By 1989 members of the organization included religious scholars who more or less (sometimes only officially) referred to the theoretical assumptions of Marxism. After 1989 the Polish Society for the Study of Religions became a fully pluralistic academic society affiliating scholars linked with different paradigms and representing various academic communities.

This paper is focused on the activity of the organization and the studies it embarked on at a time when Poland was under Soviet influence, and Polish social and political life was conditioned by Marxism-inspired concepts. Those were the conditions in which Polish religious studies scholars conducted their research and developed their academic activity. The authors set out to make an assessment and criticism of the works of that time.

The paper consists of three parts. In the first one, the authors focus on the social and political situation in Poland in the years 1945-1989, with special emphasis being placed on the academic activity and the development of religious studies as an academic discipline. In the second part, the authors will present the organizational aspect of the activity of the Polish Society for the Study of Religions in the years 1958-1989 and they will attempt to assess its significance for the development of religious studies in Poland. In the third, final and most extensive part, the authors will present eight Polish religious scholars connected with the Polish Society for the Study of Religions, whose most important academic activity was between 1957 and 1989. Those scholars were: Józef Keller (1911-2002); Tadeusz Margul (1923-2009); Mirosław Nowaczyk (1931-2007); Andrzej Nowicki (1919-2011); Zygmunt Poniatowski (1923-1994); Eulalia Sajdak-Michnowska (1936-2021); Henryk Swienko (1930-1997); Witold Tyloch (1927-1990).
**911 Between Catholicism and Secularization: Aporetic Cultural Memories in Poland**

*Juliusz Iwanicki*

Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, Poland

**Abstract**

I would like to present different images of cultural memory in Poland, concerning the perception of religion. In a country where for centuries the Catholic Church dominated, in recent years there are many processes of secularization and mediatization, which cause the cultural situation to change dynamically. In 2016, the 1050th anniversary of the Baptism of Poland was celebrated, with reference to the millennium that was celebrated under communism. However, the cultural situation in Poland is different now from what it was more than half a century ago. Images of cultural memory are emerging in which the Church is not seen as a component of national identity, but as one among many, in a pluralistic space of values. Religious minorities and women are drawing attention to their subjectivity, referring to other images of the past, and interpreting the role of religion in public life differently.

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**ISC 12 Religion and Health (Individual Short Communications)**

**11:50 - 13:20 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021**

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*Sawsan Kheir*

University of Haifa, Haifa, Israel. Åbo Akademi University, Turku, Finland

**Abstract**

Meaning-making refers to the restoration of meaning in the context of highly stressful situations (Park, 2010), which relates to our conative need to know and understand our self and surroundings. Thus, meaning-making has been found to play a significant role in subjective wellbeing, leading to higher levels of psychological adjustment and happiness (George & Park, 2016).

Religion and spirituality have a special link to meaning-making. Religion is construed as a “meaning system” above all its other attributes. It has been defined as a meaning structure within the human cognitive system,
which includes attitudes and beliefs, values, goals, self-definition and some locus of ultimate concern (Paloutzian and Park, 2014).

The COVID-19 pandemic is a dramatic world event that has evoked feelings of anxiety and of being threatened. Various explanations across different cultures have been offered for the pandemic and many meanings were attributed to it, as part of people’s effort to deal with this anxiety and uncertainty.

The current paper will target two questions arising from this situation: Do religious people mostly attribute religious meanings to the pandemic, as compared to other people and meanings? And how do religious meanings correlate to wellbeing measures, as compared to other meanings?

The answer to these questions will be discussed cross culturally, basing itself on data that were gathered during August -November 2020, via a web survey, as part of a larger study aiming to explore the correlations between meaning-making, agency and wellbeing in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic among Israeli, Finnish and Turkish adults.

402 Market ‘Chazara b’teshuvah’ through Covid-19: The Case of Israeli Jewish Preachers on Social Media

Elad Ben David
Bar-Ilan University, Ramat-Gan, Israel. Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv-Yafo, Israel

Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic has appeared while the proliferation of new media technology is dominant and affects mediated communication in the religious public sphere. The presentation deals with the famous phenomenon of “Chazara b’teshuvah” (reaffiliation/repentance to God), using social media content. Through this virtual discourse, Judaism is marketed as a religion that has the key to life’s solution, using a hybrid genre of information and entertainment in light of the Covid-19 implications and challenges.

Chazara b’teshuvah is a famous Jewish religious term, aimed to bring non-observant Jews back to Orthodox Judaism and known as a life-time process of every Jew to rectify his/her deeds. In Israel, this activity started to increase after 1967 (Six-Day War) and 1973 (October War), which influenced many Israeli Jews to rediscover their religious identity due to the intense simultaneous feelings of heroism and fragility. Since that period, religious activity started to widen in Israel, in the forms of Yeshivot (Jewish educational institutions), group seminars, and preachers’ sermons throughout the country.

In the 1980s and the 1990s, the cassettes’ evolution with television and satellites, helped spread the phenomena to a larger audience. One of the influential preachers who used that technology was Rabbi Amnon Yitzhak, an ex-secular Jew himself. Yitzhak’s tactic focused on “rational proofs” and “hellfire intimidations,” combined with emotion and humour to impact the diverse Israeli-Jewish culture and society. Nevertheless, during the last two decades, the rise of new online media boosted many other preachers to gain more popularity among their audience. Some of the prominent preachers include Rabbi Zamir Cohen from “Hidabrut” (Conversation) and Rabbi Igal Cohen from “Anafim” (Branches), who intensively use those platforms.
Therefore, I argue that although Covid-19 has harmed daily religious routines, it also played a significant resilience role, thanks to the advancement of religious activity on social media platforms. In an era where people are forced to limit their physical, religious rituals, such as praying in the synagogues or gathering in religious conventions, the engagement of a “virtual Judaism” as an independent religious form, can preserve a communication channel. This helps to continue the phenomena of Chazara b’teshuvah of many Israeli Jews through private online mediation, even during those difficult times of pandemic.

The presentation applies a range of examples used on social media by those popular preachers, highlighting the Covid-19 calamity in the contemporary discourse. This includes, for example, how to regain faith in God, psychological messages to overcome difficulties, spiritual advice, and even linking the current plague to similar events during Jewish history. Some of their messages are also marketed in a Western coaching and entertainment style, common especially among preachers who used to be secular. That linkage gains more interest and solidarity, particularly among secular Jews, who find it relevant to their modern lifestyle and current daily challenges. Therefore, as reflected in social media platforms, all these elements manifest that Judaism has become a religious authority that adapts to change, adapting itself in the light of contemporary events and calamities, such as in the Covid-19 pandemic.

215 Empirical Research on the Role of Religious Coping and Associations with Depressive Symptoms and Feelings of Integrity and Despair in Geriatric Patients in Belgium

Lindsy Desmet, Annemie Dillen
KU Leuven, Leuven, Belgium

Abstract

Healthcare studies show an important relationship between religious coping on the one hand and mental health on the other hand, which cannot be ignored (Pargament et al. 2011; Rippentrop et al. 2005). This presentation focusses on the results of a cross-sectional study in Belgium on the prevalence of positive and negative religious coping and the relation with depressive symptoms and the process of achieving ego-integrity (Erikson, 1982) during hospital admission (N = 201). Based on the RCOPE questionnaire by Pargament et al. (2011) and the Geriatric Depression Scale (Jongenelis et al. 2007), results of our Belgian study report a relatively high level of depressive symptoms and positive/negative religious coping compared to other research. Moreover, depressive symptoms are associated with positive and negative religious coping. For example, higher scores on negative religious coping correlate with more depressive symptoms. Religious coping is also related to the psychosocial process of integrity and despair. In other words, geriatric patients who have a positive reflective life process (integrity) report in general less negative religious coping. Geriatric patients who have dissatisfaction with their (past) life (despair), note on average more negative religious coping. This study suggests that it is good for spiritual caregivers in hospitals to pay attention to the role of religious coping in older adults’ life as this is associated with mental health outcomes and psychosocial processes (depressive symptoms and integrity/despair). This presentation discusses the data gathered in geriatric wards of three Belgian hospitals during the covid-19 pandemic (June-August 2020).
Religious Coping and Depressive Symptoms among Religious Belgian Hospitalized Patients: The Mediating Role of Hope

Eva Buelens

KU Leuven, Leuven, Belgium

Abstract

Within major life crises, such as severe illness, people can rely on religious beliefs and practices as a way of coping with stressful life events. Religious coping is defined as the use of cognitive, emotional and behavioral techniques that arise out of one’s religion or spirituality. Positive religious coping (PRC) styles are characterized by a secure relationship with a caring God. Negative religious coping (NRC) styles express a fear of divine punishment and a less stable relationship with God filled with doubt. Although there seems to be evidence for a connection between positive/negative religious coping and psychological outcomes, a great deal of the research is carried out in the context of the United States and some research suggest that this connection may not be true in countries where religion is less prominent. Furthermore, there is very little information on the pathways through which religious coping might affect psychological outcomes like depressive symptoms.

This cross-sectional study (N= 155) examines hope as a mediator of the influence of positive/negative religious coping on depressive symptoms of hospital inpatients in Belgium. NRC is found to be directly related to increased depressive symptoms and this relationship is indeed indirectly mediated through hope. We do find PRC to contribute indirectly to fewer depressive symptoms through hope. However: no direct relationship between PRC and depressive symptoms is found. Limitations of the study and clinical implications of the results will be discussed.

Resilient Esotericism

11:50 - 13:20 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

Marco Pasi

The Enduring Influence of Theosophy on British Occultism: The Case of Aleister Crowley (1875-1947)

Henrik Bogdan

University of Gothenburg, Gothenburg, Sweden

Abstract
The Theosophical Society, founded in New York in 1875 by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831-1907), Henry Steel Olcott (1832-1907), and others, is usually credited with bringing “Eastern” teachings into “Western” esotericism. The theosophical emphasis on Hinduism and Buddhism had a profound impact on contemporary and later forms of occultism, both in terms of its teachings (such as reincarnation, karma, and ‘Mahatmas’), and practices (such as the use of yoga). The emphasis on Eastern teachings, however, caused a reaction within occult milieux in the early 1880s, and leading British theosophists such as Anna Kingsford (1846-1888) and William Wynn Westcott (1848-1925) came to found occult societies with a marked “Western” or “Hermetic” orientation – the Hermetic Society (1884) in the case of Kingsford, and the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn (1887) in the case of Westcott. The distancing from the Eastern emphasis of the Theosophical Society has by scholar of esotericism Joscelyn Godwin been called the ‘Hermetic Reaction’, and it is to this context that the notion of a distinctly Western form of esotericism can be traced. Despite this reaction, the distinction between Eastern and Western forms of esotericism remained blurred and theosophical teachings permeated British occultism from the 1880s onwards, including those forms of a more ‘Hermetic’ bent. This paper will discuss the enduring influence of Theosophy on British occultism, using Aleister Crowley (1875-1947) as a case study. While Crowley was adamant in his condemnation of post-Blavatsky theosophy and often dismissed theosophists as “Toshophists”, he remained ambivalent towards theosophy as a whole. As will be discussed, this ambivalent approach towards theosophy culminated in the mid-1920s when Crowley unsuccessfully tried to assume control of the Theosophical Society by laying claim to Jiddu Krishnamurti’s (1895-1986) position as the World Teacher.

12:10 - 12:30

661 Resilient Women, Irresilient Sources? Accessing Female Agency in the Archives of Early-20th Century Esotericism

Manon Hedenborg White

Södertörn University, Stockholm, Sweden. Karlstad University, Karlstad, Sweden

Abstract

In recent decades, scholars seeking to understand women’s religious agency have highlighted “lived” practice and everyday life as vital aspects of religion. This paper explores the challenges attendant to excavating historical Western esotericism “as practiced” from textual-archival sources. In focus for the discussion is a case study of two early-20th century female esotericists: Leah Hirsig and Ninette Shumway, disciples of the British occultist Aleister Crowley (1875-1947). The paper will argue that Hirsig and Shumway’s devotion to a socially marginal, esoteric religion was shaped by their resilience to partially gendered burdens (e.g., social stigma, intra- and extra-religious gender logics, domestic/reproductive labor, material shortage). Consequently, the paper will stress the importance of taking seriously religion as “lived”, destabilizing boundaries of sacred/profane, in the historical study of women esotericists. Simultaneously, the paper will discuss points of silence in the sources, indicating the irresilience of lived religion as an object of historical-archival study.
816 Esotericism in Corporate Form: Resilience and Crisis in the Anthroposophical Society

Karen Swartz

Åbo Akademi University, Turku, Finland

Abstract

After the death of a charismatic leader, a religious movement typically faces a crisis. The Anthroposophical Society, an organization based on the esoteric conceptions of its founder Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925), has tried to overcome this moment of crisis by developing a corporate structure. On the one hand, the resilience of the movement is evident from the fact that it has members in over 50 countries. On the other, the Anthroposophical Society remains an organization in seemingly perpetual crisis. This paper examines some of the ways in which the Anthroposophical Society attempts to remain a major player on a market where other organizations provide similar products and services, as well as some of the reasons for the continuing crisis mode of what is arguably the largest contemporary esoteric institutionalized movement.

81-II Resilience of Tantric, Magic, and Shamanic Practices at the “Margins” of South and Southeast Asian Religions

11:50 - 13:20 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

Paolo Eugenio Rosati, Andrea Acri

82 Voices from the Peripheries of the Holy Groves: A Study on the Less-Known Deities of Tantra in Kerala

Maciej Karasinski

Hainan University, Haikou, China

Abstract

The aim of this study is to discuss Tantric deities of Kerala that are often invoked as wish-fulfilling agents. This paper aims at providing a fresh perspective on the contemporary Keralan Tantra and its less-known deities. The paper investigates also the various forms of worship of wish-bringing spirits who are summoned
in the shrines of Keralan holy groves (kāvus). In fact, many so-called Tantric families have their own ancestral temples and holy groves. There, they perform acts of volitional magic and invoke warrior goddesses, tutelary deities, and spirits like Cāttāṅ or Guļikan.

Moreover, the paper sheds light on Keralan Mantravāda, a path of certain Tantric practitioners who conduct so-called kāmya karmas, wish-fulfilling rituals. Mantravādins often mediate between people and gods, perform magical acts to bring good fortune, remove inauspicious forces, or curse their enemies. Mantravādins also act as healers, magicians and exorcists, negotiating their roles in society and within the communities of temple priests in Kerala.

Combining both philological and ethnographic perspectives, the paper attempts to show the complexity of the Keralan Tantric traditions and elaborate on the origin and function of the wish-bringing deities. Also, the study here intends to take into consideration the voices of living practitioners to provide a more nuanced understanding of Keralan ritualism.

90 Brahma Bābā- A Ghost or A Deity? An Inquiry into the North Indian Folk Beliefs with Special Reference to Harshu Brahma
Prabha Shankar Dwivedi
Indian Institute of Technology Tirupati, Tirupati, India

Abstract

This article examines how and why a dead person is deified to be worshipped as a deity by a family or a community in North Indian folk religious practices. How are these dead people instead of becoming ghosts themselves made a machinery for exorcising ghosts? How the bhagatas or Panḍās who worship these deities diagnose people suffering from spirit possession, social, mental, or bodily afflictions, or bless the supplicants with their desired wishes. It is a known fact that folk Hinduism deifies the dead in various roles, like a guardian, an ascetic, a community mother or a grāmdevatā (village god), etc. Such folk deities are worshipped in profusion even today in North India. A Brahma Bābā is one such deity, who is venerated by all but worshipped mostly by the family they belong to. When a Brahmin dies prematurely in any sort of violence done to him, he emerges to be a Brahma (in local language, known as ‘Baram’). However, people pray to the sainted dead irrespective of family, region, or caste. The sainted dead are usually those who were wronged while alive and died demanding justice. The present paper focuses on understanding the mechanism and the creation of one such folk deity called Harshu Brahma Bābā who is primarily worshiped by the people of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, and some part of Maharashtra. This shrine is at a place called Chainpur in the Kaimur District of Bihar. Though the shrine is primarily known for its power of exorcism, the offerings for Bābā are a sacred cord (it may be normal, or made of gold or silver), and sweets like any other Brahma Bābā. The nature of this paper is primarily empirical as it is based on a detailed ethnographic study of Brahma Bābās in general and Harshu Brahma in particular. The article also gives an overview of how a Brahma (Baram) negotiates for a sthān (place) with his family by means of possession and is deified and propitiated to protect the family from any calamity or enemy and bless it with all sorts of growth.
Resilient Śrīvidyā: Transformation and Centre-Margin Negotiations in a Contemporary South Indian Tradition

Monika Hirmer

School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, London, United Kingdom

Abstract

In eschewing mainstream notions of (im)purity, making rituals accessible across genders and castes, and encouraging practitioners’ partaking in cosmic energies, Tantric traditions occupy the margins of Hinduism. Scholars’ primary interest in ancient texts rather than current practices reinforces the idea that these traditions are, at best, concealed and, at worst, bygone. Resilience, then, appears as a matter of surviving in secrecy.

Observing a contemporary South Indian Śrīvidyā tradition, it however appears that, when confronted with mainstream expectations, instead of primarily resorting to secrecy, practitioners undertake a selective process of change that enables renegotiations of centre-margin dynamics. When accounting for change, then, resilience becomes a matter of adaptability.

Through extensive anthropological fieldwork among sādhakaś in Śaktipur (pseudonym of the temple-complex where I lived), I observed transformations at the social (ritual practice) and geographical (temple use) level, aimed at negotiating the tradition’s marginality and acceptance among mainstream worshippers. Despite ensuring the tradition’s resilience, these changes were often contested. In fact, while many practitioners repeatedly transgressed Śaktipur’s reformulated ritual canon, more intransigent ones abandoned the temple and established new shrines where to uphold rituals in their esoteric form. Similarly, adjustments mitigating the erotic character of what was once Śaktipur’s most emblematic shrine, while enabling its promotion among a wide base of conventionally-inclined devotees, were heavily criticised and circumvented by a majority of sādhakaś.

When factoring change into the analytical framework, it emerges that Tantric traditions present a propensity for adaptation, which determines their resilience vis-à-vis the mainstream. This adaptability, while not unchallenged, underlies their capacity to negotiate centre-margin dynamics, in the process not only refashioning their own positionalities, but also reshaping the centre and creating new margins.

When Healing Fails: Resilience Management in Christian Healing

11:50 - 13:20 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021
Ariane Kovac

In this panel we investigate how Christian communities in which different modes of healing play a central role react to experiences of non-healing or delayed healing. Accordingly, experiences of non-healing can be understood as collective irritations and disruptions of socially shared religious reality. Religious resilience is therefore explicitly not understood as the individual strengthening of psychological (and physical) resilience (coping with personal strokes of fate), but describes the systemic properties of religious groups and discourse communities to deal with disappointments. We therefore assume that religious communities have often already established successful strategies to confront these dissonances or disappointments, which can be described as resilience strategies or resilience management. These processes of active “resiliencing” become particularly visible when religious communities are challenged by external or internal disturbances. Such strategies can be revealed by analyzing contextual path dependencies such as healing narratives, religious rhetoric, hierarchies and organizational structures, professional counseling, etc.

Drawing on different case studies from recent Catholic and charismatic Christianity, further theoretical considerations will be developed and explicaded (practice theory, organizational sociological theories, discourse and communication theories, etc.), which could help to illustrate the concrete process of resilience management and expand the proposed sociological understanding of systemic resilience. Consequently, the study of resilience thus describes not only the stability of a religious system, but its potential for change and adaptability.

491 Practicing Resilience: Failed Healing in Pentecostal-charismatic Congregations in the US and Germany

Ariane Kovac

Leipzig University, Leipzig, Germany

Abstract

For many pentecostal-charismatic Christians, the results of religious healing practices can hardly ever meet their high expectations: Although they believe in a God who wants every believer to be healthy and happy and who can perform miracles at any moment, they have to live with the realization that healing can be a long, non-linear process or might not ever occur. Still, healing practices are booming, in more everyday contexts such as private prayer or prayer groups and at large events and services – and, increasingly, online, as people receive prayer via apps and live streams. How do believers deal with these dissonances? Focusing on the communicative strategies US-American neopentecostal congregations and their German “franchisees” use to protect, preserve, or transform their belief system from such disappointments, in this paper, I investigate these as practices of resilience management, examining material from field research including interviews and participatory observation.

Viewing failed or inconclusive religious healing from a resilience perspective does not only offer new insights in the study of religious healing but can also contribute to the further development of a “social resilience” (Endreß/Rampp) as a framework for the study of religious phenomena. As existing theories on resilience in the social sciences have often focused on systemic macro contexts or on top-down resilience management (Denzel), I aim to add a practice theory based approach: How are resilience strategies
How is resilience being practiced, how is it incorporated, and how does it relate to healing practices? With this approach, I also intend to go beyond linear or static conceptions of resilience as stability or consciously planned “bouncing back” and instead explore the role of vulnerability, implicit knowledges, and negotiation.

516 Grace, Hope, and Resilience. Considering Religious Communication at a Catholic Shrine
Daniel Ellwanger
Universität Leipzig, Leipzig, Germany

Abstract

In the face of the global covid-19-pandemic, Olivier Ribadeau Dumas, the official head chief of the Marian apparition shrine Lourdes in France, addresses the pilgrims in a video message uploaded in October 2020 not to be afraid of coming to the Catholic pilgrimage site despite the global crises. The following line heads the video: “Lourdes: un lieu de grâce, d’espérance et de résilience” (Lourdes, a place of grace, of hope and of resilience). Hence, what can be found and expected at the shrine is not only the grace of the Holy Virgin Mary, the hope for miraculous healing during the ceremonies or in the famous baths, thus classic religious motifs; additionally, Lourdes intends to be a reservoir of resilience, a training ground for religious and spiritual people to deal with crises and to gain or regain strength in their faith and lives. Further, this specific headline refers to specific modes of regulation of expectations of what can be experienced at the Lourdes shrine, which in itself can be understood as a way of resilience management. In my contribution to the panel about resilience and Christian ritual healing, this will be the concrete topic.

Hence I assume that the semantic use of resilience is nowadays adapted into religious communication in order to shape expectations at shrines and healing places. Therefore I want to examine a variety of empirically based examples including interviews, official online resources of the Lourdes shrine, and ethnographic data, to understand different modes of modeling pilgrims’ expectations as resilience management. I suggest that practices and communication at the shrine, for example the counseling efforts of spiritual welfare or instructed religious and material practices like bathing in the sacred Lourdeswater, aim to cultivate specific expectations.

520 (Failed) Healing – Managing Expectations on “Ecumenical Frontiers” in the Evangelical Lutheran Church
Thomas Heinrich
Universität Leipzig, Leipzig, Germany

Abstract
Healing, in its whole vague range of meaning and as an aspect of faith, is not a condition for salvation, but a possibility of its very concrete, tangible experience. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America prayed for healing and unity in the wake of the last U.S. election; the Lutheran World Federation set up measures in 2020 to be a “presence of healing” in times of Covid-19. And the Medical Mission (Ärztliche Mission) combines Christian missionary methods with efforts for healing since the late 19th century.

Missionaries created “missionary societies” (Wendt) within existing societies in the colonies. “Feeling protestant” (Scheer) was taught and learned - and ultimately habitualized. The Christian message was embedded in local contexts, which can become a challenge for a global church today. The Evangelical Lutheran Church, like others, wants to be an authentic symbol of Christianity in the world. As a religious organization, it makes religious communication possible (Schlamelcher), by offering a certain space that has to be identified accordingly.

On „ecumenical frontiers“ - the intersections and transfer points of a globally oriented work - diversity is reflected in sometimes contrary expectations and explanations on how healing should be addressed, how it is made available and how its absence is interpreted. It is a purpose of the Lutheran church as an organization, to manage this seemingly fragile diversity, to reconcile these „frontiers“.

Interviews with the Leipzig Mission Organization (Leipziger Missionswerk) and its global partners, are expected to shed light on communicative resilience strategies sought at both the individual and organizational levels. Experiences such as failed healing will be examined as stressors of faith, possibly leading to cognitive dissonances. Resilience then becomes visible in the interpretations of these dissonances.

409-II Geographies of Encounter: Multi-religious Spaces ONLINE

11:50 - 13:20 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

Irene Becci, Silvia Omenetto

471 Sharing Religious Sites in Fourth Century Antioch

Francesco Massa, Maureen Attali

Université de Fribourg, Fribourg, Switzerland

Abstract

During the late fourth century CE, Daphne near Antioch in Roman Syria was a place of both cohabitation and confrontation between various religious groups and contributed to the construction of their religious identity. In 351-352, the corpse of a Christian martyr named Babylas was buried near the famous temple of Apollo. Some 10 years later, the Emperor Julian had the body sent away on the grounds that it impeded the pagan cult, hoping that its disappearance would cause Apollo to return. However, the famous Christian preacher John Chrysostom argued that the power of the martyr lingered in Daphne even after his coffin was
removed, thus asserting the supremacy of Christianity over the pagan god. While trying verbally to
cchristianize Daphne’s space, Chrysostom also disparaged the local synagogue, even though it was a popular
spot for local Christians and may have been dedicated to Biblical figures who were also worshipped by
them. He did so to enforce the spatial and theological boundaries between Jews and Christians.

637 Spatial Arrangements for Conviviality: GlaubensGarten (Garden of
Faiths) as a Multi-Religious Space in Germany
Rasool Akbari, Mahdi Hasanzadeh
Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Mashhad, Iran, Islamic Republic of

Abstract

_GlaubensGarten_ or “Garden of Faiths” was developed as part of the 2017 State Garden Show in Bad
Lippspringe – a town in the district of Paderborn, in North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany. This garden project
represents “seven religions and worldviews” and houses their major scriptural and ritualistic symbols
selected and recreated in metalwork, furnished also with artistic designs of symbolic plants and water
springs for every religion. _GlaubensGarten_ has been constructed as a space for interreligious “encounter
and engagement” that allegedly sets “a sign of tolerance and peace” on the basis of lived diversity and joint
cooperation. In fact, the remaining site has become a multi-faith space functioning as a community centre
for interreligious prayer, networking, and annual events. In a sense, the sustained space can be discerned as
a thriving outcome of the social resilience and conviviality materialized between the seven religions
involved in the process of its making. Such notions of “sustainability” and “visibility” have even been
conceived as part of the original mission of the whole project. According to our ethnographic observations
and interviews with a number of players in the field, _GlaubensGarten_ reflects apparent synchrony of “just
and consensual” representation and participation. The present study approaches GlaubensGarten as a
resilient spatialization of sustained social relations and a materialization of conviviality among multiple
religious and non-affiliated actors within a German multicultural setting. As such, this multi-religious space
can symbolize the local community’s capacity for spatial resilience in order to manage social relations
through constructive negotiations and in consensual ways, which in effect can produce peacefulness and
preserve harmony and tolerance in a diverse society. In this sense, GlaubensGarten has been socially
constructed and maintained as a multi-religious space that enshrines everyday community life and makes
cohabitation possible.

664 Religious diversity and the long nineteenth century: exploring
port cities
Cristiana Facchini
University of Bologna, Bologna, Italy

Abstract

Port cities have often been multi-cultural urban environments, and some of the ones around the
Mediterranean have been characterized by a certain degree of religious diversity. Looking at Trieste and
Odessa, as exemplary multi-religious port cities which were developed in the nineteenth century, this article explores the forms of interactions among different minorities which inhabited these urban environments focusing especially on “non-sacred spaces”.

192 Evaluation, Quality Management and Member Statistics as “Resiliency Techniques” – How the Catholic Church in Europe Deals with Its Current Crises

11:50 - 13:20 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

Miriam Zimmer, Veronika Eufinger

The Catholic Church of Europe today faces a multitude of crises configurations. Based on aspects of the “multiple secularities” (Wohlrab-Sahr, Burchardt 2012, 887), political, cultural and societal contexts, as well as inner church occurrences, the problem statements contain a decline in membership, dwindling resources and a loss of ethical credibility.

Church as an organisation deals with those crises by deploying a set of social engineering and empirical research techniques to diagnose its outside perception, systemic trends or development obstacles. Among those techniques are on the one hand church membership surveys, studies on priest candidates or analyses of church disaffiliations. On the other hand, church adapts monitoring and evaluation procedures to control the pastoral work for quality and efficiency. The application of those strategies shapes a new trend, that is starting to spread in the European Catholic Church and can be interpreted as a method of increased “self observation” (Luhmann, 2011 (2000), 72).

Part of the Church leadership mandates those strategies, their theological consideration and their embedment in the organisational culture. Those leaders intent to build a basis for decision memos in resource management and force directions on future activities and cuts based on statistics and evaluation results. At the same time, critics arise from other parts, stating the church as an embodiment of God, its differentiation from the other societal subsystems and its commitment towards changing audiences.

These conflicts indicate the heterogeneous concepts and diverse opinions on the purpose of Church and the measurement of its results and quality criteria like efficiency and effectiveness. They can be interpreted as effects of the struggle to overcome the actual crises and develop a resilient and future-proof Church. Statistical analysis, monitoring and evaluation are, on the one hand, aspired as resilience techniques, that help to break free from a long lasting trend of decline in resources, engagement, religious vitality and influence, on the other hand, suspected as exterior and economical tools, which alienate the church from its essentials.

This session highlights the European Catholic Church’s state of affairs and emerging developments with focus on resiliency techniques from an organizational perspective. Papers will discuss the measurement of religious vitality, religiosity in the context of demographic configurations and inner church discourses on evaluation among other topics. Empirical data from quantitative and qualitative projects, comparative as well as individual case studies, theories and methods of church evaluation, quality management and member statistics will be presented.
Depicting National Catholic Action Fields – A status quo Analysis of Positions and Interests in Three Western European Countries

Miriam Zimmer¹, Ton Bernts², Wim Vandewiele³

¹University, Bochum, Germany. ²University, Nijmegen, Netherlands. ³University, Leuven, Belgium

Abstract

The Catholic Church in Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium faces a loss of members and a growing societal disinterest, that result from individual secularization pathways and cultures of religion in the three socio-political contexts. In all three countries, the numbers of priest candidates are dwindling, parishes are merged and church buildings are sold. Additionally, as a consequence of several publicly discussed cases of sexual abuse, the public reputation of the church as a societal institution is very low.

These tendencies draw a dependent and passive picture of the church and its organizations. Bishops, priests, pastoral workers and even volunteers, construct their own interpretations of the current situation and perspectives of future developments from inside based on their personal ministry, biography and experiences. Theoretically, they can be seen in an action field (Bourdieu; Fligstein/McAdam) in which they take a position, form an opinion and negotiate their interests towards their future church. This paper presents the results from an international study on the three national fields in Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands. 45 semi structured expert interviews with Catholic Church central actors on their perspectives on the actual situation of their church and their opinions on innovation and towards increased religious vitality build the basis of the study. In each country a grounded typology of stances on the increase of religious vitality and its evaluation as resiliency techniques was developed.

In all three countries, the study found different somewhat contradictory understandings of the church and its future development among the interviewees which influence their attitude towards innovation, evaluation and religious vitality. Upon the interviews for all three contexts could be build a typology of ideal types that circumscribe a discourse field in the national Catholicism on church development as crisis management, resulting organizational changes, the use of social techniques and vitality increasing methods. The three fields show lots of similarities and some crucial differences. In the German sample, we found an ideal typical model of three distinct ways the church leaders deal with change, perceive their role and shape their work: the “organizationalist”, the “spiritualist” and the “relationalist”. In the Netherlands, we found four types of actors which differ in two dimensions: spirituality and community. In Belgium the field seems to be relatively homogenous but conflicts arise on the topics of Catholic identity, the organization of renewal, the definition of spirituality and the missionary calling. Based on the assumption, that biographical experiences, observation of successful projects and so on shape the mind-set of church leaders, we trace the differences back to the national history of religion and church as well as societal development.

Measuring religious Vitality – Results from an International Survey on the Evaluation of Pastoral Projects

Veronika Eufinger, Nikita Katsuba
Center for Applied Pastoral Research at the Ruhr-University Bochum, Bochum, Germany

Abstract

The Catholic Church in Central Europe currently faces a profound crisis of dwindling members and loss of moral credibility. One way of coping with the subsequent decrease of financial and personal resources as well as societal relevance is a newfound positive stance on innovation, which cannot be taken-for-granted in this tradition oriented institution. Innovation processes are supposed to close the church’s cultural distance to the majority of the population, open church towards urban milieus or enter digital media to communicate faith and create community. The Catholic Church as well as independent Catholic organizations and foundations in GER, NL and BE have recently started funding campaigns for innovative pastoral projects like a promotion program for Christian influencers or a project on creating faith communities out of Christian day care centers.

Those campaigns are accompanied by evaluative research, which tries to uncover, if and how funded projects succeed in increasing religious vitality. In this paper, we introduce an evaluation procedure, which monitors and evaluates pastoral projects from GER, NL and BE. The procedure rests upon a contribution model of religious vitality, which is based on the one hand on an ecclesiological concept, that derives normative criteria for church vitality from the *notae ecclesiae*. On the other hand, the model is built on the state of the sociological research on the vitality of religious communities. The model provides (new) indicators for the vitality of a religious community as well as hypotheses about influencing variables. Religious vitality becomes manifest in positive attention of the local community, inspiring theological narratives and the mobilization of people for the project’s cause, who reflect and perform their religiosity. The influencing variables connect the ecclesiological concept of the *notae ecclesiae* with sociological research on religious vitality. Four characteristics are expected to be crucial to the religious vitality: contextuality – the connection to the surrounding society and culture, spirituality – the foundation in biblical narratives and religious practices, intentionality – a progressive church model in the reinvention of Vaticanum II and professionalism – the application of project management techniques and SMART goals.

We demonstrate the implementation of the church vitality model via an international survey addressed to the team leaders of pastoral projects. In a sample of 50 cases the expected vitality is measured at the beginning of the project period in comparison to a second measurement of the outputs and outcomes at the end of the term. We depict the four religious vitality scales and their latent factors, explore their interconnections and relations to the properties and innovation capabilities of the project’s team leaders and their estimation of the overall church innovation climate. Different ways of vitality feedback are presented: each evaluated project holds its own vitality profile and can be placed in a cluster of projects with similar profiles for further comparisons.

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191 Statistics and Faith: Between Rationalization and Discernment

Wojciech Sadlon

Institute for Catholic Church Statistics, Warsaw, Poland. Cardinal Stefan Wyszynski University, Warsaw, Poland

Abstract

Pastoral research is a technical category that refers to the use of qualitative and quantitative methods to study social relationships within pastoral context (VandeCreek et al., 1994). But pastoral research is much
more than about technical implementation of research techniques within a religious context. Pastoral research implies a subtle theoretical background encompassing the nature of pastoral dynamism within a community that is much more than socialization or education as it integrates not only the performative and social but also transcendent order in the dynamism of human reflexivity and agency (Archer, 2000; 2004). That is why, a style of research is between speculative imagination and strict empirical methods (Rowatt, 1982).

In my presentation I want to highlight the development of pastoral research in Poland in the recent 50 years. My presentation demonstrates to what extent anti-positivist turn has impacted pastoral research in Poland from the beginning in 1970s up to present. My contribution concerns the development of pastoral research within Lublin-Warsaw School of Sociology of Religion since Vatican II. I want to present the theoretical turn within pastoral research in Poland from the dominance of Rational Choice Theory and functionalism to more ‘personalistic’ approach such as Critical Realism and Relational Sociology.

I will start with recently published research on women consecrated communities by Witold Zdaniewicz from the beginning of 1970s. I will present theory and methodology of the research highlighting its structural, functionalistic and pragmatic paradigm and also implied methodological atheism. I will include in my presentation also parish and diocesan pastoral research from 1990s and 2000s implying 3-stage pragmatic approach (Voir, Jujer, Agir) and implemented both in Poland and the USA (Center for Applied Research in Apostolate at Georgetown).

In the second part I include recent pastoral research in Poland following the lived religion approach (Ammerman 2007, 2014; McGuire, 2008; Orsi, 2003) and trying to integrate dynamic understanding of human person and affirming his/her relationship to the transcendence (Taylor, 1989; Archer 2004; 2006). My focus will be on the recent mixed-methods representative research on sexuality, gender and intimacy within Catholic consecrated communities in Poland (n=1543). I will present how we studied sexuality in the institutionally context of Catholic communities and how we integrated personal perspective in this study with theological and normative aspects of Catholic concept of chastity.

Presenting this humanistic shift in pastoral research I will highlight the central role of language and subjectivity in pastoral research. In this way I will conclude that humanistic shift opens pastoral research for the practice of ‘discernment’ formulated by Pope Francis (e.g. 2018).

287-II The Resilience of the Science of Religion(s) between Hermeneutics and History

11:50 - 13:20 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

Carlo Giovanni Cereti

901 Crisi e Ansie di Salvezza: il Caso dell’Atene di Fine V Secolo

Giorgia Cacciolatti
Abstract


Se l’asse della religione si sposta anche secondo dinamiche sociali, è con la parabola dell’Atene di V secolo che vennero a crearsi le condizioni per la trasformazione di antichi culti agrari legati a Dioniso e Demetra, divinità protagoniste di storie di patimento e il cui legame con la terra e i cicli naturali facilmente si prestava a interpretazioni di nascita-morto-rinascita, in forme di misticismo. Questo tipo di religiosità, rispetto alla religione tradizionale su cui l’uomo greco fondava il suo senso di realtà entro un sistema di culti regolati dalla polis, garantiva all’uomo un rapporto più intimo con il divino e un intervento sullo statuto del suo essere nel mondo, volto a una forma di salvezza individuale, non esclusivamente ultraterrena.

Atene sperimentò nel corso del V secolo l’apogeo culturale e politico, al prezzo di un continuo stato di tensione e di conflitto, e dal 431 fu impegnata in una guerra trentennale nel Peloponneso da cui uscì distrutta nella sua identità politica e culturale. In questo frangente temporale sono sempre più numerose le tracce - archeologiche, epigrafiche, iconografiche e letterarie - di una ricerca individuale di salvezza e di relazione personale, intima e spontanea con la divinità, in risposta all’angoscia che la crisi della guerra aveva generato. L’uomo di fine V secolo appare sempre più conscio della frattura, ormai insanabile, con una tradizione incapace di rispondere a bisogni e sentori nuovi, innati nell’uomo ma “imposti” per cause contingenti.

La crisi identitaria, politica e religiosa in cui versava la società ateniese è cristallizzata in una delle figure politiche più controverse di sempre, quella di Alcibiade, successore di Pericle e seguace di Socrate.

Quella che potrebbe definirsi una vera e propria “ansia di salvezza” e la tendenza verso una forma più personale di relazione dio-devoto sembrano essersi riprodotte, sul piano politico, nella relazione leader-popolo: come testimoniato dalle fonti, il rapporto fra Atene e Alcibiade fu emozionale e contrastato, un odi et amo il cui momento cruciale fu l’affaire in cui l’Alcmeonide venne coinvolto nel 415, la profanazione dei Misteri di Eleusi. Lo scandalo, con la schizofrenia processuale che ne derivò, fu un’operazione volta a destabilizzare l’assetto democratico, mediante l’aggressione dei simboli e dei sentimenti religiosi del demos in un momento politicamente problematico quanto cruciale per la storia di Atene.


Luciano Albanese
Opera sottilmente apologetica, composta molto tempo dopo la sua datazione fittizia, i *Saturnali* sono il ritratto di una società pagana che sembra aver ritrovato se stessa, colta nel momento del pieno risveglio politico e culturale. Il contributo esamina i principali segni di tale rinascita.

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**668 The Question of the Supreme God in Philosophical Oracles at the End of the IVth Century in the History of Religions: The Example of a Famous Oracle of Apollo and the Neoplatonist Macrobius (Saturnalia, I, 17-23)**

**Charles Guittard**

Université Paris Nanterre, Paris, France

**Abstract**

At the end of the IVth century, there was a revival of paganism, the leaders were Symmachus and Praetextatus especially about the Altar of the Victory in Rome. In Macrobius *Saturnalia*, we find a long development of Praetextatus about the theology of the Sun and the names of the gods (*Saturnalia*, I, 17-23). Macrobius quoted an Orphic verse: “Zeus is one, Hades is one, Helios is one, Dionysos is one” (*Sat*., 1, 18, 18). According to Macrobius, this verse could be explained by the authority of the oracle of Apollo at Claros (*Saturnalia*, 1, 18, 20): in one of these oracles, Helios is Hades in winter, Zeus in spring, Helios in summer, and Iao in autumn. This passage offers evidence for the concept of religious syncretism and theocracy in ancient paganism. Iao can be identified here as the god of the Jews, integrated in the Olympian theology, and in the unifying tendency of Neopythagoreism and Neoplatonism. Focusing on this oracle, we intend to examine how scholars proposed various explanations concerning the question of the Supreme God and the question of the names of the gods (epithets and epiclesis). Another question is to determine if Macrobius, also author of a *Commentary on the dream of Scipio*, was Christian or pagan. The debate is between paganism, Judaism and Christianism. How do scholars deal with such problems?

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**556 Storia delle religioni e teologia. Un’inimicizia da superare con una comune resilienza**

**PAOLO TRIANNI**

UNIVERSITY OF TRENTO, TRENTO, Italy

**Abstract**

È diffusamente noto come, tra storia delle religioni e teologia - ma questo vale anche per i fenomenologi della religione vicini alla teologia confessionale - ci sia una reciproca ostilità. Gli storici, essenzialmente,
accusano i teologi di essere lacunosi in oggettività e scientificità. I teologi, a loro volta, accusano gli storici di non cogliere l'essenza delle religioni che studiano, proprio in virtù di una rivendicata oggettività. Questa diatriba si può oggi riconsiderare da vari punti di vista. A prescindere dal fatto che la pretesa scientificità di molte discipline umanistiche è attualmente sotto accusa, è possibile ipotizzare che la storia delle religioni possa diventare un momento propedeutico della speculazione teologica, e la teologia una chiave per entrare nell'essenza dottrinaria di una religione e alla sua vitalità spirituale. Questa ritrovata sintonia, come auspicava anche Julien Ries, può dare inizio ad una nuova storia delle religioni e ad una nuova teologia. All'interno delle Scienze delle religioni, del resto, viene oggi pacificamente accolta la Teologia delle religioni. Con essa si deve intendere non un giudizio del mondo cristiano sulle altre fedi e quindi sul contenuto di verità dei loro dogmi e la loro capacità di salvare, bensì un modo nuovo di trattare le dottrine teologiche basandosi sulla comparazione di simili luoghi tematici nelle varie religioni. La teologia stessa sente oggi il bisogno di una nuova teologia sistematica articolata non più sulla base della sola tradizione cristiana e del solo testo biblico, bensì in dialogo e in comparazione con le altre tradizioni religiose e gli altri testi sacri. Era questo il progetto teologico rimasto incompiuto di Paul Tillich, che era arrivato a tale progetto dopo l'amicizia, a Chicago, con il collega Mircea Eliade. Una teologia autentica ed un'autentica storia delle religioni, non possono pertanto escludersi, ma collaborare vicendevolmente.

IAHR EC

11:50 - 13:20 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

109 Radical Resilience

12:50 - 13:20 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

Hannes Sonnenschein

109 Radical Resilience: Messianic Redemption in Times of Crisis

Hannes Sonnenschein, Tomas Lindgren

Umeå University, Umeå, Sweden

Abstract

In this study, we aim to critically analyze and discuss how the process of coping with significant historical and contemporary crises can lead to politically motivated acts of violence and terrorism. We challenge common interpretations of the concepts of resilience, radicalization, coping, and terrorism by showing how these concepts necessarily converge in the Jewish-Israeli context when it comes to radical religious movements. We explain how the assassination of Israeli Prime-minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1995 and the massacre at the Cave of the Patriarchs in 1994 inspired an ethnocentric interpretation of Jewish mysticism and a vibrant spiritual-ecological revivalist movement. In this context, some individuals and group members who have themselves experienced life-altering crises, undergo a process of radicalization through
narratives that signify an ongoing process of meaning-making, adaptation, and coping, arguing that this process is inherently linked to the social, cultural, and ideological construction and reconstruction of the identity arc story of individual lives. For some, this process forges narratives of the mystical inner divinity of the individual and the sacredness of Eretz Yisrael as prerequisites for an immanent Messianic Redemption. Subsequent engagement in violent behavior is perceived as pious, legitimate, and even necessary for the perpetrator’s psychological well-being. These Kabbalah-based views, we argue, have given rise to a xenophobic and vehement political theology that promotes a mythical collective identity. In recent years, this political theology has inspired radical religious movements that advocate an environmentally friendly emulation of biblical life and pursue the political goal of establishing a Halachic Theocracy on the ruins of Israeli democracy.

Lunch
13:20 - 14:20 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

32-III War, Peace and Resilience in the Ancient World
Narratives
14:40 - 16:20 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

Marinella Ceravolo

663 In the Name of Jupiter: Dreams, Prodigies and omina in Silius Italicus’ Punica
Diletta Vignola
Università di Genova, Genova, Italy

Abstract

It has long been demonstrated that Silius Italicus in composing his Punica – the longest extant Latin epic poem, entirely devoted to the facts of the second Punic war – relied primarily on Livy’s Ab urbe condita libri. However, being an epic poet, and not a historiographer, Silius had the chance – and one would say even the duty – to introduce in his poetic version of the war a proper Götterapparat and to make his gods take sides
either with the Romans or with the Carthaginians (Fucecchi 2013, Baier 2006). But how far could one go in making the gods take the responsibility for historical events? And in which way do Silius’ gods express their will?

The purpose of the present paper is to explore how the poet employed prodigies and *omina* as a tool to “epicize” the final part of the war and to legitimate Scipio’s potentially debatable military strategy. The fact that Scipio was put in charge of the Iberian campaign at a very young age, and that he was subsequently allowed to take the command of the whole army and to transfer the troops from Italy to Carthage, had actually been highly controversial decisions. However, through a wise use of supernatural elements (for example: the appearance of a snake, a sort of symbol of Scipio, in the sky at Sil. 15.138-48; a premonitory dream in which Scipio is advised to attack Carthago Nova at 15.180-99; the transformation of Scipio’s javelin into an oak at 16.586-91) Silius succeeds not only in representing his hero as a predestined one (Fucecchi 1993), but also in creating a new epic plot for the second Punic war – a plot in which the enemy is defeated first and foremost by the Roman gods, and therefore the final victory of Rome over Carthage becomes part of a larger divine plan.

References


343 "Inter febres morbosque reipublicae". Orosius on Roman Wars in Hist. 3, 8

Elisa Manzo

Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II, Naples, Italy. Universidad de Cantabria, Santander, Spain

Abstract

The *Historiae adversus paganos*, written by Orosius (ca 417 CE), have been traditionally linked with the struggle of Christianity against paganism in Late Antiquity. However, a closer analysis of the work shows that Orosius’ intent is deeper. Indeed, human *miseriae*, that derive from Adam’s sin and that God constantly punishes, are the core of his *Historiae*.

Orosius specifically emphasizes the *bellorum miseriae*, collecting all the wars that have followed one another over time (from the Assyrian King Nino to 416 CE). The result is that peace becomes a parenthesis between them and its duration is as short-lived as it is unheard of for humanity.
A turning point occurs with the Pax Augustea and the concurrent birth of Jesus, that makes it clear how God decided to incarnate himself precisely in the moment of greatest tranquillity humanity has ever experienced. Consequently, the spread of Christianity represents the only consolatory support to face the bellorum miseriae.

Although the sixth book is devoted to the Pax Augustea, my paper will focus on a paragraph of the third book, that has long been overlooked. It consists of Orosius’ reflection on Roman wars before the Pax Augustea, dwelling in particular on the Punic Wars. He compares the belligerent state in which Rome was raging to a dreaded disease. Such a state prevented the Romans from lucidly analysing their situation, and recourse to pagan gods fomented their malaise. Only after the Pax Augustea could Rome recover from that disease, the cure for which came directly from God.

284 Scourges in Late IV Century: A Syriac Point of View
Matteo Poiani
Université de Strasbourg, Strasbourg, France. The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Jerusalem, Israel

Abstract

At the end of the IV century, the Syriac author Cyrillona wrote a (most probably liturgical) poem about the scourges which were wasting the oriental part of the Roman Empire: Huns and locusts were for those times among the most terrible things that a society could tolerate. His vivid voice from his times shows us the way to withstand the situation. The community is lost, and it cries to its God via two personified characters: the Earth and the Church. The creation, this material world, is a possible way to contact God directly and try to find an intercession. By moving the previous analysis forward, our aim is to understand how a community could handle this situation in the poetic way that Cyrillona outlines. The preacher, the singer of this homily is the handler of the community: he leads it through the prayer, by encouraging and inspiring his audience, i.e. the congregation. The external context is the attractive city of Edessa and in particular his “theological school” configured probably by Ephrem himself. The very rich imaginary poetic world drawn up by Ephrem is developed and expanded by Cyrillona in order to create with his poems a liturgical space where the leader can take the hand of the congregation and carry it out of the tremendous time of the scourges. With Ernesto de Martino, we can say that Cyrillona is the magician of the community, the only one who can take risks for the whole congregation and re-establish the previous order.

301 When Rome Spared Capua: The Intervention of God Pan in Silius’ Punica (XIII, 305-350)
Emilie Borron
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Abstract

The Latin epic entitled Punica, which Silius Italicus wrote between 83 and 103 AD, resumes or even rewrites a suggestive amount of mythological themes from Greek epics. I propose to focus on the retractatio, one can also say the inventio of an episode dealing with the intervention of the god Pan just before the storming
of Capua (XIII, 305-350). When the gates are wide-open on the imploring Capuan people, and when Roman soldiers are ready to devastate the city, everything stands upon the brink of slaughter and ruin. However, at this very moment, Jupiter choses to send Pan, a quite minor goat-god, whose pacifying intercession is rather unexpected.

His presence would be understandable if, as he does in the Argonautica (III, 43-60), a contemporary epic by Valerius Flaccus, Pan was playing his traditional part as herald and instigator of panic and disaster. Yet, Silius makes an unusual choice by depicting Pan quite the opposite, enforcing that way not only literary aemulatio with Flaccus, but also a peculiar variatio: in fact, his god Pan is a soothing character, who achieves reconciliation between the two factions, which are after all brotherly Italian cities. Broadly speaking, since he is the god of infringements, it appears that he is able to prevent them. A further study of the excerpt brings to light the echo between the conciliation Pan is aiming at, and his literary depiction: the latter combines various distinguishing features of the goat-god in both Greek and Roman cultures, cleverly and learnedly combining them into a variegated portrait.

Thus, in depicting the god Pan in the opposite way to Valerius Flaccus’ approach, Silius Italicus dismisses the god who causes panic in Greek mythology, and puts in his place an utterly different character, perhaps because he appears this time in a Roman epic. Here, Pan is the deciding protagonist in a crucial event of Roman history, playing the part of a peacemaker, and vouching for an extended and united Romanity; a positive and happy figure who borrows from both Greek and Roman culture, this god Pan is a vivid example of the mythological, political and artistic conciliation he embodies in Silius’ epic, and also an instance of alterité incluse in a Roman context.

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26-III Gods Don't Die

14:40 - 16:20 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

Beatrice Lietz, Fabio Guidetti, Nicola Barbagli

479 Constantine and the Gods of Rome

Fabio Guidetti

Università di Pisa, Pisa, Italy

Abstract

The so-called ‘conversion’ of emperor Constantine to Christianity has been rightly interpreted as a major turning point in the history of western civilisation. However, in the appreciation of most contemporary viewers this event (or, rather, the series of events which formed this process) was not as disruptive as later, especially Christian authors represent it. This paper will look at Constantine’s policies from the point of view of the traditional Roman religion, showing that his choices can be easily understood in terms of continuity with established practices, especially in the light of the religious policies of his immediate predecessors, Constantius and Galerius. Seen as part of his imperial self-representational style, Constantine’s relationship
to one specific god (in his case, Christ) as his protector, particularly during military actions, was in total continuity with the traditional way Roman emperors advertised their privileged relationship with the divine. Constantine’s interventions in favour of Christian priests, congregations, and places of worship were the logical consequence of his devotion to his patron god, and were easily accepted by pagan Romans because they were not seen as being in conflict with standard practices. The exclusiveness with which Christian priests preached the mendacity of all the other gods was not part of the traditional Roman religious experience, and Constantine, as well as many of his contemporaries, does not seem to have understood his own religious affiliation in this way. Nor did Constantine’s choice of Christ as his patron deity affect his understanding of his own duties as Roman emperor and high pontiff; in this respect, Constantine’s religious policies maintained and upheld the principles established by Galerius in his edict of 311, which had put an end to religious persecution.

184 The Last Breath of Paganism Through the Neoplatonic “Theology of History” / L’ultimo respiro del paganesimo attraverso la teologia neoplatonica della storia (in Italian)

Miriam Cutino

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Abstract

This proposal aims to demonstrate, through one of the most emblematic Neoplatonic testimonies, the permanence of paganism’s cultural identity after the definitive closure of the temples.

The transformations and historical events, which characterize the 5th and 6th centuries B.C. and which show paganism in its gradual decline, are evoked, in a predominantly autobiographical form, by Neoplatonic philosophers such as Proclus, Damascius and Simplicius, who did not actually have a perception of the impending end, but for whom this phase of the crisis of paganism was rather a transitive period that would subsequently lead to an eventual revival. Even after the closure of the School of Athens, the transfer of the Neoplatonic philosophers, all originating from Asia Minor - Damascius, Simplicius, Hermias, Isidorus, Priscian - to Persia, at the royal academy of Gondishapur, makes it possible to continue a tradition that manifests itself as the last resistance before the establishment of Christianity.

In the light of the outlined historical picture, the purpose of this talk is to highlight one of the most emblematic ways in which the last Neoplatonic authors have represented, in a real “theology of history”, the historical, socio-cultural and geographical context of those centuries: our analysis is focused on the monumental project exhibited in the first book of the Platonic Theology of Proclus that traces the history of the “Platonic school” from its origins to its decline, and in which we meet a first attempt towards the justification of the degeneration of paganism through a cyclical conception of time. The timelessness of this story is further affirmed and scientifically demonstrated by including divine entities, to which different “divine names” are attributed, corresponding with various levels of the hierarchy. Our discussion will aim at the clarification of the roles played by these various entities in Proclus’ conception of History and historical events, by finally comparing it to the multiple rituals of the divinization of nature reported in Proclus’ Hieratic Art, one of the most solid expressions of the identity of the pagan society in the 5th century. Our final question will be: how can we relate Proclus’ cyclical conception of time to the priest’s feeling of gradual approach to the fixed hierarchy of the gods, and what is the place occupied by the common human in this proliferation of the divine?
147 Resilient Rituals: Epiphany, Therapy, and Identity Between Pagan and Christian Cultures

Luigi Lafasciano

Università degli Studi di Salerno, Fisciano, Italy. École Pratique des Hautes Études de Paris, Paris, France

Abstract

The puzzling phenomenon of Christian incubation - i.e., to sleep in a sacred place in order to obtain prophecy or healing in a dream vision –, has been traditionally understood, even though never fully explained, in terms of continuity or discontinuity in its adaptation from Pagan to Christian culture. According to most recent scholarly research, incubation emerges in Eastern Christian cultures only at the end of the 5th century CE, as a result of the evolution of the cult of saints. This paper challenges the aforementioned hermeneutical approach, and analyzes the phenomenon in terms of the resilience of ritual and cognitive devices. Analyzing a range of sources from the 1st to the 5th century CE - including the Shepherd of Hermas, Perpetua’s passio, Ambrose of Milan, Victoricus of Rouen, Paulinus of Nola, and Augustine -, the paper traces a brief history of the ritual gestures associated with prophetic and healing visions in the Latin West. The ritual “vocabulary” of visions was indeed a shared concern between Pagan and Christian late antique communities, and even though the latter had particular problems in adapting it to their new theology of salvation, they developed an original framework and new ritual patterns in order to keep seeking a visionary contact with the divine.

825 “It Is Easier to Beat Them to Death than to Dissuade Them from That Abominable Crime”: Continuity, Resistance, and Revival of Pagan Cults in Late Antique Gaul

Carlo Ferrari

Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Storici, Napoli, Italy

Abstract

After Caesar’s conquest in the 1 century BCE, Gaul became part of the Roman Empire. However, the level of integration was not the same everywhere: cities participated more actively than the countryside in the new cultural and economic system, elites more than common people. Moreover, a marked difference existed between Southern
and Northern Gaul: while the former - thanks to the foundation in the past of Greek colonies and the Roman province of *Narbonensis* - was already largely integrated into the Greco-Roman world before Caesar’s campaign, the North continued to remain on the margins of this world, even after the Roman conquest. This fracture became deeper following the political and military turmoils of the III century and again at the beginning of the V century, when Germanic and Central Asian populations crossed the Rhine, bringing devastation and instability to much of Northern Gaul. One of the main consequences of these traumatic events was the strong slowdown in the process of Christianization, which in Gaul had been undertaken with some regularity only since the beginning of the IV century: the numerous wars fought on Gallic soil by barbarians and usurpers and the progressive weakening of the imperial control, in fact, made it very difficult for the Church to pursue its missionary activity. As a result, a large part of the population continued to practise the old traditional cults - not only the Greco-Roman ones, but even those dating back to before the Roman conquest, which (especially in Northern Gaul) were still relatively vital even after four centuries of Roman domination. In addition to that, barbarian peoples from across the Rhine - whether soldiers employed in the imperial army, agrarian labourers, or invaders - brought with them rituals and beliefs that in some cases even merged with the local ones. By analyzing some of the most significant literary passages and archaeological findings, this paper intends to provide a picture as vivid as possible of the multifarious religious situation of Late Antique
Gaul, when Christianity coexisted for some time with local cults and even with foreign ones imported by barbarian peoples from Central and Eastern Europe.

277 “Adspice, concedas numen inesse loco”: Cult and Cultural Memory in the Destroyed City

Emily Hurt

Yale University, New Haven, USA

Abstract

The ancient city was a site of memory. It held its past in its temples and streets, its monuments and tombs, its names and sacred groves. It was what Pierre Nora has called a “milieu de mémoire”, a place so infused with the memories of the past that that memory becomes the chief organizing force of society: it preserves the past, it spontaneously regenerates in response to the present, it drives the future. It is this shared memory that provided the foundation for a sense of civic identity in the city of Rome and throughout its Empire. This paper examines cultural memory in cities that suffered a traumatic break in their memories, specifically, those cities that were utterly destroyed by the Roman Empire in the process of its expansion.

A part of this destruction was the the ritual calling out of the Gods, the *evocatio*, and the invitation to those gods to abandon their cities and transfer themselves to the city of Rome. Even the Romans recognized the immortality of the gods: they could not be destroyed, but merely relocated. I argue that that despite the efforts of the Romans to strip these communities of their cults, the bond between the city and divinity was, to some extent, unbreakable. Even in a city newly rebuilt and filled with Roman colonists, the cult of the original city acted as a “lieu de mémoire” or memory node. This node was a creative space that allowed for the continuation, rebuilding, and reinventing of the city’s cultural memory. I examine this pattern in cities destroyed by the Romans in Italy and North Africa. I focus first on the continuation of the cult of Juno Currites at Fallerii, the Faliscan city destroyed by the Romans in 241 BCE and moved to a site seven kilometers away. Secondly I turn to the Goddess Caelestis at Carthage, a city that the Romans had destroyed in 146 BCE and refounded a century later on the same site. I argue that these cults acted as focal points that allowed the inhabitants of the new cities to build their civic identity around the memory of cities that were fundamentally alien to them, Faliscan and Punic respectively. Our evidence for these cults shows that they lie at a complex intersection of Roman and local discourse that paradoxically allowed the conqueror to play a role in preserving what it itself had tried to erase. In this paper I will show that the gods, indeed, do not die, nor do they go willingly from their sacred spaces. They instead act as central point for the imagining of shared past in communities in which every other memory had been taken away: their sacred spaces leveled, their books burnt, their ancestors killed. Both Roman Fallerii and Roman Carthage used their goddess to link their current city to the past city, proving that the connection between the gods and their worshippers survived even the most violent attempts at erasure.
In Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, failure to align themselves with normative religion could have serious consequences for citizens, with effects on social and legal relations. From the time of the Emperor Constantine, heresy became a legal category and heretics, considered a threat to the State welfare, were punished - or at least threatened - with the loss of multiple civic rights, with the practice being imposed that the religion of the ruler was the religion of the citizens. This initiated a process of legal penalisation of religious dissent which, starting with Christian dissidents, was extended to other religious groups (pagans, Jews, apostates, Manicheans), who, branded as public enemies and marked with the stigma of infamy, were deprived of civic rights and socially segregated. Expulsion from cities, prohibition of assembly and teaching, loss of freedom of discussion, censorship and burning of books, exile, confiscation of property, loss of the right to test and receive legacies, marriage limitations, prohibition on holding public office, were some of the measures applied to religious dissidents. However, those who were excluded proved to be extremely resilient, developing strategies to defend their cases (social networking support, apologetic writing, court appeals). Taking advantage of the tolerance intervals to reintegrate into their local communities, the excluded saw their prestige and authority enhanced.

Contributions to this panel are invited to present cases of civic exclusion related to religious dissent, both of individuals and groups, as well as citizenship discourses during Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages. Legal sources, canons of Church councils, hagiography, and theological texts provide a rich and varied material to document religious resilience in a crucial formative period in the history of Europe, giving rise to new forms of social and political belonging.
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366 The Tenacity of Religious Dissidents. Rhetorical Strategies of Defence
Juana Torres
University of Cantabria, Santander, Spain

Abstract

After the recognition of freedom of worship and the end of persecution in the Roman Empire, pagan intellectuals began to protest against the privileges granted to Christians and against repressive measures towards traditional cults. The various adversus christianos texts were answered and their arguments contested in apologetic literature. The aim was no longer to defend themselves or to ask for clemency from the authorities, but to refute the questioning and disqualifications to which Christian dogmas were being subjected. Although the works of the pagan authors have barely survived, the debates are included in the opponents’ responses and reflect their perseverance in their criticisms, using mainly rhetoric. Through the use of dialectical strategies, the pagan dissidents showed great tenacity in confronting Christian arguments. In this paper I will study two works from the 4th-5th century, little known in the academic field, which reproduce discussions between pagans and Christians (“The Dispute with a Lawyer” by Marcus the Deacon and “The Apocrytic” by Macarius of Magnesia). The examination of the argumentative strategies will demonstrate this resilience.

400 From Slaves to Citizens. The Religious Aspects of Manumission in Roman Times
Pedro López Barja
Abstract

In Ancient Rome, manumission very frequently entailed the creation of a new citizen. Nevertheless, scholars have tended to overlook the religious implications of the manumission process. In this paper we will look at the differences between Pagan and Christian times in respect to the manumission of slaves. We will also argue that a change in change may be construed as an explanation for some of them: the presence of the bishop meant that the new freedman became a member of the Church, while in previous times the magistrate giving authority to the manumissio uindicta signalled the enlisting of the ex-slave among the citizens. As evidence of these changes, we will rely on the juridical sources, but also take into account some inscriptions acknowledging certain deities for being instrumental in the freedom obtained by the devotees.

598 Cauernae: A preferential topos for Resilient Citizens according to Antiheretic Literature

CARLA SETIÉN

UNIVERSITY OF CANTABRIA, SANTANDER, Spain

Abstract

The control of space/s was determining for any type of religious group claiming a predominant position within society. Coming through a long occupation of the peripheral spaces, by the second half of the fourth century, the Christian orthodox group could claim a leading position, among other features, thanks to the possession of buildings in the heartland of the cities, that is, in full view of the vast majority of the population.

The purpose of this study is to examine to what extent excluded Christian groups, considered heretics, were forced to retire to the most peripheral spaces, to cauernae. It will also look at how this withdrawal made possible their existence and that of their religious practices. The sources of this inquiry will be the heresiologists of the first centuries of Christianity, namely Irenaeus of Lyon, the author of the so-called Refutatio, Filastrius of Brescia, and the author of the Indiculus de haeresibus. By framing the text in this manner, it is important to take into account that the portrayal and the reasoning come from a one-sided point of view as heresiologists represent the winning part.

ISC 13 Christians, Jews and Arabs in the Middle Ages (Individual Short Communications)

14:40 - 16:20 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021
Julian Wood
University of Oxford, Oxford, United Kingdom

Abstract

Bishop Theodore Abu Qurrah (d. ca. 825) wrote against a tide. A Syrian Melkite Christian, he found his Church increasingly alone and embattled. Long cut-off from Byzantium, it was confronted with a culturally assertive Abbasid Caliphate pushing Islamification. Conversion abounded, with increasing abandonment of Christian practices as concession to pressure. None was more susceptible to this than image-veneration; a religious catastrophe, so devastating for Theodore that he composed a Treatise solely devoted to defending the tradition.

This paper defies this resilient Christian’s scholarly neglect, and concentrates on a hitherto under-appreciated, crucial, question in his Treatise: whether Theodore suggested that iconic depictions could be ‘alive’. This issue dominated the image debates that engulfed both the Byzantine and Islamic worlds across the 8th-9th centuries, yet has been eschewed in scholarship on Abu Qurrah. This paper suggests that his treatment of the issue indicates much about his strategy for religious resilience against Islamic pressure. Crucially, it suggests that the method was effectively religious permeability: combatting the prevalence of conversion, and parrying pressure that often prompted it, by tactfully yielding to certain Islamic ideas.

Close textual analysis, and comparison to Theodore’s other works – especially those addressing less conversion-prone Greek-speaking audiences – investigates how newly-crystallised Islamic arguments regarding ‘ruh’ (‘spirit’ within depicted figures) may have influenced Theodore’s thought. It suggests that Abu Qurrah, despite being fiercely Christian in a fiercely Islamic world, incorporated, rather than refused, this particular idea from Islamic theology. To buttress his own embattled faith, and identity, amid a cultural and religious crisis.

124 Resilience by Retelling: Nahmanides’ on the Biblical Forefathers
Miriam Sklarz
Orot Israel College, Rehovot, Israel. Hemdat HaDdarom, Netivot, Israel

Abstract
Nahmanides was the spiritual leader of Catalan Jewry in the 13th century and one of the most defining figures in Judaism of all time. The centerpiece of his literary enterprise was his Biblical exegesis written with the aim “to put at ease the minds of the students who are wearied from suffering exile and adversity.” In this paper, I present Nahmanides’ creative Biblical interpretation by which he transforms the Biblical Forefathers into representatives of the Jewish nation throughout history, in its highs and lows. I will demonstrate how Nahmanides’ exegetical method, including themes, content, and rhetorical style, are designed to empower his readers, in terms of their cognitive, spiritual and emotional resilience, and strengthen their resistance to the material and spiritual challenges of their times.

50 The Jews of Arabia: Exploitation of Cults and Resilience
Valentina A. Grasso
University of Cambridge, Cambridge, United Kingdom

Abstract
The Jews were a significant minority in late antique Rome and Iran. Yet, the rabbinical elites were able to maintain a distinguishable community identity and influence the neighbouring Gentiles. According to Bernard Lewis, the Jews of Arabia “were of no great importance in Jewish history” (Lewis, The Jews of Islam, 74). Conversely, Arabian Jews plausibly played a pivotal role in the rise of Islam. Having previously served the South Arabian king as counsellors in the fifth century, the Arabian Jewish communities played a significant role in the first years of Muhammad’s prophetic career as suggested by the so-called ‘Constitution of Medina’ (Dastūr al-Madīna), regulating tribal matters such as warfare between the main tribes of Medina, the Aws and Khazraj, and those who emigrated with Muḥammad from Mecca to Medina in 622. Exploiting an array of archaeological and literary sources mostly written in Syriac, Arabic or Hebrew, but whose study is currently heavily compartmentalized, this paper analyses the history of the Jews of Arabia during Late Antiquity. Investigating the Arabian Gentiles’ socio-political exploitation of Judaism as a mechanism for establishing identities, I will highlight the Jews’ ability to suit new environmental conditions in the region at the dawn of Islam.

774 The Arab Christian Identity during the Transition from Byzantium to Islam in Umm al-Rasas / Kastron Mefa’a (Jordan): A Case of Resilience
Carmelo Pappalardo
Università degli Studi di Firenze, Firenze, Italy. Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Jerusalem, Israel

Abstract
The Syro-Palestinian Region has always been an area of great importance and strategically relevant from a commercial, economic and political/military point of view. The control of this pivotal piece of land has always attracted the major trading powers that took over one after another throughout history and the scenario of social, cultural and religious changes.
In this perspective it is interesting to draw attention to the historical and cultural transition that took place during the 7th century, when the control and administration of the region passed from the Roman and Byzantine rulers - who had controlled the region continuously since 63 BC - to the Islamic-Umayyad power in the thirties of the century.

The so called “transition” from Byzantium to Islam is one of the most relevant and up-to-date topics in the studies of the Syro-Palestinian region, not only in terms of history and archaeology, but also for its commercial, religious, cultural and anthropological implications and impact. What was traditionally seen as a point of violent “fracture” – thanks to the results of the archaeological investigations conducted since the last decades of the previous century – has been reconsidered and somewhat revalued as a period of slow transition with several and interesting implications, emphasizing the crucial role played by the Christian Arab tribes allied with the Byzantine Empire and which lived in the area.

In this context the study of the topography and the urban development of Umm al-Rasas / Kastron Mefa’a is framed very well and its transformation from a fortress intended to defend the *Limes arabisicus* to an extended settlement clearly points out how the strong Christian characterizations were kept in the urban layout that saw the ecclesiastical buildings - that were basically all built during the 6th century - maintain their centrality in the scheme of roads and buildings of Kastron Mefa’a even during the height of the Islamic period when things were deeply altered and adapted to new rules and necessities under the influence of by then different political, economic, social and religious conditions. In this way even responding to new necessities and to new urbanistic rules dictated by the different situation the topography of Umm al-Rasas kept its strong Christian characterization with numerous and vital ecclesiastical complexes still fully used as the structural and floor restorations clearly demonstrate that are dated to the second half of the 8th century.

Due to the role of the site as a liminal defensive outpost along the frontier of the Roman Empire and as a place of pilgrimage with rich testimonies of the diffusion of Christian and Islamic monotheism, Umm al-Rasas is an ideal case study to analyze the strategies employed by the population of a suburban settlement to safeguard its own tradition and to investigate to what extent the re-organization can be a resource of resilience, possibly to understand to which elements perceived as intrusive the Christian inhabitants of Umm al-Rasas reacted emphasising certain elements which were considered as identity-making.

235 Institutionalism as Strategy of Resilience

14:40 - 16:20 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

Kristine Sinclair, Niels Valdemar Vinding

Institutions are usually defined by reference to their structural relations and by their characteristics, such as degrees of embeddedness, taken-for-grantedness, routine, low cost and upkeep (DiMaggio & Powell, “Introduction”, 1991). The most significant institutions do not require deliberate action, but are rather independent of the individuals and agents associated, and even at times become “invisible” in their surroundings.
In times of crises and in the face of demise or destruction, the structures that include strong intuitions may prove more resilient. In Western Europe, churches characterized by deep levels of institutionalization and strong structural support have survived crises after crisis - in part at least - due to the significant structural inertia and natural presence in the religio-organisational field (Vinding 2013). For Muslim and other religious minority communities in Europe, looking to churches, their institutions and relations to authorities in state and society may be a strategy to create and secure resilience and to follow mimetically their example and isomorph into similar structures, frames and networks. Similarly for Jewish communities, relying on historical understandings of respect through structural embeddedness and institutional quietness remain in many instances.

As scholars of religion - both structuralists and advocates of a “lived religion” approach (Ammerman 2020, Repstad 2019) - argue, the power and presence of the taken-for-grantedness is so significant that it influences both those who seamlessly adopt the structures as natural and those who see themselves outside the organizations and structures. The latter perhaps take more note than others, as they often define themselves in opposition to that power. In this session, we discuss examples of religious resilience expressed through various degrees of institutionalization and opposition to institutionalization and strategies building on both openness and closedness to the surrounding majority societies.

This panel invites examples of crises and challenges to Muslim and Jewish communities, and explores how they may be understood in a place of imperfect institutionalization and how a strategy of further embedding themselves in the structures of recognition, inclusion and integration is a viable strategy of resilience.

235 Institutionalism as strategy of resilience

Kirstine Sinclair¹, Niels Valdemar Vinding²

¹University of Southern Denmark, Odense, Denmark. ²University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen, Denmark

Abstract

Institutions are usually defined by reference to their structural relations and by their characteristics, such as degrees of embeddedness, taken-for-grantedness, routine, low cost and upkeep (DiMaggio & Powell, ‘Introduction’, 1991). The most significant institutions do not require deliberate action, but are rather independent of the individuals and agents associated, and even at times become ‘invisible’ in their surroundings.

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Speakers and paper already submitted for this session


Maja Gildin Zuckermann (Copenhagen Business School): Securitization and Sensemaking among Dansk Jewish Day School Students.

Brian Arly Jacobsen (University of Copenhagen) and Pernille Friis Jensen (University of Copenhagen): Lived Institutions - moving on from ‘Lived Religion’

Kirstine Sinclair (University of Southern Denmark) and Niels Valdemar Vinding (University of Copenhagen): Understanding the resilience of mosques as responses to religious devastation

236 Understanding the Resilience of Mosques as Responses to Religious Devastation

Kirstine Sinclair¹, Niels Valdemar Vinding²

¹University of Southern Denmark, Odense, Denmark. ²University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen, Denmark

Abstract

Studying power structures within mosques in Denmark, we noticed how board members would express similar concerns regarding perceived impending religious devastation but choose different paths towards resilience. The fear of losing grip of younger generations of believers due to minority context circumstances and a politically negative climate towards Muslims in general, transgressed traditionalist and progressive
persuasions. But how do we explain reactions stretching from closing in on themselves, over advocating for opposition to existing societal structures and institutions to arguing that such challenges should be met with open arms and dialogue?

Here, we take our inspiration from Jonathan Lear’s (2006) analysis of responses to cultural devastation amongst Indian tribes in North America. We argue that the relative fearful reactions reflect similar responses to cultural devastation in religious associations and depend on the resources in any given mosque. Furthermore, we see a reflection in their eschatological worldview: the more hope invested in the transcended world, the more distinct towards this world. Resources should be understood in the broadest sense: social and educational background of board members and congregation, language skills, the level of understanding of the institutions and norms of majority society, time and money. Thus, how challenges are met depends first and foremost on the degree of resourcefulness of the involved individuals as their choices regarding scriptural interpretation and activism align with such resources. We illustrate this argument with examples from four mosque associations as we pose the question: What are the strategies to secure survival of the mosque?

130 Researching Lived Institutions
Brian Arly Jacobsen, Pernille Friis Jensen
University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen, Denmark

Abstract

Individual religious practices have received great attention in recent years as the past decades have seen a tendency to abandon official religion studies to instead focus on practical forms of religion following “everyday religion” beyond officially religious institutions.

In this paper we turn the focus on the institutional level of the religious field, mosques to be specific. We find how the institutions are made up of individuals, while at the same time they are much more than a group of individuals. Institutions in society have striking similarities. But how can it be that these similarities arise across institutions, organizations and also spread to religious institutions? And how can we account not just for stability but also change and dynamism that we find within these institutions for instance in attaining a high degree of resilience?

We suggest an answer to these questions is to be found by approaching the field from the concept of what we call lived institutions. Following recent discussions on “lived religion” and the neglect of the significance of institutional practice, we argue that turning the focus back on the institutional level can rebalance the structure/agency scale back toward the former without losing important insights about the actors.

With the concept of lived institution, we focus on the dynamic interplay between institutions’ official discourses and values and practices of individuals. The term shows how peoples express their identity and belonging and how individuals and social groups interact with each other. A theory of lived institution is also a theory of practice: the notion of practice is a central point that makes “interparadigmatic
conversations possible” between the concept of “lived religion” and the sociologist theory of “New Institutionalism”.

246 British Mosques: A Case Study in Models of Institutionalisation and Resilience
Azim Ahmed
Cardiff University, Cardiff, United Kingdom

Abstract
The COVID-19 pandemic restrictions in the United Kingdom have presented its estimated 2000 mosques with a unique range of challenges. They have been required to negotiate new and constantly changing regulations on communal activities while divorced from the regular congregational attendance that support their activities. This presentation, based on findings on a survey undertaken in February 2021 and fieldwork in 2020, presents the ways in which mosques have navigated challenges (successfully and unsuccessfully) utilising two broad frameworks. The first is to follow the model of established churches in Britain, while the second is to assume the modes of operation of civil society groups. While the former had hitherto benefited from greater government and media recognition (and sometimes funding) and larger operating budgets including staff, the latter had operated on more meagre resources with a greater emphasis on voluntary contributions (including time). During the pandemic however, civil society orientated mosques have proven to be more adaptable and less financially vulnerable. The case study provides an insight into means of resilience and the frameworks of institutionalisation in contemporary society.

939 Securitization and Sensemaking among Dansk Jewish Day School Students
Maja Gildin Zuckerman
Copenhagen Business School, Copenhagen, Denmark

Abstract
As the students enter the Danish Jewish day school, heavy security measures control and organize their daily entrance in and out of the school turf. While these measures are without comparison within the Danish school landscape, most of the Jewish students assert that they barely notice them at all. The threat of antisemitic assaults, the school as a target, the police officers, and the multiple security gates, and surveillance cameras have all become normal and even tedious parts of their everyday student life. In this paper, I explore how Danish Jewish teenage students make sense of and find resilience in their Jewish belonging in the light of a highly securitized school life. Inspired by cultural cognitive sociology (Goffman 1971; Zerubavel 1991, Simpson 1996; Brekhus 1998), the paper examines how the securitization of Jewish institutions effect the students’ cognitive framing of safe and unsafe, Jewish and Danish, normal and unnnormal. Based on fieldwork findings, I argue that the students come to see Jewish visibility in non-Jewish
spaces as highly political and marked statements that transgress “the normal order of appearance” (Goffman 1971). Some students take this challenge on and assert their right to be visibly Jewish everywhere. A majority of the students, however, find confidence and peace in their supposed ability to pass and appear visibly Jewish only in spaces that they find safe.

40-III Resilient Modalities of Religion in Chinese Societies

14:40 - 15:40 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

Kai Shmushko, Magdaléna Rychetská

732 The New Reading of Chinese Myths

Jakub Kwiatkowski

Doctoral School of Humanities of The Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Lublin, Poland

Abstract

Chinese mythology used to be a living form of folk beliefs in the Middle Kingdom since a remote past, when Chinese civilization emerged in history during the reign of the Shang/ Yin dynasty in the 17th century B.C. until modern times. Considering Chinese culture as a one of the most resilient human facts, it has to be said that the Chinese mythology as a kind of folk religion is a fundamental element of culture resisting crises which happened to the Middle Kingdom during 19th and 20th century. The author researches Chinese myths included in classics written since antiquity by making new translations. It helps us to understand how important for living culture are rudimental beliefs of its society. That means the new reading of Chinese myths is necessary to understand at all such complex phenomenon as Chinese culture and modern China which is the most important challenge in the modern dynamically changing world.

537 Why Do Local Spirits Leave the City? Urban Buddhism in Ulan-Ude

Kristina Jonutytė

Vilnius University, Vilnius, Lithuania

Abstract

Buryat Buddhism has historically been tightly linked with the rural milieu. Since its spread in the 18-19th centuries, its temples and lamas were initially nomadic, although settled monasteries did form later to serve the nomadizing Buryat population. The spread of Buddhism was brought to a violent halt for much of the 20th century by Soviet anti-religious policies. While the losses were vast, the recent post-Soviet decades have seen a vigorous Buddhist revival, (re)establishing its role in the public and private spheres. This
religious revival, however, has taken place in a vastly different social context. While Buryats were previously mostly nomadizing herders, over the 20th century much of the Buryat population has moved to the capital city Ulan-Ude, previously a Russian settlement. Buddhism today is thriving under newly urban conditions, but much of its historical, ritual and ideological threads still link it to the previously rural context. At the same time, the urban space is to a large extent seen as devoid of such religious power, and its local spirits and deities are said to have left it a long time ago. The present paper explores these rural-urban entanglements of Buryat Buddhism, looking at both resilience and flexibility of religious forms to enable its continuity. In particular, it asks: how does the urban environment shape Buddhist beliefs, institutions and practices, and does it make sense to speak of “urban Buddhism” at all?

546 Can Chinese Buddhism Conquer the West?
Krzysztof Kosior
Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Lublin, Poland

Abstract

The paper presents the conditions for the possibility of extensive reception of Chinese Buddhism (Hàn chuán fójiào) in the West.

The pragmatically oriented Chinese Communist Party favours, though not unconditionally, the development of Buddhism, which has been present in the Middle Kingdom for nearly two thousand years. Chinese Buddhism, which has undergone numerous transformations throughout history, is today a syncretic religious form dominated by two native traditions: devotional jingtū and contemplative chán. Such a hybrid configuration allows the omission of doctrinal, ritual and organizational reefs that emerge in the functioning of theistic religions and suspends their confrontational character. Moreover, in an age of progressive privatization of religion, mixed or selective Buddhist practice seems to meet, more closely, the religious needs and expectations of Westerners. And the intense missionary effort of the followers of Chinese Buddhism with the use of the digital media makes it much easier to undertake appropriate action. The paper attempts to answer the question whether these actions may ultimately prove effective.

249-I Re-enchantment in Central-Eastern Europe?
Religious Change in Former Socialist Countries Revisited

14:40 - 16:20 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021
Zuzana Bartova, Viola Teisenhoffer, Agata Ladykowska
This panel aims to revisit the issue of religious change in former socialist European countries through anthropological, historical and sociological approaches by focusing on emergent religious practices and the shifts in traditional religious institutions. Societies qualified as “post-socialist” have attracted scholarly attention as compelling examples of social rupture and transformation. If the interconnection of the idea of “transition” with the label “post-socialism” has been put into question (Hann, Humphrey & Verdery, 2002; Cervinkova, 2012; Müller, 2019), Central-Eastern Europe is still perceived, both in social scientific and common-sense thinking, as being on the East-West divide determined by the region’s socio-historic past. In this perspective, the study of religion seems to raise some conceptual, methodological and epistemological issues that continue to make the question spatially and temporally relevant. After the changes in legislations, typical in the post-socialist area, which allowed for the unprecedented public presence of religion, the latter underwent further substantial transformations (institutional or not). Previously marginalized institutionalized religions were dealing with the new situation and new possibilities to regain lost power and adherents. Revival of religious institutions in most of CEE countries (Tomka 2011) during the 1990’s and 2000’s was coupled with growing pluralization and the emergence of spiritual entrepreneurs. At the same time, in the past two decades, as in the West, religion has been less and less defined regarding its relationship with the state.

The main challenge in understanding religious change in former socialist countries is thus to avoid both an excessive differentiation of this region from other European countries and overemphasizing similarities. The notion of re-enchantment seems to open an unexplored avenue to search for the place of alternative forms of religion in situations in which institutionalized religious structures have historically dominated the moral landscape. Strongly associated notions of de-secularization, re-sacralization or post-secularism seem indeed to bear little heuristic power in some areas of this region, in which religion has not undergone the same secularization patterns observable in the West. In order to tackle it, the papers from this panel will address the continuities and discontinuities determined by the region’s socio-historic past as well as more recent developments in the light of new empirical evidence.

330 The “Dangerous Others”: Spiritual Energy and Contamination
Tatiana Bužeková
Faculty of Arts, Comenius University in Bratislava, Bratislava, Slovakia

Abstract

The paper addresses religious representations of danger in the spiritual sphere by exploring a case of neo-shamanic groups in Slovakia, where the dominant religion is Christianity. Neo-shamanism is a set of diverse beliefs and practices which has attracted many adherents in Central Europe after the fall of communism. Urban shamans in Slovakia do not see shamanism as a religion; rather they perceive it as a spiritual tradition aiming to heal individuals and the world. In this, the notion of healing is central. From the Christian point of view, however, Christianity is the only right spiritual path and any alternative spiritual teaching is represented as dangerous. I will discuss the results of a survey on Christian media addressing alternative spirituality and the results of ethnographic research which I conducted in neo-shamanic groups in Bratislava. I will argue that in Christian discourse as well as in neo-shamanic groups the spiritual danger is associated with the idea of contamination which indicates “wrong” beliefs and behaviour. I interpret representations of spiritual practices in terms of Mary Douglas’ theory: according to Douglas, contamination is the universal moral symbol that serves as a signal of threat and mobilizes social institutions. I will demonstrate that in the discourse of spirituality, contamination is interconnected with the notion of energy which is interpreted in accordance with people’s beliefs. While in neo-shamanism the concept of energy serves as the axis of a
linguistic mechanism around which knowledge is constructed, in Christian discourse it is largely associated with the danger of possession.

260 Managerial Practices and Discourses in Slovakia as New Religious Forms in the Capitalist and Consumerist Society

Zuzana Bártová
Charles University in Prague, Prague, Czech Republic. University of Pardubice, Pardubice, Czech Republic

Abstract

Since the 1990s, personal development practices have entered the business environment in Western countries. These practices and representations that are associated with them can involve relaxation, yoga, and meditation; participation in different therapies, such as lithotherapy, aromatherapy, coaching, NLP and psychology sessions; the conviction that individuals should discover their interior resources, work on their feelings and emotions. Recently these practices and representations have refocused on employees’ happiness and wellbeing. They are also present at the workplace in former socialist countries of Central-Eastern Europe such as Slovakia. Based on ongoing ethnographic research, the paper proposes to study management practices and discourses from the point of view of religious studies. New religious forms can be found outside religious organisations, dominated by the Catholic Church in Slovakia, and activities of religious entrepreneurs (Redden, 2005). The paper will study how these new trends in management represent new forms of religion. It will also analyse how they may reflect the values of the capitalist and consumerist society, its “spirit of capitalism” (Boltanski & Chiappelo, 1999) and the hedonistic stance of the “spirit of consumerism” (Campbell, 1987).

445 Contemporary New Age Field in Lithuania: Overview of the Anastasia Movement in 2005-2021

Rasa Pranskevičiūtė-Amoson
Vilnius University, Vilnius, Lithuania

Abstract

The paper presents a study of the implementation of environmental and spiritual ideas of alternative communitarian movements during the establishing of quickly spreading nature-based spirituality communities and their settlements in the East-Central European region. It focuses on the Anastasia “spiritual” movement, classifiable as New Age, which emerged in Russia in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union, and has since spread to East-Central Europe and beyond.

It concerns expressions of contemporary forms of spiritual phenomena, emerging in various subcultural self-selected constructions and developments of alternative religious processes within the contemporary religious environment. Discussing the Anastasian ideas, worldviews and spiritual practices in Lithuania during 2005-2021, it reflects on expressions, developments and changes of new forms of subjectivity during this period. The Anastasia movement reveals itself as a manifestation of a widening field of religious
individualization and diversity in the post-communist region, as well as a representative of the contemporary religious environment. Here, the researched movement appears as a phenomenon of global (more precisely, influenced and formed by Western culture) alternative religiosity and contemporary individualistic culture, to which local social and cultural features, formed in the post-communist environment, as well as national culture are common.

The findings are based on data obtained from fieldwork in 2005-2021, including participant observation and interviews with respondents in Lithuania.

577 The Material Dimension of Hungarian Ethno-Paganism

István Povedák

Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic. Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design, Budapest, Hungary

Abstract

It is generally recognized in religious studies research that contemporary paganism is one of the most widespread and diverse streams among new religious movements (e.g. Hanegraaff 1996, Harvey and Hardman 1996, Sutcliffe and Bowman 2003, York 2003, Strmiska 2005) which has also been relatively well explored in Central and Eastern Europe over the past two decades (Aitamurto and Simpson 2013, Rountree 2015, 2017). Primarily the historical, ideological and ritual dimension of this reconstructionist new religious movement have been explored, pointing out the importance of nationalism and ethnicity in the “ethno-paganism” of the region. (Strmiska 2005, Hubbes 2013) However, similarly to research on new religious movements around the world, little attention has been paid to the analysis of the material / artistic dimension. The direction of research focusing on the visual dimension of new religious movements and religious renewal movements—represented for instance by Leonard Primiano, Daniel Wojcik, Marco Pasi, the Enchanted Modernities Network, or Sabina Magliocco—has only been sporadically followed in Central and Eastern European research (Hubbes-Povedák 2019). However, without the analysis of the material / artistic dimension, a satisfactory image of ethno-paganism cannot be obtained. By examining the material dimension of Hungarian ethno-paganism, my presentation aims to introduce (1) how ethno-paganism is constructed from certain elements of the region’s “cultic milieu”, and (2) how it intertwines with a vast spectrum of beliefs, invented traditions, modern mythologies or even neonationalism and pseudo-history.

158 Resilience and Transformation of Religious Communities in Eastern Europe

14:40 - 16:20 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

Emil Hilton Saggau
Religious communities across the eastern half of the European continent faced an immense crisis in the last century under the communist rule. This immediate decades-long threat ceased over the span of a few years and allowed the region’s religious to rebound. One thus can talk not only of their survival but also resilience. On the other hand, since the fall of the communist regimes, some of these ‘traditional’ religious communities have not only been undergoing profound structural changes but also adjustments in their relation to the space, both sacred and profane. Today, religious communities in Eastern Europe stand in a variety of situations, which are all marked and formed by the years under communism and the following transformation and adaptation.

In this session, we look closer into the resilience but also transformation of religious communities in Eastern Europe. The key topic will be how resistance and adaptation to external and internal challenges has (trans)-formed the religious communities of the region.

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**159 The Nationalization of the Sacred: Claiming Sites, Saints and Religion as a Coping Tool**

**Emil Hilton Saggau**

University of Lund, Lund, Sweden

**Abstract**

The breakdown of communism in South Eastern Europe gave rise to a new form of nationalism, which claimed religion as a constituent part. The traditional religious communities had for decades survived on the fringe of society, but returned now to the societal scene as a coping tool for many. In this dramatically changed landscape religious sites and saints were reclaimed to provide a scene for public display of the changed religious sentiment. In this paper, three different sites in Albania, North Macedonia and Montenegro is examined in order to pin out, how the sacred character of the sites has been used to cope with the dramatic change after communism.

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**160 Institutional Self-Churchification of Muslim Religious Organizations in Eastern Europe**

**Egdūnas Račius**

Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania

**Abstract**

Governance of Islam in Eastern Europe, and particularly in countries with autochthonous Muslim populations, is arguably permeated by what in the paper is called “churchification of Islam”. On the one hand, churchification is a state-pursued policy strategy in governing of religious plurality, whereby the national legislation pertaining to governance of religions, including Islam, foresees institutional and structural churchification of registered religious collectivities along the lines of the (once) dominant (national) Christian Churches. Research findings reveal that leading Muslim religious organizations in countries under research have accepted the state-set rules of the game and have been (willingly) turning
themselves into church-like institutions (national Muslim Churches), reminiscent particularly of autocephalous Orthodox Churches.

166 Protective History in the Time of War: Ukrainian Church of Moscow Patriarchate Use of History (2015-2020)

Andriy Fert
Kyiv-Mohyla academy, Kyiv, Ukraine

Abstract

After Ukraine proclaimed independence, the biggest church of the Moscow Patriarchate faced a considerable challenge: on the one hand, to accommodate the new nation, on the other, to justify the ties with the Russian Orthodox Church. The challenge increased after the conflict outbroke between Russia and Ukraine in 2014. This paper analyses how the Church takes advantage of history and uses it to protect itself from the symbolic pressure of Ukrainian public discourse. It demonstrates how this Church undermines public claims for ecclesiastical independence from Russia and provides fellow parishioners with examples of resistance by drawing on specific historical narratives in connection with two religious memorial days - Day of the Kharkiv Bishops’ Council (May 27) and Day of the Baptism of Rus’ (July 27).

676 “Happiness multiplies”: Religious Capital at the Heart of Subjective Well-Being

Irina Petrova
Lobachevsky University, Nizhny Novgorod, Russian Federation

Abstract

Happiness as perceived by Christians is composed of normative and real constructs that dynamically interact in the process of human life. This study is devoted to identifying the elements and foundations of the life construct of happiness of members of traditional local churches of Christians of Evangelical faith of conservative brethren in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Latvia, Estonia, Germany. The results of the analysis of confessional doctrinal and fiction literature are complemented by participant observation and interviews of believers and their families, including those with many children.

Happiness as a state and experience is presented as both a collective and individual scenario. The local nature of the concept of happiness in religious communities of a particular denomination allows a spectrum of states and experiences to be seen, depending on the region where the community is located, the traditions established and the strictness of the normative precept of happiness. But the main voice remains personal stories of happiness in the context of one’s own life against the background of diverging circles - family, community, region, country, world and God.

A meta-analysis of 139 social studies over the past 30 years was conducted by UK scholars (N. Spencer, G. Madden, C. Purtill, J. Ewing, 2016). A. Wilkins describes the process of symbolic construction of happiness
of evangelical church Christians as the formation of boundaries between the community and the rest of the world (believers feel happier), as well as internal markers of the right state - Christians should be happy if they are accepted by God (Wilkins A. C., 2008).

As a result of the analysis of numerous accounts of happiness, possible categories are formed: “bitter” happiness in the period of experiencing loss, “difficult” happiness in cramped circumstances, “happiness in service” - being called by God to perform spiritual work in church, fullness of happiness in eternal life, happiness that is personified in God.

Highlighting components of happiness regularly reproduced by religious informants that differ from the representation of non-religious authors: the complex happiness of being a Christian; the fullness of happiness, which is achieved only after experiencing deep grief; “multiplication of happiness” - starting a family with a believing spouse, having each subsequent child, gaining believing friends.

“Restrictions” in the Christian lifestyle (rejection of popular pleasures) allow for an interesting socio-cultural specificity of “unlimited” Christian happiness. Such parameters as length of faith, marital status and being born and raised in a family of believing parents were found to be the most significant.

It seems interesting to find out the specifics of dynastic understanding of happiness in the families of 4th/5th generation believers in the same religious organizations. Combined with the tendency towards super multiplicity of children, such a dynasty can have more than 150 relatives (children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren of the founders) forming its own structure within the church community and transforming the church benchmarks of happiness in its own way.

Happiness for the Evangelical Christians is similar in different Eastern European countries and is more dependent on the traditions and austerity of the community.

752 “Masked” Tensions: The Tense Relationship between State and Church during the Pandemic in Romania

Laurentiu TANASE

Bucharest University, Faculty of Orthodox Theology, Bucharest, Romania. Romanian Academy; ICCV - Research Institute for Quality of Life, Bucharest, Romania

Abstract

The Pandemic threat made the whole social body sick, even before the Sars Cov 2 virus attacked the individual’s health. When Romania started the lockdown, interpersonal relationships began to strain, and extreme behaviours appeared, never seen before. One could see the gradual escalation of social tensions due to the limitation of a large part of fundamental rights. Social pressures can be seen from a perspective of the public authority’s exercise added to the Pandemic rigours, but limited by political or electoral contestation risks. The State’s decisions to prevent the Pandemic were considered as an interference in the Churches’ internal activity, interference considered abusive. The rites and rituals of the Orthodox Church were either forbidden or distorted by the brutal or uninspired intervention of public authorities. The Orthodox Church is the religious denomination with the most significant number of believers in Romania.
Gradually, tensions between the State and the Church intensified to the point where public accusations against the State began to appear, in the public speech of the bishops and especially of Patriarch Daniel, the Romanian spiritual leader of the Orthodox Church. Does Religion’s resistance to the social tension caused by the Pandemic express a high degree of resilience? Are the pressures identified between State and Church profound, or did the Pandemic superficially generate them? To understand the sources of tension between the State and the Church and observe their evolution, we will study official institutional documents, press comments, and specialists’ opinions expressed in the literature. We will also try to assess, based on statistical information, whether the phenomenon of secularization has been accelerated or diminished during the Pandemic restrictions. Our approach’s limitations are that the Pandemic is an evolving process, and the conclusions still cannot be clear and convincing. Our analysis will fall within the interdisciplinary field of sociology of religion, social sciences, legal sciences and contemporary history.

643-III Resilient Esotericism

14:40 - 16:20 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

Manon Hedenborg-White

14:40 - 15:00

728 From the Suburbs of Nicosia to the Heart of Tokyo: The Resilience of Daskalos’ Esoteric Teachings

Ioannis Gaitanidis

Chiba University, Chiba, Japan

Abstract

The Cypriot magus, referred to as Daskalos and made famous among New Agers through sociologist Kyriakos Markides’ books in the 1980s, has inspired an organization, the Researchers of Truth, and several small circles of students across the world, including Japan. As warnings found on the websites of these circles attest, Daskalos’ ideas tend to require significant exegeses and the acquiring of a dedicated vocabulary. In trying to understand the resilience of Daskalos’ teachings in the Japanese context, this paper focuses on how his ideas have been promoted in Japanese books and periodicals since 2000 when the first circle opened in Tokyo. Arriving at a particular auspicious point in time, when the adjective “spiritual” (supirichuaru) attracted significant media attention, the Japanese circles also benefitted greatly from the presence (until his death in 2018) of a Greek leader, fluent in Japanese, who blended Daskalos’ esotericism with a “Greek culture” as imagined by his Japanese audiences.

15:00 - 15:20
644 Esoteric Resilience in the Religious History of Italy

Marco Pasi

University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Netherlands

Abstract

As it is generally known, one of the most important moments in the history of Western esotericism coincided with a revival of Platonism and the “rediscovery” of the Corpus Hermeticum at the Medici court in Florence in the second half of the 15th century. For more than a century esoteric ideas found a particularly fertile soil in Italy and were cultivated by important authors such as Marsilio Ficino, Pico della Mirandola, Ludovico Lazzarelli, Francesco Giorgi, and many others. Towards the end of the 16th century, with the establishment of the Counter-Reformation, the religious and political climate changed dramatically. Giordano Bruno’s burning at the stake became the emblematic signal, among others, of these mutated conditions. After the early 17th century the expression of heterodox religious and philosophical ideas, especially of an esoteric nature, became in Italy increasingly difficult, and, if it continued at all, it had to take underground and clandestine routes. As a consequence, it is fair to say that relatively little happened with respect to esoteric ideas between the 17th century and the mid-19th century in Italy, at least compared to the earlier flourishing in the Renaissance but also to what was happening in other European regions at the same time. The resurgence of esoteric ideas in Italy in the second half of the 19th century after such a huge historical gap calls for analysis and interpretation. Can we speak of a particular resilience of such ideas in this context? Or are we dealing with different phenomena that are connected to each other only through the artificial category of “Western esotericism”? This paper will address these questions and offer some suggestions at possible answers.

15:20 - 15:40

157 Fulvio Rendhell: Survival and Adaptation of Spiritism in Italy

Angela Puca

Leeds Trinity University, Leeds, United Kingdom

Abstract

Spiritism and seances had a significant cultural influence across European countries throughout the 19th and early 20th century. After the two world wars, such phenomena seemed to have waned and almost disappeared from the popular discourse. However, the Italian spirit medium Fulvio Rendhell - with his group Circolo Spiritico Navona 2000 - tried to revive these practices and present them to a more secularized society. Involving scientists and doctors, Rendhell aimed at “proving” the “reality” of spirit mediumship, an attempt that was echoed on national and international newspapers in the 1970s and 1980s. By analysing relevant historical and contemporary sources, I will investigate the survival and resurgence of neo-spiritismo in contemporary Italy, how this form of Western esotericism got reshaped to suit the current cultural framework and the interweaving between science and spirit mediumship in the view of practitioners.
Abstract

Esotericism is an expansive, interdisciplinary apparatus. One aspect of esotericism’s resilience is its participation in contemporary artistic production and discourse. The oeuvre of Italian feminist artist, Chiara Fumai (1978-2017), is rich in mediumistic performances where she ‘allows herself to be possessed by’ marginalised, deceased women from history. The exhibition, Poems I Will Never Release, Centre d’Art Contemporain, Geneva (until February 2021), features the video Book of Evil Spirits (2015). In this installation, Fumai conducts a séance, channelling Italian Spiritualist physical medium, Eusapia Palladino (1854-1918). Fumai’s séance is narrated by French scientist, Camille Flammarion (1842-1925), who affirms or discredits various scenes. The exhibition also recreates Fumai’s Milan studio, including her library of works by Aleister Crowley, Dion Fortune, Mary K. Greer and Marco Pasi, and documents evidencing interests in the Golden Dawn and Islamic esotericism. This paper explores Fumai’s installations to exemplify the adaptation of occultism to contemporary feminist artistic praxes.

81-91-III Resilience of Tantric, Magic, and Shamanic Practices at the “Margins” of South and Southeast Asian Religions

14:40 - 16:20 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

Paolo Eugenio Rosati, Andrea Acri

85 Skull-Magic, Exorcism of Demons, Jackal Howls and the Question of Non-Tantric Magical Substratum of the Early Tantras

Aleksandra Wenta

University of Florence, Florence, Italy

Abstract

The early tantras’ involvement with the so-called “skull-magic” has been habitually traced back to the kāpālika ascetics, known for their antinomian rituals that heavily rely upon the objects procured from the cremation ground, and who are rudimentary portrayed through their five-insignia attire (pañcamudrā). This paper argues that in the description of the abhicāra or “wrathful magic rituals” attested in the early Śaiva and Buddhist tantras, we find depictions of a different type of “wild” practitioner that does not resemble the
kāpālika ascetic but rather points in a direction of a more archaic, pre-Mantramārgic magical substratum dealing with exorcism of demons, skull-magic, jackal howls that could have been subsequently integrated into tantric traditions. This paper will also examine the hypothesis that the manipulation of skulls, corpses and animal parts for magical purposes known in non-tantric texts as the śmaśānikakarma may point to a group of cremation ground specialists already in existence prior to the advent of tantrism.

213 *Imitatio Dei: Imitative Practices and Performances of Some Medieval Śaiva and Buddhist Tantric Groups in South and Southeast Asia*

Andrea Acri

Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes (EPHE), Paris, France. Ecole française d’Extrême-Orient, Paris, France

**Abstract**

The paper focuses on the overlaps between performative arts and Śaiva and Buddhist tantric traditions in the Indic ecumene of South and Southeast Asia. It analyses in particular the intriguing and little-studied aspect of the “imitative practices” staged by the practitioners aiming at embodying—i.e., becoming the “theatrical” human counterparts of their elected deity. These practices included singing, dancing, buffooneries, and engaging in wild and antinomian behaviours. While the study of the rare references found in the Sanskrit textual archive and their comparison with art historical material is important to shed some light on these traditions and their historical dimension, it is not sufficient to clarify the issue of their origins, or of the actual social realities behind them. Thus, it is necessary to integrate those data with ethnographic evidence drawn from folk and “tribal” milieus in both India and Southeast Asia, especially the low-status wandering practitioners specialised in dramatic performances, “imitative practices” (sometimes defined “shamanic” in the scholarly literature), sorcery, exorcism, and the worship of demonic forms of Śiva and the Goddess. These practitioners were not only driven by ideals of individual salvation or quest for powers contained in the prescriptive texts, but were also embedded in (and contributed to) their local social milieus and ritual economies, for instance as entertainers and performers attached to temples and royal palaces.

234 *Female Gaṇeśa or Independent Goddess? On the Elephantine Female Figures in Mediaeval Śaiva Tantric Traditions*

Chiara Policardi

Università degli Studi di Milano, Milan, Italy

**Abstract**

An Indian female deity characterised by an elephant head is usually identified with Gaṇeśa’s female form. Known as Vināyakī, Gaṇeśvarī, Gajānanā and with numerous other epithets, this little-studied elephant-faced figure however very early on appears as an independent, if minor, divinity in her own right, across
Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain contexts. The earliest material attestations of this figure date from the first century BC and come from Rairh (Rajasthan) and Mathura. The connections with the goddess Jyeṣṭhā or Alakṣmī, who is associated with misfortune and disease, appear to be particularly significant.

The autonomous character of the figure, detached from the sphere of Gaṇeśa, seems to emerge with particular clarity in the Tantric context. After the 8th century, she sometimes features as one of the Seven Mothers and is often included in groups of yoginīs. An elephantine yoginī occurs, under various names, in both Vidyāpīṭha (7th-8th century) and Kaula (post-10th century) scriptures - in particular, in Brahmāyalatana, Siddhayogesvarimatantra and Śaṭsahasrasanāhītā. The yoginīs’ pantheons of these textual traditions find correspondence, to some extent, in different extant yoginī temples. Indeed, an elephant-faced female sculpture, with a pot-bellied body, is found in the sixty-four yoginī temples of Hirāpur (early 10th century) and Rānipur-Jharial (mid 10th century) in Odisha and in the eighty-one yoginī temples of Bherāghāṭ in Madhya Pradesh (last decades of 10th century). What meanings and implications lie behind the elephantine characterisation of this yoginī? What is the connection, if any, of this goddess with Gaṇeśa? What is the significance of her vehicle, which is clearly a donkey at Hirāpur while at Bherāghāṭ it is an elephant-headed male figure? Is it possible to trace the genesis of this figure in marginal, local, non-tantric traditions?

This contribution, thus, aims at shedding light on the significances and role of the elephant-faced female figure in the thought-world of mediaeval śaiva tantric traditions, analyzing, in particular, relevant textual passages from Vidyāpīṭha and Kaula literature as well as iconographic evidence from yoginī temples. The research will highlight dynamics of interrelation between local and tantric traditions as reflected in the specific case of a deity that combines animal and feminine features.

Tiger-spirits, Tiger-shamans, and Tiger-shapeshifters in Oral and Ritual Traditions of Austroasiatic-speaking Ethnic Groups of Indochina and Peninsular Malaysia

Francesco Brighenti

independent scholar, Venice, Italy

Abstract

Archaic beliefs about weretigers as “physical” shapeshifters are widespread among Austroasiatic-speaking tribal groups in eastern India, Burma and Indochina. Similar beliefs form a little-studied aspect of the non-tribal magic lore of Burma, Thailand and Cambodia. Other Austroasiatic-speaking tribal groups in northeastern India and Peninsular Malaysia preserve in their oral traditions a more markedly shamanistic set of weretiger beliefs revolving around the concept of a “psychic” shapeshifting (the projection of one’s soul into the body of a tiger during nighttime). In Peninsular Malaysia both Austroasiatic-speaking and Malay-speaking shamans are believed to be spiritually related to the tiger; in particular, Aslian-speaking tribal shamans are believed to become “soul-tigers” after death. Moreover, in general Austroasiatic a linguistic connection can be discerned between sets of cognate terms for, respectively, “tiger” and “soul”. In the Monic, Katuc and Bahnaric branches of Austroasiatic one observes a pattern of lexical replacement of words for “tiger” by honorific terms such as “grandfather” or “uncle” which is indicative of an ancient semantic association between tigers and ancestors. Bahnaric-speaking tribal communities of Vietnam also have a
tradition of individual psychic alliances, made in dream, with “soul-tigers” regarded as the progeny of ancient human heroes, this being reminiscent of the psychic alliance of Asian-speaking shamans with their tiger spirit-guides. This paper assesses, in a comparative ethno-linguistic perspective, the interrelationship of tiger-spirits, tiger-shamans, and tiger-shapeshifters in Austroasiatic tribal traditions on the Southeast Asian mainland and the later influence of Tantric black magic practices on the complex of beliefs about “feline therianthropy”.

292-I Facing Discrimination: Religion and Agency

14:40 - 16:20 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

Johanna Marine Lems, Ana Isabel Planet Contreras

Agency is always already informed by the terms in which a subject is addressed (Bracke 2011, Butler 1997). The terms of adscription imply the imposition of difference through which people are identified and classified, and can be functional to creating a category of those who are different-from and worth less-than (Braidotti 2018), such as, but not limited to, racialized (including religious) minorities, LGBTQ+, or those discriminated against because of their age or illness. In a similar way, Hage (2010) defines racism as the “process of racial interpellation” and distinguishes negative, erroneous and non-interpellations through which an individual or group is being racialized.

The creation and imposition of different categories of persons can be contested (or not) by individuals or groups in many ways. Reactions to stigmatization depend on a myriad of factors, including the type of negative adscription and the interpellated individuals themselves (gender, level of education, socioeconomic position, age, legal residency, etc.).

Considering that subjectivities are formed at the intersection of interpellations coming from different discursive and non-discursive contexts, the aim of this workshop is to explore how interpellations coming from religious contexts (in their multiple forms and interpretations) impact the material and immaterial conditions to respond (or not) to racist discourse and/or any other type of discrimination. Do religious beliefs and/or bodily practices affect the (individual and/or collective) agential options of those being stigmatized? If so, how do these “religious interpellations” interfere in, relate to, impact on the recognition or rejection of imposed categories? Do they hinder or facilitate certain kinds of agency? Do they contribute to possibilities for a change in situations of vulnerability and subordination? Do they encourage and foster possible alternative projects and contribute to the imagining of other possible worlds?

In order to delve jointly into the similarities and differences in our case studies from an interdisciplinary and cross-cultural perspective, we invite scholars from different fields (anthropology, sociology, religious studies, critical discourse studies, etc.) to submit their proposals related to research on discriminated groups (e.g., racialized -including religious- minorities, LGBTQ+, aporophobia) and on how religion (in its widest sense) may impact their capacity to act.

571 Communicating the Resilience: Spatial Repertoires and Agency in the African Pentecostal Diaspora in Madrid
Michele Cunico
Universidad Autónoma, Madrid, Spain

Abstract

My research explores the connections between the concept of resilience (Bracke, 2016) and the multisemiotic and translingual practices in a Pentecostal transnational space.

Based on a long participant autoethnography in a Nigerian community in Madrid, I propose to interpretate the growing proliferation of ethnic churches, a still little-known phenomenon, using a communicative perspective.

Considering that the subject is defined by the possibility of expressing itself within the context, I analyze how Nigerian immigrant people deploy all their communicative resources to developing a complex process of socialization, between marginality and a claim of empowerment, at the same time that their condition of belonging/not belonging, shapes and is shaped by their possibility of communication in a continuous and multilayered negotiation of identity. Using the analytical potentiality offered by the spatial orientation in sociolinguistics (Canagarajah, 2018) (Pennycook, 2017) (Pennycook & Otsuji, 2014), I consider the religious spatiality as significant, a performative assemblage of multimodal resources and human agency within bounded and hegemonic contexts. According to the spatial communicative perspective, the participants deploy emplaced, holistic, networked and mediated resources to construct spaces that suit their needs. What are the meaning and the role of these interstitial spaces and which needs do they try to answer? Can we understand the communicative Pentecostal practices as a form of resilience? If yes, what kind of resilience are they expressing? The material used for this analysis has been obtained, as I said, through an auto- and co-constructed ethnography and is part of my doctoral research.

References


575 **Agency in the Movement of Muslim Women Teachers in Spanish Mosques**

**Marivi Pérez Mateo**

**UAM, Madrid, Spain**

**Abstract**

The aim of this communication is to explore the concept of agency, considering the different approaches of the concept argued by Bracke (2011) in the context of religious activities of teaching Islam developed by Muslim Women in the Spanish Mosques (Pérez 2019). Considering Bruinessen and Allievi (2013) and Lems’ (2016) works, we consider this educational activity within the framework of the active search for Islamic knowledge in a “non-Islamic” European context. For this purpose, we will analyse the answers of the interviews collected on-the-ground investigation with female Muslims.

During the interviews, the women were asked about their knowledge and formal education as a basis for action (Eickelman 2015, Mahmood 2005) and their role as a mualima. Even when academic education or certifications legitimize or reinforce the figure of the mualima - as occurs with men in Muslim societies who are ulemas, religious authorities or role models -, these women describe their position in different ways.

During the interviews they argued that legitimation of their activities is given in the exercise of this “noble activity” by their community (“They call me that because of the years that I’ve been teaching, although I educated myself” (Int. 1), or by her substantial religious knowledge (“We ulama [they refer to themselves as ulama] say that Muslims have to learn everything” (Int. 7). Following Bano (2017) we will discuss the challenges of the restricted conception of female agency associated with this informal educational network that has attracted educated and professional women to the textual study and teaching of Islamic knowledge but not allowed them, apparently, to get recognition for their work nor to develop some form of leadership inside the community.
Queer Muslims in LGBTQ Globalization: A Reflection on Agency, Resistance and Assemblage

Daniel Ahmed Fernández
Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Madrid, Spain

Abstract

Sitting at the intersection of Anthropology, Arab and Islamic studies, Queer theory and Postcolonial studies, the main objective of this paper is to address the role of queer Muslims within the framework of LGBTQ globalization from the point of view of discrimination strategies, as well as of those of resistance. The realization of this work is twofold. Firstly, it briefly analyzes the two hegemonic oppositional positions of Islam and gender and sexual diversity—queered Islamophobia and Islamicate LGBTQphobia—through which queer Muslims are discriminated against today both in the West and in Muslim-majority countries. Then, it provides an examination of the process through which these subjects organize themselves to face the challenges connected to the strategies of instrumentalization and control implemented by contemporary nation-states—be they Western or Islamic—in the name of the above-mentioned hegemonic positions.

The main point that this analysis seeks to highlight is that the presumption that the only way to formulate queer Muslimness is in exclusive relation to hegemonic positions, whatever their nature, is, at any rate, a limitation of the capacity for action of Muslims. Mahmood (2005) observed how the idea of agency may not necessarily manifest itself as a reaction and/or resistance to power relations, but as a capacity for action, created and permitted by historically specific relations of subordination that materializes through the performativity of daily experiences. These experiences are, in themselves, performative in a Butlerian sense, expressing not only a religious or cultural difference, but also the active reappropriation of a symbol of stigma and the transformation of its character from submission to resistance. Thus, although queer Muslim initiatives to counter hegemonic positions that oppose Islam and sexual and gender diversity do not imply resistance per se, acts related to the stigma of subalternity resulting from queer Muslimness are likely to be transformed into political actions of resistance (Abu Lughod, 1990), even if they are not perceived as such by hegemonic positions or even by the very queer Muslims themselves who perform them.

In vein with authors like Puar (2007), this research proposes going one step further towards what she terms ‘queer praxes of futurity’, where queer is conceptualized as an articulation or imbrication and not so much in terms of identity, as is usually understood from intersectional and queer approaches. Assemblage constitutes a theoretical and political articulation model that is more appropriate for control societies such as those we are dealing with, since it allows evidencing the instrumentalization and complicity of LGBTQ subjects with hegemonic positions, instead of focusing exclusively on the oppositional, resistant and dissident character of queerness. This proposal also makes it possible to re-read subjects connected to queer Muslimness—conceptualized within the framework of LGBTQ globalization as fundamentalist, patriarchal and LGBTQphobic or, at best, possessing a repressed sexuality that lacks agency and resistance—as key pieces of articulations that challenge the ontological coherence of the two hegemonic oppositional positions of Islam and gender and sexual diversity, both of which consider LGBTQ the height of Western modernity.
Talking Back by Not Talking Back? - Dutch Muslims and the Question of Not Claiming a Presence

Martijn de Koning
Radboud University, Nijmegen, Netherlands

Abstract

In many European countries secularist and racial approaches questioning Islam and Muslims dominate debates in Parliaments and in the media. The Netherlands is no exception and in this paper I will focus on how on the interpellations of Muslims in media and politics work, by focusing on processes of talking back. The more concrete question then becomes ‘how do people who want to claim a presence in the public sphere, intervene in those debates when they know their religion, identity and person is seen as a problem for integration, security, loyalty and so on? Here I’m inspired by bell hooks’ work on talking back. She defines talking back ‘speaking as an equal to an authority figure’ (1986: 123). As people will often simultaneously apply different styles of responding I will focus on one in particular: silence. Or, adding a somewhat broader perspective than the emphasis on speaking, maintaining a presence through absence. This allows me to relate on an issue that is central to hooks’ work on talking back: how ‘to make a speech that compels listeners, one that is heard’ (1986: 124) by not talking back? The paper is based upon ethnographic research among anti-Islamophobia activists, militant groups and representatives of mosque organizations in the Netherlands in the last 10 years.

Queer standpoint religion. Producing dissident subjectivities in Madrid's LGBTQ Christian community.

José Barrera Blanco
Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Madrid, Spain

Abstract

This paper aims to present the History and Sacrifice in the speeches of the representatives of the region in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. research results, conclusions, and opportunities for further development. The focus of research on the relationship between history and victimization is the Central and Eastern European region with rich historical experience and traditions - ethnically, linguistically, and culturally diverse. Remembrance, as a framework for interpretation, can be used to identify unprocessed traumas that define the individual and social identity of an area.

The database on which the inquiries are based includes speeches in English by the prime ministers and heads of state of the region, which were delivered to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe between 1991 and 2019. The research hypothesizes that the studied sample supports the criteria formulated in the theory of wounded collective identity, and the results show that fate, nation, and religion are correlated. In the presentation, on the one hand, I present the specific vocabulary of the speeches, the relative frequency of the key terms that occur, broken down into subregions within the region. On the other hand, I highlight some characteristic speech elements in which the dimensions of the wounded collective identity can be seen in action. Finally, I argue that further native language analyzes are needed to explore the depth of dimensions.
409-III Geographies of Encounter: Multi-religious spaces ONLINE

14:40 - 16:20 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

John Eade

773 A Shared Holy Landscape: The Reactualisation of Egypt’s Sacred History and Geography in Medieval Islamic Thought

Luca Patrizi

University of Turin, Turin, Italy

Abstract

For a number of religious, historical and geographical reasons, we can consider Egypt as a huge sacred open-air place shared by different religions. Islamic tradition reached Egyptian soil relatively late in relation to the very long history of the land. It therefore found an extremely rich cultural substratum and adapted it naturally to its own religious conceptions. In this paper I will first of all argue that the primary layer of sharing is constituted by the intangible cultural heritage associated with the various denominations that the Egyptian holy landscape has assumed over the centuries. These designations offer valuable information about the longstanding connection between history and sacred geography in the land of Egypt. I will then address the issue of the Egyptian holy landscape and its natural sacred sites, most notably the Nile and the Sinai. Specific emphasis will be placed on the recognition that the different religions on Egyptian soil have often shared very similar interpretations and rituals, both in a diachronic and synchronic way. Finally, I will
present some remarkable examples of shared holy places connected to the ancient Egyptian heritage and to the sacred history of Christianity and Islam.

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**428 The Veneration of St. Yared: A Multireligious Landscape Shared by Ethiopian Orthodox Christians and the Betä Ǝsrä ’el (Ethiopian Jews)**

Bar Kribus¹, Sophia Dege-Müller¹²

¹Ruhr University, Bochum, Germany. ²Hamburg University, Hamburg, Germany

**Abstract**

St. Yared is one of the most renowned local saints of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. He traditionally lived during the reign of the 6th-century Ethiopian monarch Gäbrä Mäsqäl and is credited with the composition of numerous elements of Ethiopian Orthodox liturgical music and hymns. The Betä Ǝsrä ’el (Ethiopian Jews) identify this holy man as a member of their community. According to both the Ethiopian Orthodox and the Betä Ǝsrä ’el religious tradition, he spent the last years of his life in the Sämen Mountains. These mountains were, between the 15th and 17th centuries, partially governed by Betä Ǝsrä ’el rulers, and were the site of wars waged between the Betä Ǝsrä ’el and the Christian Ethiopian Solomonic kingdom.

This paper will examine and compare the Ethiopian Orthodox and Betä Ǝsrä ’el religious traditions regarding St. Yared. Various sites in the Sämen Mountains dedicated to him will be identified and pinpointed. An attempt will be made to determine the role of these sites with regard to both religious communities and to shed light on the dynamics between these communities based on the location and nature of the sites.

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**818 The Interreligious Complex at Vulcana-Băi in Romania: A Multi-Religious Place Between Idealism and Pragmatism**

Ioan Cozma

Pontifical Oriental Institute, Rome, Italy

**Abstract**

In the early nineties, the International Ecumenical Center, a non-governmental organization of lay people and clerics of different religions, was founded in Bucharest (Romania). Its purpose was to promote religious pluralism, ecumenical dialogue, cooperation, and deeper mutual understanding among various religions. One of its most notable projects was the establishment of an interreligious complex at Vulcana-Băi (close to the city of Târgoviște, in Dâmbovița county) comprising three places of worship—an Orthodox church, a synagogue, and a mosque. Currently, the church functions as an Orthodox monastery for monks, while the other two spaces are rarely used for prayers by their respective religious groups because of the low number of members of those denominations in the area. Focusing on the mechanisms and dynamics of the building and sharing of multi-religious places, my paper aims to analyze the events surrounding the construction of this interreligious place, the religious and non-religious motivations behind it, and the meaning of its position in the religious landscape, as well as to emphasize its role in advocacy, setting an example against religious intolerance and fundamentalism. It also attempts to answer the following questions: What is the
utility of creating an interreligious place in an area that did not require it? What are the relations of power or authority among political, social, religious, and economic actors? How are relationships between religions managed (considering the strong Orthodox Christian majority in the country)? Can this place be identified as a place of memory or simply as a historical site?

253 Locating Resilience, Trauma and Religion in a Transdisciplinary and Historical Perspective ONLINE

14:40 - 16:20 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

Anita Neudorfer

253 Locating Resilience, Trauma and Religion in a Transdisciplinary and Historical Perspective

Anita Neudorfer¹, Aaron French², Johanna Gemgroß³, Katharina Waldner¹

¹University of Erfurt, Erfurt, Germany. ²University of California, Davis, USA. ³Sigmund Freud University, Vienna, Austria

Abstract

This panel intends to critically locate the concept of resilience as well as its relationship to religion both in a historical and cultural context. In order to understand resilience, which has its origin in psychological research, the counterpart, namely trauma and vulnerability, must also be considered. Resilience can only be located in connection to context, which brings up important questions relating to agency and belonging, normative assumptions about mental and physical wellbeing, and the question of causality. Resilience is always in relation to something, some perceived negative event that positions the subject outside a desired way of being. In other words, it functions in terms of resilient to something. When resilience is the discursive answer, where and what are the problems of individuals and society? With this background it becomes necessary to turn to vulnerability and trauma by considering religious and so called “spiritual” coping strategies towards (re-)gaining agency in the aftermath of the perceived negative event. “Resilience,” “trauma,” “vulnerability,” as well as “religion” and “spirituality,” are often used as a form of universal, “natural” and cross-cultural categorization.

In contrast to this tendency, our panel seeks to locate resilience and its relationship to religion in different historical contexts and academic disciplines. We will do this by the following contributions:

By combining the critical study of contemporary uses of the notion of resilience (in the holistic milieu as well as in today’s psychological practice) and its relationship to religion and spirituality through case studies focusing on different historical contexts (modernity and the premodern society of the ancient Roman Empire), we will ask how and if resilience and religion can be made be fruitful for the critical and cross-cultural study of religion. The aim is to create and discuss a synopsis of the theoretical relationship in trauma and resilience in religious contexts in antiquity and modernity.
287-III The Resilience of the Science of Religion(s) between Hermeneutics and History

14:40 - 16:20 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

Silvia M. Chiodi

751 Goddesses and Horses in Celtic Sources: Is it Possible to Trace Epona in Medieval Celtic Sources?

Francesco Amatruda
University of Cork, Cork, Ireland

Abstract

The presence of more female heroines and deities in the Celtic world who are recognized for their bond with horses is now known. Among these we remember most Epona, Rhiannon and Macha. Of the first we find the name attested in some classical sources and in various epigraphs, but little remains among the written sources about her cult and the myths related to it. Of a different nature is the fame of the other two figures that appear in later sources from which we clearly read the deeds of the two heroines. Although the production context is different for the works that deal with Epona than those that speak of the other two figures, often these female characters are brought together and overlapped due to the bond with the horse, with the theme of sovereignty and the other attributes that these figures share with each other. The aim of this work is to understand to what extent these figures are linked to each other, if there are relationships of dependence between them, but especially how to use the different literary sources to create comparisons or to obtain a diachronic reading about the theme of the goddess accompanied by horses in a Celtic context. For this purpose, we will analyze the different figures individually and their spread over the centuries following not only the literary but also archaeological and epigraphic traces to obtain a detailed picture of these figures, their evolutions, and the contacts between them to clarify whether they are autonomous figures, dependent on each other, or whether they are the result of the evolution of a single divinity

888 Peculiarità del Culto Micaelico di Sala Consilina, in Provincia di Salerno.

Lucia Inglese
Università degli Studi di Salerno, Fisciano, Italy

Abstract
Il presente lavoro prende le mosse intenzione di fornire un ulteriore piccolo tassello alla conoscenza del culto micaelico in Italia Meridionale, approfondendo alcuni aspetti che rimangono ancora privi di una trattazione specifica. A Sala Consilina, cittadina a sud di Salerno, situata nel cuore del Vallo di Diano, in aggiunta alle canoniche festività dedicate all’Arcangelo in tutto l’Occidente cristiano (8 maggio e 29 settembre), si celebrano altre ricorrenze non attestate altrove, volte a commemorare avvenimenti di rilevanza solo locale, quali ad esempio l’apparizione del Santo a un pastorello (topos più che consolidato nella tradizione dell’Apparitio) o anche il salvifico intervento dell’Arcangelo durante il devastante terremoto del 1857. Tuttavia le vere peculiarità del culto in quest’area sono da ricercare all’interno dei riti processionali che si svolgono in occasione delle celebrazioni per il Santo e che richiamano, ogni anno, centinaia di fedeli dai paesini limitrofi e dalla vicina provincia di Potenza. L’intero percorso, infatti, è costellato di pratiche e rituali che affondano le radici in un antico sostrato pagano, mai del tutto incorporato e assimilato dal cristianesimo. A tal proposito è particolarmente notevole la tradizione dei cindi (attestati solo in Lucana), ceri votivi assemblati tra loro fino ad ottenere una forma piramidale e trasportati sul capo dai fedeli. Nel presente studio, dunque, verranno presi in esame i vari momenti e tappe delle processioni locali in onore dell’Arcangelo Michele con lo scopo di analizzarne le origini storiche e antropologiche.


C. Carletti, G. Otranto (eds), Culto e insediamenti micaelici nell’Italia meridionale tra tarda antichità e medioevo, Atti del Convegno Internazionale di studi (Monte Sant’Angelo 18-21 novembre 1992), Bari 1994.


A.Tortorella, San Michele Arcangelo (Sala Consilina), Feste e riti d Italia sud 1, a cura di Istituto Centrale per la Demoetnoantropologia, , Roma, De Luca, 2009.

386 Ibn Khaldūn’s Work Between Hermeneutics and History

Davide S. Amore

I.C.S. “G. D’Annunzio”, Motta Sant’Anastasia, Italy

Abstract

The modern world is a complex place. Ideologies and religions swirl, entangle with and wage war upon each other. Politically, socially and militarily the world is in upheaval. What Muslim scholars always bring to this intricate mix of good and bad is the faith that all of it proceeds from the Divine decree.

One of the classical authors that best describes the attitude stated above is, undoubtedly, the Tunisian-born scholar Abū Zayd ‘Abd ar-Rahmān ibn Khaldūn al-Ḥaḍramī (1332-1406) who is considered one of the greatest social analysts of the Medieval Muslim world. Descending from a family of jurists and government officials, he was living in turbulent times of Maghrebian dynastical clashes and political turmoil. His abilities and skills gained him entrance into inner circles of Moroccan, Tunisian, Algerian and Granadean rulers. The immediate experience in court politics provided him with an important understanding of social power dynamics in different settings. He skilfully employed this knowledge in his “new historical science”, laid out in his masterpiece, The Muqaddimah, the first volume of his grand history of the world.

The Muqaddimah, also known as the Muqaddimah of ibn Khaldun (Arabic: مقدّمة ابن خلدون), is its author’s attempt to uncover the latent or inner principles of history which induce the rise and fall of dynasties. In this lengthy (about one thousand five hundred pages long) Introduction to the history of North African Muslim states, Ibn Khaldūn drew on perspectives largely anticipatory of those of modern sociology, politology, economy and anthropology in order to expound the laws of the history of Islamic societies. The purpose of this paper is to discuss to what extent his work was influenced by the religious dogmas of his faith, Islam, and in particular of the legal school to which he belonged, the Malikite one, or if it was rather the result of his personal reflections. In fact, The Muqaddimah, according to N.J. Dawood, can be regarded as the earliest attempt made by any historian to discover a pattern in the changes that occur in man’s political and social organization - in other words, hermeneutics of history.

776 Christian Churches and Archaeology in Jerusalem: Devotional Perspectives and Scientific Implications

Renata Salvarani

European University of Rome, Rome, Italy

Abstract
The different Churches living in Jerusalem have developed their own lines of investigation on the biblical texts related to space and connected with the definition of the “Christian Holy Lands”. Each one highlighted New Testament places and developed their own spatial narratives intertwining scriptural elements, devotions, local memories developed within the communities themselves.

The results were partly unitary, partly divergent. In particular, from the end of the 19th century and in the age of the Tanzimat, the differences were marked as identity elements, as grounds for distinguishing between the different groups and, at the same time, as points of attraction for pilgrims, in a devotional key.

Often historical studies and reconstructions overlapped diplomatic and political claims on the ownership of places and about the very presence of individual communities in the Old City (and in disputed areas as well).

Research on material data, surveys about physical places, studies on stones and earth, has paved the way for archaeological investigations, originally carried out in total autonomy.

Each community has enhanced its own areas and buildings, initiating excavation campaigns (both in Jerusalem and in other locations).

The focus was on some sites, such as the areas of the Franciscans, the Sion, the area of the Russian complex of Alexandr Nievsky, the area of the Redeemer Church of the Lutherans, the so-called tomb of Gordon, the cave of the discovery of the Cross at the ninth station of the Via Dolorosa belonging to the Ethiopians.

New punctual elements emerged and were brought back to individual devotional narratives.

However, on the basis of these activities real schools of archaeology were born, whose contributions significantly marked the scientific and methodological progress both of this discipline and of the Religious Studies.

The search for objectivity linked to sensitive and material data is presented as an element of resistance to confessional visions, as a common element of research, and as a ground for the opening to scientific criteria.

This paper critically introduces the main lines of development of Christian archaeology in Jerusalem highlighting how material and spatial data have been the basis for the resilience of a scientific approach, in the face of divergent self-justifying narratives.

References:

IAHR EC

14:40 - 16:20 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

ISC 14 India (Individual Short Communications)

15:40 - 16:20 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

53 “Desolate, they lamented and madly wept” (Rām. 2. 42. 27): Defining the Outlines of the Death Lament in Sanskrit Epics through a Multidisciplinary Perspective.

Alberico Crafa
Sapienza University of Rome, Rome, Italy

Abstract

Ritual wailings could be considered as powerful devices for the acceptance of and resignation to loss, tools for reacting to crisis and an attempt to reconcile oneself with it through the means provided by a cultural and religious discourse. Although during the last decades this subject has gained increasing importance among scholars from a wide range of disciplines, little attention has been paid to the sub-genre of the funerary lament (vilāpa) as attested in South Asian literature. The aim of this paper is twofold: firstly, to approach the theme from a multidisciplinary theoretical perspective, and secondly to shed light on several funerary episodes taken from the Mahābhārata and Rāmāyaṇa. Starting from the framework provided by Ernesto De Martino’s ethnohistorical study of funeral laments, this paper will focus on various aspects related to the narrative persona’s mourning for the loss of a loved one or kinsman as attested in Sanskrit texts. In considering these episodes as “texted performances of grief”, I will examine several standard and formalized expressions of grief, standard gestures and psychophysical responses textually described in Sanskrit epics. We will note, then, that lamenters - wives and husbands, mothers or fathers, heroes, maidens or a city and its citizens - try to cope with a critical situation through all those ways and performances well attested in textual resources involving either ancient or contemporary societies.
Coffee break

16:20 - 16:40 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

ISC 15 Near East and Greece (Individual Short Communications)

16:40 - 18:20 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

Filippo Battistoni

342 Two Millennia of Vivid History: Divination as a Key to Understanding the Religious History of Mesopotamia

Krzysztof Ulanowski

University of Gdansk, Gdańsk, Poland

Abstract

Divination was a salient characteristic of Mesopotamian civilization. Divination was based on the idea that to some extent the future is pre-determined, but that the gods especially Shamash and Adad have made available to man certain indications of the future (omens and portents) in the world around him, which can be interpreted (divined) by experts with specialist knowledge. The future as crystallized in the present was not considered by the Babylonians as created solely by gods but as the result of a dialogue between man and god. The first and basic assumption of the Mesopotamian civilization is that the gods communicate their intentions through signs, and that the universe works according to certain principles that require only knowledge and expertise to decode them. The Mesopotamians believed that the gods wrote into the universe, and that is why the world could be read by those who were wise enough (some kind of priests and scholars). The organic body was seen as a text and the specially prepared priests could explain the signs sent down by the gods (in Akkadian, the word pašāru means a multilayered reading or decipherment of texts).

Research on divination allows us to learn about the mentality of individuals, groups and entire societies as well as their goals, aspirations and perceived threats related to their functioning in the world and offers an opportunity to reread the cultural codes that determined the functioning of communities and state organisms in the light of religious, political and social crises. In this special case, I am interested in the durability and longevity of divinatory practices. I focus on the remarkable similarity of the methods, applications and results of divination from the Akkadian and the Neo-Assyrian period which followed it almost two millennia later.
**Abstract**

This paper presents a structural method of comparison between religious elements, based upon the comparison of Mesopotamian polytheism to Biblical monotheism carried out in G. Buccellati’s 2012 publication entitled *Quando in alto i cieli* (Jaca Book). The method is first applied, as an example, to divination and prophecy. Then the theory behind the method is developed with considerations regarding language. Finally, the paper concludes with an exploration of some possible extensions of the methodology in Digital Humanism.

Data regarding religious practices can be initially interpreted as if they were the still-mysterious graphical symbols of an ancient and unknown written language. As in the decipherment of hieroglyphs and cuneiform texts, careful observations can lead to the construction of a “syntax” for the proper linking of the data elements, before attempting any “semantic” interpretation. From a well-constructed syntactical structure that represents the pattern of the underlying data, well-founded considerations about meaning can emerge.

Divination and prophecy offer an interesting case study for our method. They present several similarities, and are easily susceptible to description in a schematic, “structural” manner. Through such representation, a few important differences between the two activities, and between the relative conceptions of the divine, emerge naturally.

Structures are a useful metaphor for comparing two distinct religious practices. They are also a useful way to imagine research into entire sections of a civilization: perhaps not only “divination” and “prophecy”, but “Mesopotamian polytheism” and “Biblical monotheism” could be compared usefully in this way. Furthermore, a structural comparison remains intrinsically open to new data.

This process can be extended to large-scale collections of data and their publication and interpretation. The author currently collaborates on one such project (4banks.net), which will be briefly presented in conclusion.
Abstract

The image of the Mesopotamian evil deity Lamaštu has drawn the attention of scholars, as has that of the Greek deities such as the well-known Lamia or Gorgo (amongst other examples). All these deities had something in common: they all attacked children and/or women during childbirth.

The first issue that is to be discussed in that brief communication is the conception of premature death both in Mesopotamia and Greece so as to make clear their similarities and differences. Then, the speaker will provide a catalogue of all child abductors goddesses and demons to make a comparative analysis, based on archaeological remains and ancient literary sources. After that study, it is going to be explained what were the aspects of the goddess Lamaštu that penetrated into the thought of the Greek people, for they created (at least) eight deities/demons that carried a similar function. Finally, having considered all the similarities and differences between the two cultures, it is the moment to justify the power that they exercised over the respective societies and why the Mesopotamian people gave Lamaštu the rank of goddess, whereas the Greeks regarded their deities as simple demons. Besides, the speaker will focus on why each deity kidnapped children and what could be done to frighten them away so as to draw substantial conclusions.

852 Resilience, Memory and the Worshipping of Divinities at Abandoned Settlements on the Cyclades

Erica Angliker
ICS -London, London, United Kingdom

Abstract

By the Early Archaic period groups of people on various islands peacefully abandoned their settlements— for reasons only partly understood—to establish themselves elsewhere. However planned and peaceful this displacement from the land of their ancestors and gods may have been, it must have been a traumatic experience that generated discomfort and resistance. One way to deal with this kind of demanding situation was to maintain the cult of divinities at the abandoned site. The periodic return to these sites for the purpose of engaging in cultic activities helped people cope with the change much as do actions taken by people who are forced to flee a location after a disaster. This paper analyses the relationship between resilience and worship by considering two different settlements that were abandoned in the Cyclades by the Early Archaic period, Zagora (Andros) and Koukonaries (Paros). After briefly considering the possible reasons that led people to leave behind their homes and the places where they relocated, I turn to the nature of the cults practiced at the abandoned sites. I look at how long it took for the cults to be established after the abandonment of the settlements, the characteristics of these cults, and how they kept alive the memory of these ancestral places. Afterwards, I compare the cultic sites and show how once the memory of the stressful move had faded after four generations, the need to demonstrate resilience disappeared and the cult could be abandoned.

633 Homer’s Athena: On Cunning Management of Critical Emotions

Nicola Fogazzi
Università degli studi di Milano, Milano, Italy
Abstract

My communication will focus on the action of Athena as conceived and exploited by the Homeric poems, with regard to the goddess' ability to cope with the situations of crisis among men and gods. It has long been acknowledged that she is connected to cunning intelligence and to the management of natural forces (most notably by the studies of Detienne and Vernant). My suggestion is that Homer often applies this attitude to the cunning control of human impulses, deployed to discard virtually disruptive outcomes and to obtain out of their 'emotional potential' the best possible result. In the *Iliad*, whenever a hero or the mass of the army are driven by an impulse that jeopardizes the plans of the Olympians, Athena is involved to readjust as she can the unexpected turn of the events, operating in strikingly flexible ways on the body and on the emotional sphere of human beings. She is thus an instrument of resilience at work between project and emotions, gods' will and men's possibilities, and her set of tools is used by the poet to drive forth and orient the plot of the poem. In the *Odyssey*, the same set of tools is originally rearranged to design the support of Athena to Odysseus and Telemachus. In this case, the sufferance of the heroes stuck in outrageous impasses is deepened by her intervention and then turned into pondered and powerful means of reaction, thus making her resilience abilities a sometimes-paradoxical help for men to appeal to.

26-IV Gods Don't Die

16:40 - 18:20 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

Beatrice Lietz, Fabio Guidetti, Nicola Barbagli

232 A Palace in the Mountains: Imperial Legitimation and the Medieval Cult of the Goddess Tenkawa Benzaiten

Yagi Morris

UW-Madison, Madison, USA

Abstract

There are times in history that the story of a god intersects with the story of a nation. At such times or crossroads between reality and the imagination, between the political and religious domains and between locality and sovereignty, a god’s ontological status may extend beyond the mythological, ritual and social spheres in which it came into being; its abode may become the navel of the world and the nucleus of a system of signs.

Following the downfall of emperor Go-Daigo’s regime (1333-1336) and the accession to the throne of the emperor of the northern court, Yoshino, the northern gateway to the Ōmine Mountains, became the stronghold of the southern court. This was the beginning of the “Northern and Southern Courts Period” (1336-1392), the only time in Japanese history that the imperial court had split in two, a crisis that together with the Shogunate’s rising power provoked a civil war. Secluded with the emperor at the refuge palace and shielded by the forest-clad mountains, the scholar-monk Monkan Kōshin (1278-1357), compiled a corpus of esoteric Buddhist texts on “The Joint Ritual of the Three Worthies”. This was a secret practice that
developed in the esoteric Buddhist schools in Japan in the 12th and 13th centuries as part of a discourse on enlightenment and performed exclusively at the imperial court as a rite of sovereignty, epitomizing the intimate relations between kingship and enlightenment.

The *Kinpusen himitsu den*, “The Secret Transmission of the Golden Peak”, compiled in 1337, soon after Monkan’s arrival at the refuge palace, is unique within this corpus in the soteriological significance it attributes to the local gods of the Ōmine Mountains as a vessel of enlightenment and as key to the renewal of the emperor’s authority. My presentation examines the integration of the goddess Benzaiten, a local transformation of the Hindu Sarasvatī, into the esoteric Buddhist liturgy of the imperial court and her association with Buddhas and symbols of divine and imperial authority in the text. It further looks at the spatial formulation of her abode on the banks of the Tenkawa River at the foot of the Ōmine Mountains and atop Mt. Misen - which had a strategic significance in the war - in relation to Buddhist cosmology, to a network of sacred spaces and to discourses on the sacredness of Japan that were geared towards imperial legitimation. Second only to Kinpusen in the text, I argue that the shrine of Benzaiten in Tenkawa offered an alternative seat of imperial and divine power in an era absent of a clear sovereign center.

Monkan’s surge of creativity and productivity at the refuge court was an ad hoc response to crisis, an innovative, perhaps desperate, attempt to manipulate sacred power and create a divine explosion in face of doom. The mountain gods occupied a prominent role in this process, as embodiments of local power, of the salvific capacity of Buddhas associated with other politico-religious domains, and of the sacredness of Japan.

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250 Resilient Myths: Pre-Christian Motifs in Slavic Spiritual Chants and Legends Devoted to St. Elijah and St. Nicholas

Enrique Santos

Complutense University of Madrid, Madrid, Spain

Abstract

It is a well-known fact, prophet Elijah took the role of the Slavic pre-Christian god Perun as a weather god among the East and South Slavs in the period of syncretism just after the Christianization known as dvoeverie “double faith”. The earliest example can be found in the East Slavic first chronographical work, the so-called “Primary Chronicle” or “Tale of Bygone Years”, dating back to the beginning of the 12th century, though based on earlier materials. However, unlike other characters taken from the Old Testament, Elijah was not honoured with extensive translations of full apocryphal works, except for a group of apocryphal fragments that have been preserved in the Slavonic Church. On the contrary, some original works devoted to the prophet were created, such as the encomium attributed to St. Clement of Ohrid (9th-10th c.) or the “hybrid” gender of the spiritual chants. The spiritual chants are half way between the popular and the ecclesiastical verses devoted to different saints, being composed starting from the second half of the 15th century. And they show a great influence from the folklore, both from the byliny, the East Slavic oral epic narrative poems, and from the folk tales. Some authors, such as Ivanov and Toporov (1974), as well as Boris Uspenskij (1982), have already studied the transformation of the heroes and gods belonging to the Slavic pre-Christian religion into Christian saints. But all of them did it on the basis of the East Slavic folklore. In this paper we will analyse folk legends devoted to both St. Elijah and St. Nicholas, as well as South and East Slavonic spiritual chants from the 15th c., comparing them with some other apocryphal fragments in order to identify original motifs that could date back to the pre-Christian period, such as the “divine council” or the dispute between weather gods.
759 Christ Comes Last. Rethinking Local Deities and Cult Practices: an Ethnographic Case Study

Federica Rainelli
Sapienza Università di Roma, Rome, Italy

Abstract

On the anniversary of the Spanish conquest of Mexico (1521-2021), this paper aims to explore the dynamics and strategies that have allowed local deities and cults to survive the downfall of their socio-cultural system of origin and to cross five centuries of “spiritual colonization”, reaching us in revisited and syncretic, but still vital forms. In particular, our reflection will move from the emblematic ethnographic case of the Eastern Highlands Otomi, whose religious landscape includes both indigenous divine beings and Catholic cult figures, unravelling from a series of binary oppositions that determines the partition of dedicated times and spaces: nocturnal / diurnal, old / new, wild / domestic, native / foreign. Ancient local extra-human beings are thus exiled outside the inhabited space, on the peaks of the surrounding hills and in the depths of the woods, and their cult is relegated to night-time, where it finds space thanks to the favour of darkness. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to retrace the logic through which internal assumptions and external influences have historically been articulated, permitting the reconfiguration of the local pantheon and giving rise to a coherent narrative.

609 The Ever-Living Ones: Contemporary Paganism, Old Gods, and the Resilience of Tradition in Modern Ireland

Jenny Butler
University College Cork, Cork, Ireland

Abstract

The “Ever-Living Ones” is a descriptor found in the Early Irish Literature in reference to the inhabitants of the otherworld, a place sometimes called Tir na mBao (Land of the Living Ones) or Tir na nOg (Land of the Young). The Celtic otherworld is presented as a bright, beautiful land of vibrant and everlasting beings. Ireland’s build heritage and topographical features reveal that the deities never died, living on in the Old and Modern Irish language for place-names and in legends. Similar to accounts elsewhere in the world of new religions overcoming the native ones, breaking statues and driving worshippers from their temples, Ireland’s mythic history tells of the patron saint Patrick smashing the “idol” of the harvest deity Crom Dubh and examples abound of Christian monasteries and churches built on or near pagan sacred sites. Elements of the “old religion” continued in folklore and in the vernacular religious practices of the Irish and have been revived and re-contexted by practitioners of new religious movements including modern Pagans. This paper examines the abiding presence of the Celtic deities in present day Ireland through a case study of contemporary Pagan engagement with them, in worldview, discourse and ritual practices. It draws on longitudinal ethnographic research with Witches, Druids, and other Pagans to gain insights into their lived realities and the contexts for, and methods of, communication with deities. The refashioning of deities in artwork and other creative expressions reveal the gods to be very much alive in Ireland today.
Du génie du pater familias à Assas dar. Survivance d'un culte païen depuis l'antiquité romaine jusqu'à l'époque moderne algérienne.

Amel Bouder
Institut d'archéologie, université d'Alger 2., Alger, Algeria

Abstract

La société algérienne est considérée comme société conservatrice qui se force à respecter les traditions et les coutumes. Ces dernières sont souvent issues du cumul culturel des précédentes civilisations, ce qui explique la survivance de certaines pratiques païennes dans un milieu musulman.

D'ailleurs, à titre d'exemple, dans les croyances algériennes le génie ou le djinn prend une place très importante, que ce soit dans les contes populaires ou dans la vie quotidienne, grands et petits, musulmans ou pas, tous aiment écouter et parler de ces êtres surnaturels. Mais parmi tous ces êtres, on distingue un qui est spécial et qui est connu de tous, ce dernier se trouve dans toutes les maisons algériennes nommé Assas adar « le gardien de la maison ». Cela dit, ce personnage trouve son parallèle dans un autre personnage mythologique qui remonte à la civilisation romaine, celui du genius du pater familias. Celui-ci a pu survivre dans les traditions et les croyances algériennes même après l’arrivée de l’Islam et cela jusqu’à nos jours.

Mais alors, quels sont les points en commun entre ces deux personnages ? Les Algériens pratiquent-ils des coutumes spéciales à « Assa dar » ? Si oui ! Lesquelles ? Et qu’elle est l’opinion religieuse dans ces pratiques ?

Pour répondre à ces questions, nous feron un bref exposé sur les génies et des démons depuis l’antiquité jusqu’à nos jours, mais nous nous attarderons sur la place du génie dans la famille romaine et sur le Djinn dans la civilisation arabe (avant l’islam) et musulmane (d’après le coran et les hadiths), puis la place du djinn en Algérie en nous basant sur des témoignages de certaines personnes.

315-II Resilient Citizens: Religious Dissent and Civic Rights in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages

16:40 - 18:20 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

Mar Marcos, Juana Torres
449 The sins of Young Epiphanius of Salamis and Other (Not-so-good) Christians

Elena Sol Jiménez

University of Cantabria, Santander, Spain

Abstract

Lines between heresy and orthodoxy were drawn during the first centuries CE, when heresiologists like Irenaeus warned innocent men and women from dangerous teachings, while encouraging those astray to come back to the Catholic truth. Especially dangerous were gnostic leaders such as Valentinus and their disciples, whose teachings flourished through the second and third centuries.

More than a century later, orthodoxy was being pushed by much more powerful forces than apologetic writings against heretical ideas and teachings still growing in the Empire.

By that time, Epiphanius of Salamis wrote his Panarion or “pharmacy” against heretics mostly using two previous works: Irenaeus’ Adversus Haereses and Hippolytus lost Syntagma. But he also provides original material about heretics and other Christian groups, especially from his area in Egypt, he had heard about or even met himself. An interesting section of his work focuses on his own experience inside a group of gnostics when he was young, from whose lies he was (fortunately) able to escape, while he made them be expelled from the city. Young Epiphanius showed strength and conviction when realizing how wrong those heretics were, but not every person was able to get away from heresy like he did. In his work he talks about several individuals making their way into heresy over and over. From Epiphanius’ point of view, heresy was always to be defeated and his “remedies” helped to achieve its extinction, but despite his efforts, heresy seemed quite popular still in his time.

Hieracas, Borborians, Euctatus and Peter are some of the names that Epiphanius’ provides as examples of weak people that fell into heresy, but they were not so weak if they were able to travel, to expand their ideas and to get away with their own disciples from Epiphanius’ and other heresiologists efforts to discredit them.

757 Voices of Jewish Communities in Late Antique Imperial and Christian Laws

Alessandro Saggioro

Sapienza, Rome, Italy

Abstract

Voices of the Jewish communities in the IV Century can be detected reading the imperial laws related to them in this age of religious transformation. Did Roman Emperors listen to claims from the religious minorities and from those communities that were considered outside Roman law? How did those citizens affirm their rights and try to obtain a better condition for themselves?
828 Religious Dissent, Civic Rights, and the Road to Papacy: Hormisdas of Rome's Answer to Resilient Citizens

Alexander Evers
Loyola University Chicago, John Felice Rome Center, Rome, Italy

Abstract

Hormisdas, Bishop of Rome from AD 514 until 523, had to face the Acacian Schism (AD 484 - 519) during the first few years of his papacy. Leading up to his pontificate, he was a key player during the Laurentian Schism (AD 498 - 506). This paper intends to examine the actions and reactions of both ecclesiastical authorities and resilient citizens during the years of Hormisdas' reign as the bishop of Rome, as well as the years leading up to it. Hormisdas used his relationship with the emperors in Constantinople, particularly that with Emperor Justin (AD 518 - 527), rather cleverly in his attempts to establish and consolidate a much stronger position of authority for the bishop of Rome. A considerable part of his correspondence has been preserved in the so-called Collectio Avellana - and provides a clear insight in the wheeling and dealing of Hormisdas, the emperors, as well as other authors and recipients of his letters. Hormisdas clearly strived for much more authority, if not primacy, for the bishop of Rome within the world of Christendom - both at the expense of resilient citizens and causing a great deal of resilience in return.

399 When Jesus Was Roman: The Orosian Citizenship Discourse as Case-Study

Elisa Manzo
Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II, Naples, Italy. Universidad de Cantabria, Santander, Spain

Abstract

The sack of Rome in 410 CE represents a good opportunity to question again the legitimacy of Christiana religio, especially for those who are still tied to traditional cults. It did not take long for the Christian response to come, focusing precisely on the relationship between the Roman Empire and Christianity, how it benefited the former as a result of the spread of the latter. This report raises both theological and factual questions (e.g., civic conditions and taxation) and, among its most authoritative voices, there's Orosius', author - inter alia - of the Historiae adversus paganos (ca 417 CE).

Therefore, my paper will be focusing on how Orosius develops his discourse on Roman citizenship in his work. At a first glance, it seems that his discourse is not relegated to individual steps, but embraces and permeates the whole structure of his work. On the one hand, Orosius critically points out a substantial difference between being a citizen of the Roman res publica (pre-Christian period) and, instead, a citizen of the Roman Empire (Christian period). To reinforce this difference, he states that Jesus preferred to become a Roman citizen, blessing the birth of the Empire with his advent. On the other hand, Orosius notes that, despite a widespread diffusion of Christianity, in his time there are still Romans who are not Christians and vice versa. Against such a circumstance, what is the right solution: to be Roman or to be Christian? The Orosian answer is less obvious than one might realize.
This workshop focuses on discussing forms of radical religion in the ancient world and on developing new approaches to radical religion by 1) focusing on emotions and narrativity, 2) offering a set of historicizing case studies from ancient religions based on a new research project focused on the concept of “total devotion” (www.sdu.dk/radrel). Today, the field of radical religion research focuses mainly on radical beliefs and the violence directed at others, whether the social environment or competing religious groups, thus making marginalisation a key factor. There is, moreover, a particular focus on Islam in the media, in politics, and in the research field. In contrast to these trends, the different workshop papers presented here will analyse varying forms of radical and intense religious devotion - total devotion - in ancient religious traditions. We will probe if investigating emotions and narrativity can help explain the “pull” and the intensity of involvement in radical religion in more depth, and on that basis we can discuss the resilience of religious groups.

The workshop papers analyse religious texts that idealize total devotion and an all-encompassing emotional commitment, located in the inner person, in different ancient religions. Our common term - total devotion - is formulated theoretically in dialogue with research on radical religion, and strategically on the basis of one of our vital texts, namely Deuteronomy 6,4-9 from the Torah. This text, with its famous command to love Yahweh, focuses on devotion as total in several ways: it stipulates total love for the deity with all of one’s heart, all of one’s being, and with all of one’s strength, and total devotion in keeping the deity and his commandments in mind everywhere and at all times. Our term “total devotion” thus signals the intensity of the loyalty-relation between the deity and the devotee/s, the emphasis on emotionality, and its all-encompassing quality. Therefore, our workshop will centre on total devotion as an intense, all-encompassing emotional and binding relation between a deity and a devotee or group. What do the ancient sources say about the intense, emotional, total relationship between the deity and the devotee/s? How is this relationship formatted narratively? We suggest that belief is not necessarily the decisive or the only factor in total devotion and that emotional involvement needs much more study, as it may also play a role for the resilience of religion. Therefore, we discuss various ways of opening up the field and showing how radical religion comes in a variety of forms beyond modern “fundamentalism” and “extremism” (Fox 2013; Sedgwick 2010; Al-Rasheed and Shterin 2009; Partridge 2001).
Abstract

This paper presents 1) an approach that combines narrativity perspectives with the theory and history of emotions in order to approach radical religion - total devotion - in ancient religions, and 2) a case study of an analysis the role of emotions in narrative communication about “total devotion” in ancient Judaism, namely an analysis of Deuteronomy/Devarim 1-11. Understanding narratives as among the most suitable tools for processing emotions (Frink 2015; Feldt 2020)[1], and stories as stimulating emotions in their audiences through characters, narrators, and events[2], I present an approach focusing on verbalised/narrated emotions and emotional story/plot effects and narrated ideals of total devotion/radical religion. Then, I look at the role of emotions in narrative communication about the exemplary devout and exemplary religious identity in Devarim/Deuteronomy, especially chapters 1-11. This paper analyses both verbalized text emotives (such as ḥb (“love”), yr (“fear”), et al.), and emotional story/plot effects in the narrative and rhetoric of Deuteronomy 1-11, arguing that emotionality plays key roles in Deuteronomy 1-11, contrary to a long-standing, though not uncontested, scholarly consensus (building on specific understandings of Neo-Assyrian vassal treaties), and, moreover, that they are intimately tied to narrativity and efforts to strengthen the resilience of the group. The analysis of text emotives and story effects forms the basis for a discussion of emotional practices, emotional community, and the role of emotions in the formation of total devotion ideals, in discussion with key analyses of Deuteronomy from research history and comparative materials from the ancient Near Eastern context.


[2] See Hogan’s useful distinctions (Hogan 2011: 2-4; Bartlett and Gentile 2011; Döveling et al. 2011, 3-4). Emotion scholars like Bourke (2014), Scheer (2012), and Rosenwein (2010) reckon with common cognitive-bodily foundations, but also stress historically & culturally shifting contexts. We lean on this history- and literature-oriented research strand more so than the power-oriented emotion ethnography (e.g., Lutz and Abu-Lughod 1990). NB, even post-classical narratologies offer few strategies of analysis for emotions (cf. Feldt 2020).

17:00 - 17:20

489 Radically Emotional: Torah Study as Total Devotion in Ancient Rabbinic Judaism

Tamara Holkenov

University of Southern Denmark (SDU), Odense, Denmark

Abstract

This paper focuses on the classical Rabbinic corpus of late antique Palestine, under the Roman and Byzantine rule. In this corpus, Torah study is generally considered the ultimate practice of total devotion. As emphasised by Satlow (2003), this perception takes after Greco-Roman tradition of asceticism, and
specifically that of philosophy as an ideal way of life. However, as Satlow notes as well, it also derives from
the biblical commandment of total love towards God, strongly connected to Torah study already in the
Torah itself (Deut. 6:5-7). Rabbinic mini-narratives about Torah study as the ultimate total devotion express
this tension between the perception of Torah study as ascetic, and its perception as an emotional practice of
love, or a privilege. For example, some of the King parables in Sifre Devarim, an early rabbinc
interpretation to Deuteronomy composed in third century C.E. Palestine, compare Torah study to jewellery
given by a husband to his wife, in order to make her desired by him. In this type of King parables, the Torah
is both a joyful gift and an obligation. Typically, King parables are emotionally loaded, also in cases where
the King’s subject is his son or his servant, rather than his wife. The intense emotionality of the parables
amplifies the emotionality of their reference, i.e. the relationship between God and his devotees. This broad
rabbinc cultivation of emotionality is exceptional in the cultural landscape of late antique Palestine, in light
of the strong Stoic roots of the Graeco-Roman tradition, aspiring for the transcending of emotions and
inclining towards the rational rather than the emotional as a superior state, and influential also over the
early Christians, at least on the interpersonal level (Rosenwein & Cristiani 2018). To use terms coined by
Reddy (2001), the highly emotional rabbinc texts might have functioned as “emotional refuge”, under the
Graeco-Roman “emotional regime”, playing a significant role in the construction of ancient Rabbinc identity.

17:20 - 17:40

228 Slaves of God/Christ: Narrated Total Devotion in the Apocryphal Acts of Peter
Jan Bremmer
University of Groningen, Groningen, Netherlands

Abstract

What is the influence of total devotion on the worshiper and his image of his god? In recent decades, much
attention has been paid to the phenomenon of megatheism in antiquity. “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians”,
was shouted for two hours by the craftsmen and other Ephesians in reaction to Paul’s preaching, at least
according to Acts of the Apostles (19.28). The acclamation fully fits the second century when we can
observe an increasing usage of epithets, expressions and acclamations that praise and exaggerate the
power of individual gods. This development went concomitant with the rise of the terms Kyriōs/Kyria
(translated into Latin as dominus/a) and Despotēs/Despoina as divine titles. The early Jesus followers had
joined this chorus and stressed the “Lordship” of their God by calling themselves “slaves of God” or “slaves
of Christ”, expressions already to be found in the earliest Christian literature (Romans 1.1, 1 Cor 7.22, Gal
1.10, Phil 1.1). This expression of total devotion to God/Christ (the two are not always sharply distinguished
in this early period) can be found in many early Christian writings, but it is rarely elaborated on a narrative
level. In my contribution I will argue that the apocryphal Acts of Peter, which were probably written in
Bithynia around 190 AD, illustrates the total devotion of the Christ believers in the way they are called
“slaves/servants” and in the exaltation of the power of God. At the same time, the martyrdom of Peter,
which is the climax of this Christian “novel”, shows what the apogee of total devotion should be and thus
constitutes a model to be followed by the audience/readers of this “novel”.

17:40 - 18:00
186 Total Devotion and the Creation of Egyptian Monasticism

Ingvild S. Gilhus

University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway

Abstract

Monasticism is a type of radical religion, which presupposes that people leave their families and continue their lives in a new ascetic setting. It presupposes a transfer of emotional belonging to the new monastic community and to divine beings. This paper focuses on how this transfer of emotional belonging is described in the First Sahidic Life of Pachomius (S1). Pachomius is recognized as the founder of Christian cenobitic monasticism, and the vita signals that monastic life is still in its beginning, and not spelled out like it later was. The prologue of the vita presents an intense glorification of monastic and spiritual fatherhood as it is embodied in Pachomius after the model of Paul [1]. Referring to Luke 14:26, “the one who comes to me and does not hate his father and his mother etc. cannot be my disciple.” The prologue indicates that this is a radical emotional separation, and this separation will be explored in the paper. In addition to vague references to monastic rules and a monastic garb, S1 offers interesting details about Pachomius’ attempts at establishing his first ascetic community including a conflict with his brother and his problems with controlling the disobedient and rude members of his first community. How is total devotion described in S1, what are the pull factors and what are the push factors, what type of emotions are involved, and by what means are these emotions made effective?


ISC 16 Silk Road (Individual Short Communications)

16:40 - 18:20 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

Pier Giorgio Borbone

6 Royal Religiosity: Transnational Confucian Thoughts in Joseon Jongmyo Shrine

David W. Kim

Australian National University, Canberra, Australia. Kookmin University, Seoul, Korea, Republic of

Abstract
While the geopolitics of East Asia is a crucial issue among those nations (Japan, Korea, China, and Vietnam), Chinese culture has been transmitted into the lifestyle and history of each ethnic society. The globalization of philosophy, astronomy, and literature (either officially or individually) motivated for alternative thoughts. The transnational movement of traditional religions was not exceptional. The history of Korea reflects that the teachings of Daoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism have been passed onto the ancient and medieval kingdoms and dynasties in which they transformed the local culture and structure. The religiosity of national leadership was also increased in the dynamic of Chinese religions instead of Shamanism. Daoism arrived at the Goguryeo kingdom in 624 CE. Buddhism was the key teaching for the establishment of the Goryeo dynasty (918-1392). Meanwhile, one of the most substantial influences for the Joseon dynasty (1392-1910) was Confucian thought. Then, how was the Chinese tradition emerged in early Joseon? What was the social function of Jongmyo (宗廟)? How was the metaphysical philosophy of the religion embodied in the royal shrine? The paper explores the transnational aspects of Ye (禮, courtesy), Hyo (孝, filial piety), Chung (忠, loyalty), the Samjae thought (三才思想), and the Yin-Yang and Five Elements (or Five Agents) theory (陰陽五行說) in the context of Jongmyo jerye (Confucian ritual), Jerye-ak (sacred music and dance), and the architectural style. The royal religiosity of Confucian values is re-creatively argued as the intellectual philosophy of Joseon (or early modern Korea) in the politico-cultural perspective of Jeongjeon, Yeongnyeongjeon, King Gongmin shrine, Chilsadang, and Gongsindang.

868 Between Mission and Power: Christian Communities in Turfan and Dunhuang

Chiara Barbati¹, Daniel Sheridan²

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Abstract

Having always been minority communities in the various contexts in which they have come to be, the Syro-Oriental religious communities have consistently shown a great capacity to adapt to these different contexts in order to exist as well as maintain a fundamental element of their Church, namely missionary activity. These two themes are quite evident in the Central Asian (Turfan) and Chinese (Dunhuang) documentation from the Early Middle Ages. The aim of our paper is to highlight some of the strategies used by these communities in terms of existence and missionary activity through the analysis of literary, terminological and material aspects of the extant book culture.

569 Franciscan Attitudes Towards Property in 13th and 14th Century Mongol Empire: Resilience and Transformations

Jana Valtrová

Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic
Abstract

The paper analyses the reports of the Franciscan friars (John of Plano Carpini, William of Rubruck, John of Montecorvino, John of Marignola and others), who travelled to the court of the Mongol khans and evangelised in the Mongol empire between the mid-13th and the mid-14th centuries. The paper focuses on the role of these friars’ attitudes towards property in that particular cultural context. How did the friars reflect the Franciscan ideal of poverty? What kind of forms could it take, and what role could it play in the process of evangelisation in the cultural context of the Mongol Empire?

Medieval Franciscan missions in Asia were performed by friars of various origin and background. Some scholars point out that many of these friars were Spirituals, for whom the ideal of the poverty of the Church was essential, and who were sent to the distant regions of Asia to be kept further away from the Church in Europe. While it is not possible in all cases to determine whether each particular friar was or was not a Spiritual, the question of the friars’ attitudes toward property deserves our attention. It is important not only from the perspective of the Franciscan Order’s inner development, but also when we consider the development and success of the mission among the Mongols, who highly valued material wealth.

The analyses of the friars’ attitudes towards property from the early beginning of the Franciscan missions among the Mongols up to the period of established missions in the second half of the 14th century enable us to learn about the resilience or adaptation of the ideal of poverty among these friars. The paper aims to contribute towards the discussion of the means and results of the medieval Franciscan mission.

638 A "New" Silk Road: The SERICA Project
Andrea Balbo
Dipartimento di Studi Umanisitici - Università di Torino, Torino, Italy

Abstract

In this paper I aim to describe the structure, the purposes and the targets of the SERICA project (Sino-European Religious Intersections in Central Asia. Interactive Texts and Intelligent Networks). This project, led by me and prof. Chiara O. Tommasi Moreschini (University of Pisa) - has been awarded by a grant from the Italian Ministry of Education and Research and aims to develop research about the Silk Road by considering material culture artifacts, artistic products and texts in Latin, Chinese, Greek, Indian and Persian languages, that mediated to Europe the knowledge of the Middle and Far East.

240 The Importance of Connection to the Resilience of Minority Christian Communities in Central Asia
Benjamin Sharkey
Oxford University, Oxford, United Kingdom
Abstract

Despite their minority status, Christian communities, between the Oxus River and the Turfan Oasis, survived from at least the fifth to the fourteenth centuries. In key centres such as Samarqand this presence was practically uninterrupted.

In this paper I will demonstrate the critical importance of connection to the survival of these minority communities, allowing them to withstand the various pressures attendant on their minority status. I will examine the role of connection through distinct evidence produced by two communities: a cemetery of Syriac gravestone inscriptions, 1200-1345, from Lake Issyk Kul, and a large number of tenth to thirteenth century Sogdian manuscripts from the Turfan Oasis.

Connection was an essential antidote to the dangers of isolation. Major trade arteries played their part, as did nomadic migration. Regional movement met practical needs, such as priests and manuscripts, while physical connections as far away as Byzantium and China provided encouragement of the wider church’s continued vitality. Hagiographic and scriptural storytelling allowed them to connect imaginatively with the church through space and time, encouraging of Christianity’s strength and veracity. Stories of martyrs and missionaries from the Persian church helped these communities understand and respond to their own difficulties, while scripture, sacramental practice and relic stories made their beliefs present to them, encouraging them of their value.

In conclusion, I will suggest that, while it was these connections that helped these communities survive for so long, it was the breakdown in these connections that lead to their final disappearance.

249-II Re-enchantment in Central-Eastern Europe?
Religious Change in Former Socialist Countries Revisited

16:40 - 18:20 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

Zuzana Bartova, Viola Teisenhoffer, Agata Ladykowska

845 Performing Agnosticism

Gerald Creed

The Graduate Center, CUNY, New York, USA. Hunter College, CUNY, New York, USA

Abstract
This paper is part of session number 249, “Re-enchantment in Central-Eastern Europe?”. It extends my earlier research on Bulgarian winter fertility rites known as kukeri and survakari. During these events groups of costumed participants canvass village households to drive away evil and invite abundance. In contrast to many other pre-Christian rituals that have disappeared, or continue predominantly in the form of folkloric performance, these events remain vital in many villages and towns. Indeed, my research in some locations revealed an increase in participation in the first decade of the 21st century. With a few exceptions, the increasing participation did not correlate with renewed belief in the efficacy of these rites, rather most practitioners continued to deny belief in the supernatural bases of the rituals. Taking my lead from these denials I looked instead for what the rituals revealed about other arenas of life, such as political participation, gender identity and ethnic relations. In this paper I reconsider my lack of attention to belief and entertain the prospect that commitment to the rituals reflects a particular experience of religion that is missed by taking participants’ denials literally. I suggest that ritual investment reveals a distinctive religious attitude, which might be characterized as a refusal to not believe, or a recognition and demonstration of ambivalent belief. Appreciating this possibility, I consider these events as rituals of agnosticism and ask what their performance suggests about the religious subjectivity of ritual participants.

318 Bad Priests and Beautiful Feelings: Orthodoxy, Re-enchantment, and Scepticism of the Church in Post-Yugoslav Serbia
Nicholas Lackenby
University College London, London, United Kingdom

Abstract

In contemporary Serbia, as elsewhere in postsocialist Eastern Europe, the majority of the population identify as “Orthodox Christian”. Whilst open expression of religion was stigmatised during socialist Yugoslavia, today scholars frequently observe that Orthodoxy is now ubiquitous in Serbian everyday life. Practices such as fasting, baptism and church weddings are increasingly widespread, and there are numerous possibilities for coach-trip “spiritual travel” to holy sites across the region. However, despite this re-engagement with Orthodox spirituality amongst the population at large, one also encounters a widespread and deep-rooted scepticism of the institutional Serbian Orthodox Church, its “corrupt” clergy, and the seemingly “zealous” churchgoers who try to live a “liturgical life”. Thus, this paper explores the issue of “re-enchantment” by considering how a popular sensibility for the Orthodox Christian tradition has taken root in Serbia, albeit one which is frequently detached from institutional, liturgical forms. In this context we have to observe how continuity and discontinuity are both at play. On the one hand, the negative socialist portrayal of the Orthodox Church lingers on; on the other, people can now openly express themselves in spiritual terms in a way that was not possible before.

786 Beyond Religious Revival: New Paths of Research from Post-Socialist Romania
Giuseppe Tateo
University of Leipzig, Leipzig, Germany
Abstract

According to a recent survey of the State Secretariat for Religious Affairs, in Romania almost ten thousand houses of worship have been built (by all eighteen recognized religious groups) between 1990 and 2015, more than one per day. Against this background, the major religious organization – the Romanian Orthodox Church (ROC), which represents 86% of the religious population – stands out not for the number of churches erected (about four thousand), but for the over thirty cathedrals built within the national boundaries. The boom of the newly-built religious infrastructure has pushed some observers to talk of religious revival, sacralization, revitalization, or renewal, thus linking the visibility of religious symbols and edifices with a growth in faith, belonging and practice.

However, the powerful comeback of religious signifiers in the public arena was accompanied by unprecedented criticism, inchoate forms of anticlericalism and new modes of coexistence between secularist sentiments, religious identification and spiritual practice. In this light, I look skeptically at the paradigm of religious revival and suggest alternative paths of research: the organizational revival of the ROC, the de-secularization of property, and the privatization of faith among younger generations. The paper ends reflecting on a paradox that has been emerging in the last two decades: at a time when the religious infrastructure goes back to being one of the main elements of the urban built environment, the authority of clerics in society wavers and younger generations tend to understand faith as a private matter, distancing themselves from communal religious life.

319 The Reconstruction of the Marian Column in Prague Old Town - between Religion, Heritage, and Politics

Alessandro Testa

Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic

Abstract

The recent reconstruction of the Marian Column (“Mariánský Sloup”) in one of Prague’s most important and central squares has sparked a heated public discourse, also echoed by innumerable conversations and discussions in the private sphere, making it a very timely and interesting case study to observe and understand better religious change in a quintessential central-eastern European country, the Czech Republic.

This paper intends to present some preliminary findings, observations and interpretations about this specific case study, while at the same time associating it with broader socio-cultural patterns of “re-enchantment” currently at work in central-eastern Europe.

After briefly presenting the significance of the Marian Column in European, Czech and local history, the paper will discuss its entanglements with phenomena such as the social reinterpretation of the past, the
structuring of public discourses, the making of national and religious symbols, the negotiation and expression of political positioning, and heritage-making processes.

700 Religious Toleration and Peace (RETOPEA): Engaging the Present with the Past in European Contexts

16:40 - 18:20 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

Stefanie Sinclair

This session brings together different aspects of the “RETOPEA” (Religious Toleration and Peace) project. This is an international research project funded by the European Research Council as part of the European Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (Grant agreement no. 770309). RETOPEA aims to find out more about young people’s attitudes towards religious diversity and develop pedagogic approaches that promote active engagement with religious history. This includes workshops that give young people (aged 13-18) the opportunity to make short documentary-style films so-called ‘docutubes’) that engage them in thinking about religious diversity, toleration and peace in the past and present.

RETOPEA involves work in schools, museums and youth clubs in 8 countries across Europe with the following partner institutions: KU Leuven (Belgium), The Open University (UK), Helsingin Yliopisto (Finland), Macedonian Centre for International co-operation and Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje (Macedonia), University of Granada (Spain), Leibniz Institut für Europäische Geschichte (Germany), University of Warsaw (Poland), University of Tartu (Estonia), Le Foyer vzw (Belgium) and the Euro-Arab Management School (Spain).

The RETOPEA project involves historical and contemporary research as well as innovation activities that address the following three main questions:

1. What can religious peace treaties (pacts, treaties and informal settlements) tell us about how complex problems of religious coexistence were practically handled in the past?

2. How are some of the same key issues of religious coexistence presented in contemporary culture and media, and how can an appropriately critical attitude to these presentations be fostered?

3. How can the results of historical research be used to develop innovative, engaging and reflective teaching and learning materials for young people that will help them understand the issues at stake in religious coexistence, and develop skills to promote peaceful coexistence?

This session will offer an overview of the project and will provide a snapshot of its different research activities. This will include papers by the project PI, Patrick Pasture (KU Leuven, Belgium) on “Toleration beyond conflict: how the changing ‘postsecular’ religious landscape restates the debate on toleration”, by
687 “Consigning the Past to the Past?” Religious Division and the Memory of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement (1998)

John Wolffe

The Open University, Milton Keynes, United Kingdom

Abstract

In a speech to young people on the fifteenth anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement in 2013 the Irish Foreign Minister, Eamon Gilmore, talked of consigning “the past to the past”. He hoped that his audience, who had grown up since 1998, would put behind them the political polarization that had fuelled the violence of the Northern Ireland “Troubles”. In exploring the legacy and memory of the Good Friday Agreement, one of the most recent of the treaties examined in the H2020 Religious Toleration and Peace (RETOPEA) project, this paper will assess how realistic this aspiration has been, in the light of the continuing religious division of the province between Catholics and Protestants. The paper will analyse evidence from the various commemorative events and memorials relating both to the Good Friday Agreement itself and to the earlier Troubles. It will also draw on the author’s own interviews with religious and community leaders. It will be argued that despite - or perhaps even because of - the significant secularization of Northern Ireland since the 1990s, divisions rooted in nominal religious affiliation continue to run deep. They are transmitted to the next generation by an educational system that remains predominantly segregated on confessional lines. In conclusion, the Northern Ireland case will be compared with North Macedonia, a country likewise divided on religious lines which similarly experienced a period of violent conflict concluded by a peace settlement at the turn of the millennium, the Ohrid Framework Agreement of 2001.

700 Religious Toleration and Peace (RETOPEA): Engaging the present with the past in European contexts

Patrick Pasture¹, John Wolffe², Sinclair Stefanie², Karel Van Nieuwenhuyse¹, John Maiden²

¹KU Leuven, Leuven, Belgium. ²The Open University, Milton Keynes, United Kingdom

Abstract

This session brings together different aspects of the ‘RETOPEA’ (Religious Toleration and Peace) project. This is an international research project funded by the European Research Council as part of the European Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (Grant agreement no. 770309). RETOPEA aims to find out more about young people’s attitudes towards religious diversity and develop pedagogic approaches that promote active engagement with religious history. This includes workshops that give young people
(aged 13-18) the opportunity to make short documentary-style films so-called ‘docutubes’) that engage them in thinking about religious diversity, toleration and peace in the past and present.

RETOPEA involves work in schools, museums and youth clubs in 8 countries across Europe with the following partner institutions: KU Leuven (Belgium), The Open University (UK), Helsingin Yliopisto (Finland), Maecdonian Centre for International co-operation and Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje (Macedonia), University of Granada (Spain), Leibniz Institut für Europäische Geschichte (Germany), University of Warsaw (Poland), University of Tartu (Estonia), Le Foyer vzw (Belgium) and the Euro-Arab Management School (Spain).

The RETOPEA project involves historical and contemporary research as well as innovation activities that address the following three main questions:

1. What can religious peace treaties (pacts, treaties and informal settlements) tell us about how complex problems of religious coexistence were practically handled in the past?

2. How are some of the same key issues of religious coexistence presented in contemporary culture and media, and how can an appropriately critical attitude to these presentations be fostered?

3. How can the results of historical research be used to develop innovative, engaging and reflective teaching and learning materials for young people that will help them understand the issues at stake in religious coexistence, and develop skills to promote peaceful coexistence?

This session will offer an overview of the project and will provide a snapshot of its different research activities. This will include papers by the project PI, Patrick Pasture (KU Leuven, Belgium) on “Toleration beyond conflict: how the changing ‘postsecular’ religious landscape restates the debate on toleration”, by Karel Van Nieuwenhuyse (KU Leuven, Belgium) on “Representing European Religious Diversity in Textbooks for History Education”, by John Wolffe (Open University, UK) on “‘Consigning the past to the past?’ Religious division and the memory of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement (1998)” and by John Maiden and Stefanie Sinclair (Open University, UK) on “The challenges and potentialities of presentism: Calling on young people’s understanding of historical and contemporary religious toleration and peace”.

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701 The challenges and potentialities of ‘presentism’: young peoples’ understanding of historical and contemporary religious toleration and peace

John Maiden¹, Stefanie Sinclair¹, Karel Van Nieuwenhuyse², Päivi Salmesvuori³, John Wolffe¹

¹The Open University, Milton Keynes, United Kingdom. ²KU Leuven, Leuven, Belgium. ³University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland

Abstract

Although recent years have seen growing interest in views and understanding of religious diversity in European countries, one particular demographic has received markedly less attention: the young. As part of the RETOPEA project, using semi-structured focus group interviews and questionnaires, a team sought to
gather and evaluate the views of young people on religious diversity, tolerance and intolerance across multiple national contexts. This paper discusses the patterns and asymmetries evident across 6 countries: the UK (England), Belgium (Flanders), Germany, Finland, Estonia and Spain. Specifically, the data covers:

- young people’s views on how religion and religious diversity (in past and present) are represented in the media
- the sources and extent of young people’s knowledge of and views on religious diversity in the past
- young people’s perception of religious diversity in contemporary society
- how young people’s knowledge and views of religious diversity in the past and present inform each other

A unique aspect of the data which has been gathered is that it concerns young peoples’ perspectives on both contemporary and historical religious diversity. What are the media contexts and sources of information which shape these perspectives? How do young peoples’ own experiences of religious diversity in the present day influence their understanding of the past? We discuss the extent to which a ‘presentist’ (von Borries 1994) epistemology shapes the attitudes of young people. We shall argue this ‘presentism’ present significant pitfalls for academics seeking to engage young people with the themes of religious diversity, tolerance and intolerance, it also offers some unexpected potentialities. We consider these challenges and possibilities in the context of the RETOPEA project’s ongoing efforts to engage European young people in making ‘docutube’ films which engage such themes in both historical and contemporary perspective.

690 Representing European Religious Diversity in Textbooks for History Education

Karel Van Nieuwenhuyse¹, Madis Maasing², Laura Galian³

¹KU Leuven, Leuven, Belgium. ²University of Tartu, Tartu, Estonia. ³University of Granada, Granada, Spain

Abstract

When watching and listening to societal and political debates and media news coverage, one often gets the impression that religion and religious diversity are perceived in a negative way, in that they are linked to conflict, exclusion, violence, acts of aggression, and even war. Research shows that our perceptions of phenomena in the present are often influenced (among other factors) by social representations of the past. It is therefore interesting to gain a precise picture of how religious diversity in the past is represented today. This presentation focuses on one specific medium carrying such social representations: history textbooks for secondary education. Using a comparative approach across eight European countries (Austria, Belgium, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom), this presentation gives an analysis of the representation of religious diversity focusing (on some 50 textbooks) on a selected number of interreligious contacts over the course of history. The main research question that guided the analysis, is the following: what social representations of interreligious contacts in the past are being constructed and disseminated among young people across Europe today in history textbooks for secondary education, and how to account for them (by taking into account their connection with specific religious, national,
sociopolitical and cultural contexts in which they arose)? An analysis scheme was designed, establishing a system of categories and subcategories in order to carry out a fine-grained diachronic and synchronic analysis of both the content and the narrative of each textbook, as the main objective was to understand educational representations in context. This analysis was followed by an international comparative analysis of the textbooks from the different countries.

Some firm conclusions could be discerned. First, the accounts are actually quite similar across the range of textbooks from different countries. Second, all the textbooks embed interreligious contacts within a broad historical and societal (political, socioeconomic and cultural) context. Third, the analysis reveals that agency in the contacts under study was mostly attributed to powerful individuals and groups, and other non-human agents. Ordinary individuals are almost never mentioned; neither are women. Fourth, a great deal of homogenization was observed in the textbook accounts of interreligious contacts. Also, the focus is particularly on the broad outlines and the processes of change in the past; micro-history, the individual human being of flesh and blood, and nuances were often overlooked. Fifth, in the interreligious contact between Muslims and other religions during the Middle Ages (7th - 15th century CE), the positive contribution of Islam and Muslims to societies in the West, and the fact that most Muslims were peace-loving, tends to be emphasized. Sixth, the textbooks are mainly past-oriented, in the sense that the past is treated completely independently of the present. Seventh, most of the textbook authors offered a one-sided, negative representation of interreligious contact in the past, as a source of conflict, violence and even war.

Those results will be discussed and reflected upon, on how a good understanding of interreligious contacts can be acquired in history textbooks.

880 Toleration Beyond Conflict: How the Changing “postsecular” Religious Landscape Restates the Debate on Toleration

Patrick Pasture
KU Leuven (University of Leuven), Leuven, Belgium

Abstract

In his monumental classic Toleration in Conflict Rainer Forst argues that toleration and conflict are inextricably linked: “Toleration is called for in conflicts that cannot be resolved but can only be ‘diffused’ by adopting a tolerant attitude (…) Furthermore the concept of toleration is itself contested with regard both to how it is understood and to what value attached to it as well as regarding differences among justifications of toleration. In short, toleration is a focus of both social and philosophical conflicts“ (Rainer Forst, Toleration in Conflict: Past and Present, Cambridge 2013, 449). While until recently it was common sense that Europe – in particular Western Europe – has moved beyond religious conflict (paradoxically expressed in the claim that ‘tolerance is the soul of Europe’ – Angela Merkel), there is ample evidence that the issue has again moved centre stage along with the increased visibility of religion. In this paper I want to take a closer look at different developments which change the debate. First of all the religious landscape has become not only more diverse but also more complex as a result from different, partly contradicting developments, among which de-Christianization, the growth of immigrant’ religions and New Spirituality, but also diverse forms of the non-religious as well as the emergence of a militant Islamophobic ‘cultural Christianity’. The latter sometimes builds alliances with a new wave of equally Islamophobic militant
secularism that aims at secularizing the public spaces and ‘privatizing’ religion. However, at the same time boundaries between the sacred and the secular are also redrawn and questioned. The latter development offers new perspectives for an interfaith and interconvictional ‘pluralist’ dialogue that ‘transcends’ conflict, based on mutual respect, but also generates new ‘interconvictional’-identities in which conflict dissipates. But this also raises challenges for the established religions as well militant secularists and atheists alike, for it requires relativizing one’s own truth, leading to new conflicts.

643-IV Resilient Esotericism

16:40 - 18:20 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

Angela Puca

651 Esoteric Hermeneutics as Instrument of Resilience Among the Zoroastrians of India

Mariano Erichiello

SOAS, London, United Kingdom

Abstract

In 1909, Behramshah Naoroji Shroff (1858-1927) introduced Ilme Kṣnum “Science of Bliss” among the Zoroastrians of India (Parsis). By proposing an esoteric interpretation of the Avesta, the Zoroastrian sacred scriptures, Ilme Kṣnum introduced new cosmological and eschatological concepts. Nevertheless, Parsis were already familiar to some of these ideas as they were greatly exposed to Persianate and Western forms of esotericism. This paper examines how the colonial enterprise innovated the Zoroastrian religious marketplace of India, triggering the emergence of different interpretations of Zoroastrianism that led to a religious pluralism, of which Ilme Kṣnum is an expression. This work also illustrates how esoteric hermeneutics, favoured by the entanglement between the Parsis, the West and the Persianate, became an instrument of resilience of Parsis’ customary religious practices during the transition from an Indo-Persian to a reconstructed ancient Iranian identity.

832 When it Comes to Psychedelics, Just Say Know: Moving Beyond the Drug War Epistemology
J. Christian Greer
Harvard University, Cambridge, USA

Abstract

This presentation addresses the resilience of psychedelic spirituality. Advocates of this esoteric tradition have been persecuted for more than half a century due to the US government’s War on Drugs. However, its status as “rejected knowledge” came to a dramatic end in 2014, after medical professionals at Johns Hopkins University published a groundbreaking study evidencing the profoundly healing effects of the psychedelic “expansion of consciousness.” Dozens of similar medical studies followed, leading major media outlets to proclaim a “Psychedelic Renaissance.” My paper identifies how the academic study and subsequent medicalization of psychedelic spirituality has been shaped by what I term the “Drug War epistemology.” I demonstrate how this epistemology misrepresents the history, demographics, and beliefs of psychedelic communities. The paper concludes by outlining a new approach to psychedelic spirituality, which centers cultural diffusion, as opposed to counter-cultural deviance, as the basis of a post-Drug War epistemology.

17:20 - 17:40

817 The Resilience of Magic: A Multifactorial Explanation
Bernd-Christian Otto
University of Leipzig, Leipzig, Germany

Abstract

At least from the 19th century onwards, numerous scholars have claimed that magic has either already largely declined, up to the degree of having become a marginal, anachronistic survival of once widespread premodern mentalities, or that it will most certainly die out in modern societies due to inexorable cultural processes of rationalisation and scientification. By pointing to various cases from the textual-ritual tradition of Western learned magic, the paper argues that these scholars have obviously been wrong, similar to all those who have proclaimed a general demise of religion over the past century. However, whereas one may easily find a number of fair arguments for the resilience of religion, the apparent resilience of modern Western magic (or ‘magick’, as it is often spelled today) might be a bit more tricky to explain. The paper attempts to do so nonetheless, and presents a multifactorial explanatory framework that takes into account a range of ‘resilience processes’, such as reconfiguration, innovation, emigration, and exoterisation.

81-IV Resilience of Tantric, Magic, and Shamanic Practices at the “Margins” of South and Southeast Asian Religions
144 Supernatural Experiences at the Margin: Khyāk, Tantric Rituals and Narrative Folklore among Newar Communities in Central Nepal.

Fabio Armand

Institute Pierre Gardette, “Culture(s), Language and Imaginaries”, UR Confluences: Sciences and Humanities, Catholic University of Lyon, Lyon, France

Abstract

This contribution aims to reveal the rich narrative folklore of the Khyāk, a supernatural ontology that haunt the imaginaries of the Newars, a Tibeto-Burman ethnic group living in the Kathmandu Valley (Nepal). We will stroll on the trails of this fantastic being in order to access a complex belief system allowing us to comprehend some Tantric ritual practices, pertaining both to Hindu and Buddhist traditions. Starting from the origin of this supernatural ontology, related to the figure of Nasadyāḥ, the Newar form of Śiva Naraṭarāja, we will analyze an important prepubertal feminine initiation, the bārhā tayegu (nep. guphā basne), where the Khyāk becomes a symbolic deflower agent. During the liminal period of this twelve-day seclusion ritual, the Bārhā Khyāk is supposed to visit the young candidates and lie down on their body during their sleep. Focusing on the dynamics of the ritual and its possible failures, we will highlight a borderline situation: if a girl dies during the ceremony, her ātman will turn into one of the forms of Khyāk and will continue haunting the house of her living. These considerations allow us to introduce a Tantric shamanic perspective concerning the categorization of the various forms of Khyāk and the specific rituals to pacifies them.

114 Socioreligious Alchemy: Virgin Worship and the Mainstreaming of Kaula Tantrism

Sundari Johansen Hurwitt

California Institute of Integral Studies, San Francisco, USA

Abstract

The kumārī pūjā—ritual worship of the goddess in the body of a pre-menarche virgin girl—is immensely popular throughout India. The modern kumārī pūjā, though it appears to be fairly orthodox in form, has direct historical antecedents in the antinomian rituals known as Kaula Tantrism. This paper uses an innovative, original comparative ritual analysis of a broad range of understudied Tantric texts of the post-thirteenth-century Kaula revival—including the Kulāṇava Tantra, Kaulāvalī Nirṇāya, Nila Tantra, Bṛhannila Tantra, Rudrayāmala, and Vārāhī Tantra—together with a rare ethnographic study of a living, secretive community of Tantric and orthodox Hindu practitioners at the Kāmākhyā temple complex in Assam. Evidence suggests that the kumārī pūjā represents a publicly accessible, chaste, and highly coded inversion of the ritually subversive practices of the Kaulas, which satisfy bodily desires in order to achieve a liberated
state. Public virgin worship also synthesized a sanitized public identity for Tantric practice, which had become increasingly popular among dominant castes. More importantly, the oft-overlooked kumārī may be historically one of the most powerful, liberatory, universalizing, and lasting symbols of Tantric identity in India, helping move Tantra from the periphery to the very heart of Hindu worship.

89 Shamanic Roots of Tantric Spirit Possession and Exorcism
Michael Slouber
Western Washington University, Bellingham, USA

Abstract

The “Bhūta Tantrika” was an expert in spirit possession and exorcism in early medieval India. The scriptural basis for such practices was the Bhūta Tantras, a genre of Tantras that spread throughout South Asia and into Southeast Asia as well. A popular 9th–10th century model that correlated Śaiva Tantric revelation with the five faces of Sadāśiva recognized the Bhūta Tantras as one of the five main division's of Tantric revelation. It has received little scholarly attention because sources on the Bhūta Tantras remain unpublished, and later digests of this material have hitherto been unrecognized as being drawn from the Bhūta Tantras in the few scholarly studies that mention them. The purpose of the present paper is to examine the origins of the Bhūta Tantrika role as a service occupation, by comparing and contrasting it to that of the shaman in numerous traditional cultures around the world. Both general features and specific examples of the ritual acts will be compared on the basis of vivid examples from primary source manuscripts and ethnographic accounts of living South Asian shamanism traditions, such as those of the Agaria in central India, and the jhankri of Nepal. The paper will also engage with the growing body of secondary scholarship on the origin of Tantrism and Tantric magic.

942 Tantric Elements in Monpa Shamanism: A Case Study in the North Eastern Frontiers of India
Stefano Beggiora
University Ca’ Foscari, Venice, Italy

Abstract

This paper proposes an ethnographic research study carried out among the indigenous communities of Arunachal Pradesh (India), with particular reference to the area of Monpas. The ancient shamanism of these mountains blends with the cultural heritage of the Buddhist schools present in the area and in particular with the Tantric and Shakta tradition which originated from the wide Hindu background. Through the analysis of images of supernatural entities and fantastic creatures of local folklore and the study of cases of possession, we will try to demonstrate how the indigenous tribal element is still the most important cultural feature of the place in order to understand fully the history of the region.
292-II Facing Discrimination: Religion and Agency

16:40 - 18:20 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

Johanna Marine Lems, Ana Isabel Planet Contreras

401 Religion, Sexuality and Migration: A Case Study of Gay Migrants from Different Religious Backgrounds Living in Madrid

Rafael Camarero Montesinos

Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Madrid, Spain

Abstract

This paper explores the relationship between religious identity and sexual identity among gay migrants living in Madrid. Are these two identities mutually exclusive? Drawing on Lee’s push-pull theory (Lee, 1966), my proposal aims first at considering immediate religious environments as a potential push factor for migrants with non-heteronormative sexual identities (Warner, 1991). Religious contexts where the social and familial environment rejects sexual dissent (Duggan, 1994) can act as a trigger for a migratory process - a push factor - for religious people with non-heteronormative sexualities, consequently affecting their religiosity in terms of belonging and practices. Does this mean that religious identity as a whole and religiosity in terms of beliefs can also be affected at the same level? Do gay people with a religious background necessarily have to give up on their religious identity in order to develop freely their sexuality? In relation to sexual identity formation, religion can indeed be seen in many different ways, not as merely a push factor, but also as a refuge that enables them to feel part of a community, or even as a potential tool to rectify the stigma (Goffman, 1963) or the shame (Sedgwick, 1993) that non-heteronormative sexualities may imply. The material used for this analysis was obtained from ethnographic fieldwork carried out in summer 2018 in Madrid. For four months I interviewed, observed and socialised with several gay men from different religious backgrounds who had recently arrived in Madrid looking for a more open environment to freely develop their sexual identity.

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“Creating Change from Within and Not in Response to”: Muslim Women and Agency in Transformation

Johanna M. Lems

Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Madrid, Spain

Abstract

After many years of work largely dedicated to showing the compatibility of their Muslimness and their Spanish citizenship, in recent times a group of women, forming part of the founding team of an association for young Muslimas, has grown tired of always “reacting to” hegemonic discourse and to questions imposed by others. Instead, they have decided to create their own subject matters and to rethink the initial objectives of their association. Through a period of group reflection and a process of internal and external training they have come to reset the foundations, aims and activities of their organization. No longer mainly focused on seeking recognition from third parties of their (political) subjectivity, these young women wish to construe an ethical sensitivity and to contribute, both collectively and individually, to a better world.

Based on material obtained with participant observation and semi-structured interviews, this communication analyzes the main interpellations (racializing and others) that have led to the above-mentioned dynamics. The paper furthermore seeks to explore how religion affects both the desire for transformation of their association and the way these changes have taken place, as well as its relationship with feelings of belonging.

Feriel Benjama’s Time Travelling, Creative Agency and the Racial Far-right in Germany

Luis Manuel Hernandez Aguilar

University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Netherlands

Abstract

“Berlin needs Blue, Berlin will become Blue” was a slogan designed by the far-right and openly racist political party Alternative for Germany (AfD) for the local elections in 2016. Blue is the color of the party, and the slogan bespeaks of a twofold process, the necessity of having the AfD as a ruling party, and of a temporal horizon predicting that eventually, the AfD will rule the country’s capital. Feriel Benjama is a renowned German Muslim artist, who after seeing the slogan, embarked on an uncommon journey. She imagined a travel 10 years forward in time to Berlin in the year 2026 in order to witness and experience first-hand how Berlin and Germany would look like after its blue unbecoming. The outcome of the trip was the 2016 exposition Blue Years (Blaue Jahre) a series of photographs and artifacts retrieved from the year 2026, and exposing the ubiquitous presence of racial discrimination in the city landscape. The paper analyzes the exposition against the background of growing anti-Muslim racism in the country, it centers on Benjama’s creative agency to raise alarm about the danger that racism and right-wing populism represents for religious minorities in the country. Moreover, the paper also investigates the way in which the work of Benjama draws on the history of racial religious persecution.
Abstract

The re-establishment of democracy in Spain in 1975 allowed for an unprecedented religious development. Beyond strengthening the right to non-discrimination on grounds of religion, the 1978 Constitution and the 1980 Law on Religious Freedom made it possible to declare Islam as a “religion of well-established roots” in the country and the signing in 1992 of an Agreement of Cooperation between the Islamic Commission of Spain and the Spanish State.

During this process, a generation of new Muslims - “converts” who had embraced Islam during the first years of the democratic transition played an important role, developing an original associative fabric with specific characteristics. Thirty years later, conversion processes continue to take place. The question at the present time is if there are converts who develop their lives as Muslims outside these associations, or if they are part of another type of political, union or citizen association? The material used to answer these questions comes from a series of interviews conducted between 2019 and 2021 in the framework of a broader doctoral research on the processes of conversion to Islam and the experience of Spanish converts as new Muslims.

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59 Religious Spaces and Urban Resilience ONLINE

16:40 - 18:20 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

Jörg Rüpke

The congress topic of “Religion and resilience” is inquiring into very different fields of types of resilience and related religious practices or beliefs. This panel proposes to focus on urban actors, their resilience as urbanites and their city’s resilience as a consequence of these actors’ religious practices. Thus, the general topic of the congress is narrowed down in both respects, namely a) what type of behaviour is analyzed for being more resilient - determined as spaces defined as urban by their users and constructors - and b) due to which religious phenomena this resilience is seen as being strengthened - determined as religious practices (rather than specific beliefs or symbols). The panel is made up of case studies covering a range of different practices like spatial, temporal, ritual, hidden versus open practices. It will be opened by an analysis of the oppositional pair of hidden and interreligiously open practices, followed by a study on the sacralization of natural spaces as a way to increase resilience in the face of ecological threats. Finally, two case studies will focus on the increased attachment to urban space and the resilience resulting from such ritual practices. The contributions range from Mediterranean antiquity to contemporary constellations. Each case study will start from a brief reflection of how resilience can be conceptualized in the specific case and will end in reflections about the generalizability of the case and the limits to such generalization.

09:00 - 09:20

69 Secrecy as Urban Resilience: Hidden Religious Practices in the City

Cristiana Facchini

University of Bologna, Bologna, Italy

Abstract

Cities are ideal sites to perform and observe religious rituals, both as temporary or repeated ceremonial or structured types of actions that may be activated according to both civic and liturgical calendars, or in the aftermath of traumatic events. Public and collective rituals are however accompanied by less visible type of rituals, which might be individual or family oriented.

In this paper I wish to follow a particular lead. Instead of exploring how religious rituals were performed and defined by different religious minorities within specific urban environments, I will try to reconstruct how invisible rites took place in the interstices of urban lives. These “hidden rituals” might be recorded in a number of different sources, from private memoirs and correspondence to external records. Although it might be of some use the rather vague concept of “heterotopias” to detect these types of religious rituals, my goal is to reflect upon strategies of ritual survival performed by individuals and small groups of people
in urban contexts that were somehow under surveillance. Looking at “crypto-rituals” of Jewish Conversos and Protestants in some Catholic cities of the early modern period, I will also reflect upon the type of archival material that detects and imagines “hidden religions”.

09:20 - 09:40

152 Algiers: Interreligious Practices and Urban Resilience after the Civil War
Dionigi Albera
CNRS/Aix-Marseille University, Aix-en-Provence, France

Abstract

Inaugurated in 1872, the huge basilica of Our Lady of Africa was a central element of the urban landscape of Algeria’s capital in the context of the French colonial state. Since its creation, this sanctuary also attracted Muslim faithful, especially women, who used to accomplish devotional actions there. The mixed attendance at Our Lady of Africa was part of a multifaceted, everyday religious practice in nineteenth and twentieth century Algiers.

The symbolic prominence of this sacred site persisted even after Algeria’s independence in 1962. After a long war with France, the independence of the country led to the forced departure of almost the entire population of European origin. Since then, the Christian presence has been reduced to a few thousand people. In this new situation many Muslims continued to visit Our Lady of Africa in Algiers, representing now the greater share of the pilgrims.

Muslim devotion at Our Lady of Africa has survived the shocks of the 1990s civil war fought between the Algerian state and various islamist rebel groups, which left nearly two hundred thousand victims dead. The violence was also directed against Christians living in the country. In the single diocese of Algiers, nineteen of them were murdered during this period. Even in the riskiest moments of the black decade, several Muslims continued their devotions to this basilica.

Such attendance augmented considerably during the subsequent years, when this sanctuary has increasingly become an emblem of urban resilience. The paper will principally focus on this process, showing that the basilica is more and more seen as an explicit symbol of peace and interreligious dialogue in contemporary Algiers.
A Resilient Spiritual Re-valuation of Urban Nature: Forces and Limits

Irene Becci
University of Lausanne, Lausanne, Switzerland

Abstract

At latest during the COVID19 pandemic, has the extent of the ecological disaster humanity is facing become uncontestably visible in European Western cities. In this context, voices and claims for increasing green and natural spaces in cities are getting louder and so is the request for a change in the relation to space through an intensified use of local green areas and urban agriculture. Such changes are meant to contribute to strengthening urban resilience to the environmental crises. Based on a study of ecological practices including a religious (or in emic terms, spiritual) dimension in urban public spaces in Switzerland between 2016 and 2020 as well as during the lockdown periods in 2020 and 2021, I shall discuss how natural space becomes a “physical, emotional, and cognitive dimension of the experience of transcendence” (Thurfjell 2019: 207). The increasing awareness of the ecological disaster has intensified a longing for care for “ordinary” urban nature - trees on squares, lawns between houses etc. - qualifying it as valuable “wild urban nature” (Gandy, 2012: 17). Numerous natural sites that used to be seen as markers “of spatial disorder” (Gandy, 2012: 733) are now re-classified as valuable (Graeber 2001) forms of nature in the city, creating new natural “urban atmospheres” (Löw, 2008) often through spiritual semantics that are gendered in various ways. The topographic sacralization (Smith 2004) of natural urban space through eco-rituals in contemporary Western cities is linked to a long historical development implying a variegated imagery of the place nature is supposed to occupy within built environments (Gandy 2012). I shall rely on the insights of the “spatial turn” and conceive natural space in relational terms, that is, as arising “from the activity of experiencing objects as relating to one another” (Löw, 2008: 44). This contribution aims at illustrating these processes and concentrates in particular on how such spiritual practices and discourses rely on space to construct analogies between intimate and cosmological scales, and how they thereby often fail to spot the cultural and economic inequalities the ecological crisis implies.

Resilience Seen through a Girls’ Dance in the Heart of Rome

Francesca Prescendi Morresi
EPHE, Paris, France

Abstract

During a long war against Carthage, the Romans, exhausted, were particularly sensitive to bad signs. The birth of a hermaphrodite in 207 B.C. then seems a disturbing prodigy to be expiated and for which the Roman authorities create a new rite: a procession in which 27 young girls take part, singing a hymn composed especially for the occasion and dancing in the Forum, the heart of political and economic life. The religious authorities join the girls in the procession that travels through different parts of the city.
This rite, which has the character of protecting the entire urban space, will later become traditional to expiate similar prodigies. This rite is itself an element of resilience, and its performance will help to re-establish a good understanding with the gods.

This research consists of the analysis of the ritual described by the Livy (27, 37) set in dialogue with processions recounted by other ancient authors and framed in the topography of Rome.

10:20 - 10:40

60 Temporal Practices in Big and Small Cities of Ancient Italy

Jörg Rüpke

University of Erfurt, Erfurt, Germany

Abstract

This paper will start from the assumption that the religious structuring of time is typical for urban religion in small towns as well as in big cities, an assumption plausibilized in the introductory part. The body of the paper is dedicated to arguing the claim that such religiously articulated temporal structures (“calendars”) increase resilience. For that purpose, resilience is defined as the collective clinging to the urban space and/or urban society even under ecological, military or social pressure. The argument is built on observations about the appropriation and creation of urban spaces in calendarical, that is, annually recurrent, rituals characterized by a widely distributed agency, testimonies about the appeal to such rituals in times of crisis, and the longevity of local temporal arrangements.

631 Religious Narrative and Narration in the Study of Religion

16:40 - 18:20 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

Hans Geir Aasmundsen

The questions about religion’s relations to changes, in what we can call its external environment, society and culture, as well as to what we can call its internal environment, are not only interesting and fascinating in themselves, but also of great importance to our understanding of both religion and society. For,
as we know very well, they both do change and sometimes new religions emerges, sometimes as part of religious changes and sometimes as part of societal changes, but most often as part of changes in both society and religion(s) – can we at all understand them separately?

In this panel we ask what is the role of narratives and narration in this regard? How do narratives “work”? How are they constructed and why are they constructed as they are? What are the relations between narratives and practices? We will look into such questions, and others, from different inter- and intra-disciplinary perspectives. Moreover, we ask what constitutes religious narratives, and whether or not this is substantially different from what constitutes academic narratives? Finally, we think that a substantial discussion about the role of narratives can help us better understand how religion adapt, change, transform and reform as part of societies and cultures.

951 Religious Narratives as a Qualitative Approach

Roberto Cipriani

Università di Roma Tre, Rome, Italy

Abstract

Twenty-two years after the research on Religiosity in Italy, the survey carried out in 2017 also covers 164 subjects appropriately selected, without the pretension of representativeness and generalizability. The stratification of the sample concerns three categories related to the educational level (compulsory schooling, middle-superior diploma, degree), gender (man, woman), residence (small towns, medium municipalities, large cities), geographical distribution (north, centre, south and islands) and age (young, adult, elderly). The effectiveness of a completely open interview, without predefined questions, was tested. In fact, for almost half of the sample, i.e. 78 cases, the interviewers tried to obtain narratives, reflections, interpretations and evaluations not solicited through specific questions on religiosity. For the rest of the 86 subjects interviewed, the first part was entirely free and the second part was on some concepts-stimuli relating to daily and festive life, happiness and pain, life and death, God, prayer, religious institutions and Pope Francis. The results of the qualitative analysis were also corroborated with sophisticated quantitative instruments: a programme called T2K (Text to Knowledge), Lexical Correspondences Analysis and VoSpec procedure (Vocabulaire Spécifique des Groupes d’individus). An analysis sheet similar to a semi-structured questionnaire was then prepared to be applied to the interview texts, with the intention of capturing recurring patterns, values and representations.

949 Religion as Communication and Religion as Narration in the African Neo-Pentecostal Churches during the Pandemic

Enzo Pace
Abstract

What the effect has the pandemic had on some African Neo-Pentecostal Churches, on the format of the drama-liturgy of the hand-to-hand combat between the transformative power of the Spirit and the prince of evil, Satan?

The practice of the deliverance, staged during the great mass sessions in some large neo-Pentecostal Churches observed in Nigeria and Ghana, constitutes the meeting point between religion as communication (exercise of the oracular power of the charismatic leader) on the one hand, and religion as a narrative (which leaves room for the faithful to recount the change that has taken place in the lived experience of liberation), on the other hand.

No longer being able to celebrate the practice of deliverance live, the leaders of these Churches had to adapt to computer-assisted communication, drastically reducing the space usually offered to individual narration. The pandemic, therefore, in addition to forcing many Churches to no longer be able to organize great drama-liturgies live, prevents the communicative flow (the narration) of the experience lived by the individuals and decisively reduces the leader's communicative power, producing and defining meaning.

The Holistic Mission Narrative: An Evangelical and Pentecostal Roadmap for the 21th Century

Hans Geir Aasmundsen

Universitetet i Stavanger, Stavanger, Norway

Abstract

Globally, Evangelical Christianity, particularly in its Pentecostal version(s) experienced a substantial growth in the late 20th century and into the new millennium. It now comprises more than 500 million followers worldwide (Anderson 2013), sparking claims that it may have been the most successful social movement of the 20th century (Jenkins 2007). As the numerical growth continues, we see an increased socio-cultural impact, influencing individuals and collectives, religion and politics (Beyer 2006), localities and globalities in ways we still do not fully comprehend. Hence, I ask, how does Evangelical Christianity “work” today, as a religion or religions, as a vital part of the fabrics that make up societies and cultures? One way of doing this, obviously among others, is to look at the movement’s narratives and how and why they are constructed as they are. Therefore, in this paper I will present what I call The Holistic Mission Narrative with a particular focus on how it is constructed, why it is constructed as it is and, how it functions as a meaningful way for the insiders to communicate among themselves (internally) and with the outsiders (externally). Moreover, I will address the issue of resilience by asking whether such a narrative is not only a “roadmap” for a postmodern mission but also a “toolkit for adaptation” to a changing and challenging environment?
The Linguistic Construction of Narrative in the Cape Town Commitment

Øyvind Gjerstad
University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway

Abstract

The purpose of the proposed article is to apply narrative theory in an analysis of the Lausanne Movement’s “Cape Town Commitment” (CTC), published in 2011. The value of the narrative perspective is in highlighting a particularly important aspect of texts, as storytelling has proven effective in shaping opinions and preferences. The analysis will also include polyphonic theory, to show how texts can integrate and negotiate competing storylines, by refuting them, conceding to them, or by citing them as authoritative. The inclusion of such alternative narratives reflects the challenges that the CTC is faced with when navigating the political and religious spheres in an international context. In fact, the analysis shows that the text negotiates not only theological perspectives but also secular ones, which indicates that the CTC seeks to communicate not only within the realm of religion but also beyond, highlighting the movement’s broader political and societal ambitions.

Telling Stories About Religion: How Narrative Shapes What We Investigate and What We Find

James Spickard
University of Redlands, Redlands, California, USA

Abstract

Sociologists of religion imagine that they investigate reality. They examine the world around them, mine it for data, and use that data to test theories about how religions work. In fact, however, those theories are high-level stories about religious developments that structure sociologists’ investigations. They are generally abstract enough to evade empirical testing. Instead, they tell investigators what constitutes data and where to look for it. In doing so, they deflect sociologists’ attention from data that might contradict the narratives in question.

There are currently six main stories that sociologists tell about what is happening to religion. This presentation uses recent conflicts between pairs of these stories to illustrate the processes described above.

The Resilience of the Science of Religion(s) between Hermeneutics and History

16:40 - 18:20 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021
Renata Salvarani

909 Viaggio nell’Antropologia Storicistica: Alla Ricerca del “Paradigma”
Sonia Giusti
independent, Roma, Italy

Abstract

Le mie riflessioni sull’antropologia storica sono iniziate negli anni Ottanta (S. Giusti, Storiografia e antropologia culturale, Ed. dell’Ateneo, Roma, 1983) quando, nel tentativo di tracciare i rapporti fra antropologia culturale e storia, si faceva sempre più evidente il problema radicale dell’individuo nella storia.
Con la sua creatività, la sua irriducibilità in schemi di comportamento e la molteplice varietà di concezioni del mondo che lo caratterizzano, l’individuo storico esprime la qualità indispensabile ad evitare semplicistiche conclusioni euristiche, sia di episteme, sia di metodo. E penso che su questo nodo sia utile insistere per contribuire a fare chiarezza su cosa intendere per antropologia storica, anzi antropologia “storicistica”, per riprendere la proposta che venne a vantata da Tullio Seppilli nel 1995 al seminario di Cassino su Ernesto De Martino e il senso della storia organizzato in occasione del trentennio della sua scomparsa. Nella premessa al fascicolo che contiene i risultati di quel seminario, mettevo in evidenza il neoumanesimo demartiniano caratterizzato dal primato della coscienza storica maturatosi intorno all’idea di “una origine e di una destinazione integralmente umana dei beni culturali”, dove la storia si dipana come processo, attraverso le diversità e le contraddizioni della comunità umana interpretate con l’uso non dogmatico delle categorie della conoscenza e alla luce di una tensione etica che si configura intorno al concetto demartiniano di “etnocentrismo critico”. L’intervento di Tullio Seppilli mise a fuoco una questione che non ha mai smesso di coinvolgermi, e sulla quale non ebbi modo, purtroppo, di ritornare con lui, certa che mi avrebbe aiutata a fare chiarezza. Analizzando il disturbo mentale, non solo in termini biologici, ma nelle correlazioni con il vissuto esistenziale e le sue basi storiche, Seppilli ritornò sullo storicismo al quale avevo accennato nella presentazione del seminario, dicendo:

“... non sono convinto che occorra fare antropologia storica, poiché secondo me tutta l’antropologia è storica, altrimenti non è; soltanto la chimerei storicistica, nel senso di una accentuazione del metodo, nel senso di un discorso sul metodo, perché altrimenti l’antropologia storica per alcuni diventa un’antropologia del passato rispetto all’antropologia dell’oggi. Per il resto siamo totalmente d’accordo. Quindi si tratta di impostare in termini storicistici anche la nascita del disturbo mentale e quindi riferire le contraddizioni che immesse nella struttura psichica nascono, tuttavia, dal contesto esistenziale e questo è utile per comprendere i modi in cui, attraverso vari filtri culturali, si determina il disturbo mentale”. (T. Seppilli, Ernesto De Martino e la nascita dell’etnopsichiatria italiana, in «Storia Antropologia e Scienze del Linguaggio», A. X, n.3, 1995, pp. 147-156. La Rivista «AM» fondata da T. Seppilli nel 1996 ha ripreso la pubblicazione con la direzione di G. Pizza nella nuova edizione editoriale on line, 1, n. 49, 2020).

443 Science of Religion and Archaeology: A Complex Relationship.
The Case of Pre-Roman Italy
Massimiliano Di Fazio
Università di Pavia, Pavia, Italy

Abstract

The proposed paper aims to offer some reflections on the relationship between the history of religions and archaeology. During the last decades a growing interest has been shown by archaeologists towards an approach that takes into account the religious and ritual spheres as means to light up the interpretation of ancient contexts and artifacts. As a matter of fact, religious factors as a hermeneutic key have replaced the economic and social factors, which were instead predominant in the 1970s, when Marxist approaches were in vogue especially in Italian archaeology. The case studies taken into consideration are related to a specific area, namely ancient Italy before the Roman conquest.

878 The Punitive Bosom Serpent
Davide Ermacora
University of Turin, Turin, Italy

Abstract

The “bosom serpent” is the well-attested folk belief, reflected in narratives, that snakes and other animals can live within the human body, invariably damaging the host’s health. BS depend upon what has been called an “open body” scheme. Subjects imagine disease tangibly in the form of small creatures entering and dwelling inside them. But the same subjects often hold, too, views about supernatural punishments, that is, beliefs about divine retributions for infractions of the moral code. Deliberate or accidental transgression of the traditional code of right and wrong, particularly by unbelievers, can in fact draw the severest retribution in the form of punishment for opposition to saints, frightful manifestations of divine wrath resulting in severe illness, etc. Medical conditions such as leprosy and madness can be also read as divine punishment for sinful activity. Sanctions applied to taboo breakers range from severe fright, loss of speech and blindness, to death and, of course, to BS. The presence of BS inside the body can be conceived as a specific result of the breaking of moral codes by wrong-doers, an outcome of cultural and/or religious transgression. The present paper will review and discuss some examples of punitive BS from the medieval Christian tradition.

540 Resilience and Consilience in the Science of Religion(s)
Domenico Accorinti
IIS Galilei-Pacinotti, Pisa, Italy

Abstract

In the preface to the recent Festschrift in honour of Armin W. Geertz the editors state that “[i]n recent years consilience has become a catchword for designating the attempt to increasingly bring the natural and behavioural sciences into closer dialogue with the humanities”, adding that historians of religions and
cognitivists need to “engage in conversation with each other, as well as dialogue with colleagues in all neighbouring disciplines” (Anders Klostergaard Petersen et al. [eds.], *Evolution, Cognition, and the History of Religion: A New Synthesis*, Leiden/Boston, Brill, 2019, 4f.). Should consilience dictate the agenda for future scholarship in the science of religion(s), or should the pair, hermeneutics and history, still provide resilience against the ‘scientification of religion’? This paper aims to contribute to this current debate.

830 Ermeneutica, Fenomenologia e Ontologia: Una Retrospettiva
Marco Bighin
S.I.S.R (Società italiana storia delle religioni), Chioggia, Italy

Abstract

Il presente contributo si ripromette di identificare il rapporto tra l’ermeneutica e la storia delle religioni utilizzando opere di autori quali Karl Löwith, Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher e Martin Heidegger. In particolare, un’attenzione particolare viene riservata al tema della manifestazione dell’elemento ultramondano nella realtà storica, su cui Löwith si sofferma nell’opera *Significato e fine della Storia*, cercando di ricondurre l’ermeneutica ad una metodologia di carattere diacronico, e guardando con preoccupazione lo sguardo fenomenologico – e sincronico – operato, a suo giudizio, da Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel.

Schleiermacher fu, con tutta probabilità, il primo pensatore a fare della comprensione delle fonti testuali un’arte, Heidegger invece agì in modo da svincolare quasi del tutto l’ermeneutica dalla dipendenza dallo scriptum e dal simbolo, riservandole una funzione ontologica; anche Hans-Georg Gadamer si colloca su una linea ontologica naturalmente, ma più in modo più raffinato rispetto a Heidegger. Motivo di riflessione fondamentale, pertanto, risulta essere il modo in cui l’ermeneutica, a contatto con la storia delle religioni, può evitare la tentazione di compiere una transizione sincronica nei confronti degli eventi storici di cui si occupa.

IAHR EC

16:40 - 18:20 Tuesday, 31st August, 2021

ISC 17 Ancient Egypt (Individual Short Communications)

09:00 - 10:40 Wednesday, 1st September, 2021
272 The Ancient Egyptian Conception of God: From the Predynastic Through the Old Kingdom (ca. 3800 - 2135 BCE)

Leival Richards

UNISA, Pretoria, South Africa

Abstract

It is not clear what an Egyptian god was, what was believed about them, or how people responded to them. This qualitative work induces the nature of gods from the fourth and third millennia B.C.E. culture with the intention of stating what Egyptians believed. Framed in a philosophical design, it explores three features. First, using language, archaeology, and iconography the essentials of the god identity are outlined for original qualification. Second, god existence is argued using classical proofs. Third, god character is examined to reveal the specific psychological archetype that dictated their behaviour in myth. Then, delineated by the essential qualities of all three features, the nature of the gods is consolidated and filtered through an Old Kingdom value structure to reveal their conception—habitual ideal individual behaviour. The ancient Egyptians had a monistic idea for god that was internalised by every individual thus creating a system of internal equality despite the external inequality.

132 Exorcism as a Way of Fighting Against Chaos in Ancient Egyptian Religion

Gabriele Mario Conte

Università di Pisa, Pisa, Italy

Abstract

The theme of resilience is particularly appropriate for the Egyptian religion. The centre of this religion is the concept of Maat, the cosmic order that must be continuously preserved and maintained. The religious conception of the world is therefore a continuous struggle against all the forces and events that can disturb this order. In this sense magic, as we read in the Teaching for Merykara, is a weapon given by the gods to humanity. Exorcism, as a magical-religious practice directed against hostile supernatural entities, is one of the most important aspects of the Egyptians’ struggle against the forces of chaos. In my presentation, I would like to examine the aspects of the exorcism practice that make it a fundamental moment of resilience against the adversities of human life: the identification and absorption of the contingent episode into a mythical framework; the connections and similarities with other magical practices directed against dangerous human beings, in particular foreign enemies or criminals (excreration rituals, threat formulas); the institutionalization of a period of the year to remove such threats. These elements show the presence of the same mental frame in fields that we perceive as different, but for the Egyptians were not (religion, politics, daily life, health). The aim of this analysis, within my research project, is a re-evaluation of the role of demonology in Egyptian healing practice: not an attempt to explain inexplicable facts, as it is often understood, but a perfectly integrated element in the Ancient Egypt worldview.
**525 Resilient Funerary Practices in the Egyptian Amarna and Post-Amarna Periods in Memphite Tombs: Atum versus Amun**

Inmaculada Vivas Sainz

National Distance Education University, UNED, Madrid, Spain

**Abstract**

This proposal focuses on private tomb-scenes dated to the end of the 18th Dynasty from the Egyptian Memphite necropolis, with a special interest in the “resilient gods”: change and resistance in the religious beliefs and practices belonging to the Amarna and Post-Amarna periods. The repertoire of funerary images changed significantly during the “Amarna revolution”, as they were adapted by the tomb owner and artists to the new official religion and the main god (Atum). However, some traditional images such as mourning scenes or offerings to the deceased remained in the private tombs. In the Post-Amarna period, the “traditional gods” returned to the decorative program, and even tomb-owners changed their names. The reigns of Tutankhamun and Ay reveal a hybrid style which is the heir of the Amarna art, but it goes back to the traditional Memphite style. This “Tutankhamuneneque” approach retained some of the elegance of the mature Amarna art style but it reverted to the pre-Amarna proportions used in laying out human image. Indeed, many Memphite tombs reveal the innovation and originality of the artists. This paper explores the process of creation of the funerary iconography of the Amarna and Post-Amarna art, a period of religious, political and social changes which were mirrored in private tomb scenes. For instance, groups of mourners were separated according to their gender but they show similar expressive poses (which provoke feeling of empathy and sorrow in the beholder), an unusual feature as mourning men in expressive attitudes are particularly rare in ancient Egyptian scenes.

**99 The Significant Uses of the Language of the Amarna Period**

Sherouk Shehada

Helwan University, Cairo, Egypt

**Abstract**

When Akhenaten became king at the end of the 18th Dynasty, he started a religious, artistic (in the Aten temple east of Karnak) and architectural revolution at Thebes. On the other hand, it was when he moved to Amarna that innovations in language began in the Amarna Period. The Language used in the Amarna Period was characterized in a number of ways, but the most important is that one can see patterns of colloquial language emphasized as an official language. In spite of that, Akhenaten did not neglect the Classical forms, but both were used.

The transitional phase between Middle Egyptian (ME) and Late Egyptian (LE) witnessed transitional constructions, which did not exist before, i.e. the Classical Egyptian (CE). The language used during the Amarna Period was unique for the emergence of many Transitional Egyptian (TE) verbal forms. This TE can be noticed in the new negative particles, $bw$, and $bn$, which were replaced by the old ones, $n$ and $nn$ in the syntactic system respectively.
This investigation tackles the innovations in the language of the Amarna Period analyzing the verbal system based on identity-related forms. The study shows that the Verbal System in the Amarna Period participated in developing the analytical system of the LE and also used the suffix conjugation of the classical phase in some cases. The language of the Amarna Period and its innovations were not attested suddenly or unexpectedly, compared to the period of Kamose. Some other forms were already attested in Pre-Amarnan times. The new style of the language was an essential feature at Akhetaten itself. It did not reach Saqqara, Thebes, or any other city in the reign of Akhenaten. This probably happened due to the overwhelming dominance of the local dialect. Besides, the Amarna Period texts clearly showed one of the essential features of this period: the specific use in one tense of different forms or constructions. In this case the changes in the language, especially the official texts could reflect the fact that new elites were formed by the side of Akhenaten, whose roots were slightly different from those of the previous elites. In such a scenario their language, a bit more "Colloquial" would be a function of the shifts in their social identities.

Moreover, the researcher explores the idea of the innovations of the Amarna Period at Akhetaten, which were introduced by Akhenaten himself and his scribes following his orders. This was a significant feature, which is presented in the Royal Texts and Private Texts in the direct speech of the king. The statistic study tackled the attestation of the instances, which is subdivided into two main parts: (1) Pre-Amarna Period including (63.33%), (2) the Amarna Period containing (36.67%).

372 The Ritual of the Sed-Festivals: The Rejuvenation of Amenhotep III (14th century BC)

Marianne Pinon

Université Paul Valéry - Montpellier 3 (UMR 5140 ASM- Archéologie des Société Méditerranéenne), Montpellier, France

Abstract

In ancient Egypt the king is a god by nature. But although the pharaoh is a living god on earth, he is not eternal. He needs to fulfill specific rites in order to have the strength and the youth to keep ruling. In Egypt this rite is called the sed-festival. It is attested from the first to the last ages of pharaonic times, and was usually celebrated at the 30th year of a reign. Then, it could be repeated every 2 to 4 years.

The king Amenhotep III (14th century BC, XVIIIth dynasty) celebrated three sed-festivals, in his 30th; 34th and 37th years of reign. We know of them through temple or tomb representations as well as diverse artefacts.

The general publications which talk about a sed-festival define it as a “renewal ritual allowing for the king to keep ruling the country, but no one gives a real explanation of the processes of this renewal. Only the result of this revival is known: Amenhotep III is represented younger after his first sed-festival.

For the development of Amenhotep III’s sed-festivals, archival research has been done in order to create the most efficient sed-festival ritual as possible. Some of these rites are customary: dancing, singing, processions, apperition of the king on his specific throne (tjentjat); but others are more singular: the illumination of the throne, the hauling of the boat or the offering of the clepsydra. Moreover, the king had
to demonstrate his physical strength. Normally, he had to submit himself to a ritual run. In Amenhotep III’s case, it seems that it was replaced by another rite, the djed-pillar erection.

Furthermore, the location of these celebrations is known. The three sed-festivals took place at the Malqatta palace, close to Thebes (Luxor), the capital of Egypt in Amenhotep III’s reign. This palace was probably erected for the celebrations of the first sed-festival and then used also for the other two. Thousands of docks (or jar-labels) were found here and testify to the organization of banquets in relation to the sed-festivals, consisting in wine, beer, meat, fat, milk, oil or incense. The major part of the depictions of these feasts were found near the palace in tombs (TT192 Kheruef, the queen’s great intendant) or temples (Amenophium, temple of Amenhotep son of Hapou). But another part, not insignificant, of these attestations was found as far south as the temple of Soleb (Nubia), more than 630 km from Malqatta.

After these first findings we can wonder about different aspects of these celebrations. What was the role of these specific rites? Why did the king choose them? What were their purposes? Why were these scenes also represented so far away from Thebes? Is it possible to distinguish between the three different festivals?

Using the case of Amenhotep III, I aim at understanding the processes of the revival of the Egyptian kings through the cult practices of the sed-festivals.

20-I Religion as a Key Factor for Resilience: From Rome to Constantinople

09:00 - 10:40 Wednesday, 1st September, 2021

Giorgio Ferri

In the course of Rome’s long history, religion has always been a powerful tool of resilience against natural disasters and military defeats. As Jörg Rüpke argued recently (Urban Time and Rome’s Resilience: Steeling Oneself against Disaster in Religious Practices, "Numen" 67, 2020, 1-28), an essential document of such resilience through religion was the calendar (fasti). The downfalls and misfortunes, which the city was able to endure and to survive, could put its very existence at stake, such as the Gallic sack or the defeats in the Second Punic War, or could temporarily open a crisis, that would be regarded first of all as a religious one.

In any case, the immediate re-establishment and the careful preservation of the “pact” with the gods (the pax deorum) was a strong support during a crisis (no matter its causes) and the first pillar upon which to start rebuilding right afterwards. The resilience of Roman religion can be also observed beyond the sack of 410 AD and the fall of the Western Empire, and even beyond the shift to Christianity and the move/doubling of some rituals to Constantinople.

This panel intends to explore the resilient function of religion in Rome and to investigate how such resilience could in its turn affect Roman religion, also by delving into some case studies from Rome to Constantinople, from the founding of the former to the fall of the latter.
66 The Lupercalia from Prehistory to Late Antiquity: A Case Study in the Resilience of Roman Religion

Kresimir Vukovic
Ludwigs Maximillians Universität, München, Germany

Abstract

The Lupercalia is arguably Rome's most famous and most enduring festival. Its roots can be traced to the prehistoric period while a most significant historical instance used the festival as a stage for Caesar's refusal of the royal diadem in 44BC (North 2008, Vuković, forthcoming). After civil wars, Augustus restored the festival and celebrations continued throughout the imperial period as the Lupercalia adapted to new circumstances such as the rise of the equestrian elite and gladiatorial games. The last testimony of the festival in Rome is given by pope Gelasius in a letter against its performance in the 490s AD, over a century after Theodosius’ prohibition of pagan sacrifice. At this point the Lupercalia lost many of its old rituals but continued in the form of a rowdy carnivalesque festivity that openly challenged authority and the new high priest of Rome (McLynn 2008). Finally, the Lupercalia was transferred to new Rome—Constantinople—where it became a celebration of spring in the hippodrome (Graf 2015). Tracing the countless transformations of the multifaceted Lupercalia this talk will present one of the most resilient festivals of Roman religion and give a glimpse of my book in progress, The Wolves of Rome.

Works cited:

Graf, F. Roman Festivals in the Greek East: From the Early Empire to the Middle Byzantine Era. Cambridge University Press, 2015.


176 The Prodigious Ways of Resilience: Dreams and Prophecy in Cicero’s De divinatione

Andrei-Tudor MAN
Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Paris, France
Abstract

Cicero’s theological trilogy (De natura deorum, De divinatione, De fato) was written in the midst of perhaps the most troubled times of the author’s life. Out of the three dialogues, the one addressing divination was composed during the height of those disturbed moments. The Civil War and the defeat of Pompey, his exclusion from Roman active politics, Caesar’s death - all of them leave traces in Cicero’s dialogue. It was often emphasized that Cicero had the capacity to abstract himself from the historical context and to dedicate himself completely to writing, including De divinatione. Nonetheless, for all we know, an analysis from the point of view of resilience of the passages that mention the troubles of that time in De divinatione has never been advanced, the present paper assuming this task. Certain signs indicate that the composition of the dialogue is divided into two moments, separated by Caesar’s death. Cicero’s references to the historical events are also deployed in the text in different ways and seeking a different end, depending on the compositional moment they are part of. While, after Caesar’s death, Cicero openly affirms his former persecuted condition, the same end is attained before the Ides of March through examples of dreams or confirmed prophecy. The second instrument of resilience may seem peculiar, given the nature of the dialogue. Thus, while he seeks to confront the irrational belief in divination as a case of superstition, the author uses examples of true intuitive divination, coming out of his own experience, in order to reassert his political role in the Republic. Three passages of the first book are of interest for our paper, all exemplifying cases of intuitive divination: the dream of Quintus Cicero (I, 58), that announces the return from exile of his brother Marcus, the dream of Marcus Cicero (I, 59), announcing his own return from exile, and a case of true prophecy during the battle of Dyrrachium (I, 68-69). We consequently postulate that resilience is a common end for several passages that refer to Cicero’s historical context. To pursue this task, we primarily examine the instruments of these acts of resilience, which would bring us to the final and essential question of the paper, which regards the role of religion as an instrument for resilience in Cicero’s De divinatione.

09:40 - 10:00

23 Cicero’s De signis: Creating Religious Responses to Foreign Divine Statues in Rome

Claudia Beltrão

Universidade Federal do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Abstract

This paper will address the fourth part of the second speech of Cicero’s Orationes in Verrem (De signis), in which the invective against Verres is supplemented by accounts of his appropriations or robberies of divine statues from Sicilian cities. The general desolation and the abandonment of the fields are presented as outcomes of the impiety and greed of a vicious Roman provincial governor. Cicero addresses varied responses of mourning or resistance of distinct Sicilian populations to their religious losses. This paper will focus only on the cases of Diana, Hercules, and Ceres (Verr. 2.4.72-82, 93-96, 105-115). These passages are crucial to Cicero’s argument, creating an emotional impact on his Roman audience by connecting the Sicilian divine statues with gods and goddesses who have saved Rome in dangerous times. Cicero connects the misfortunes of the Sicilians to moments when these deities were fundamental to the safety of Rome, in powerful associations in which Roman religious feelings and resilience are at the heart of the narrative.
Vespasian, the Restorer of Ma´at at Rome

David Gordillo Salguero
University of Salamanca, Salamanca, Spain

Abstract

The Flavian Dynasty maintained a close and unprecedented relationship with Isis and Serapis. This link with the Egyptian deities arose during the stay of Vespasian in Alexandria in the year 69-70. The first Flavian emperor promoted the public cult of Isis and Serapis, that was inscribed in the official calendar at least since 71. That year the first public sanctuary of these deities in Rome, the Iseum Campense, was inaugurated, from where the Ceremony of Triumph started a few months later. At this time, the doors of the Temple of Janus were closed and Vespasian announced the construction of the Templum and Forum Pacis.

At the Iseum Campense, extensively renovated by Domitian, the goddess was venerated as Isis Sothis. In Egyptian Theology, Sothis was the star that announced the annual rise of the Nile. The overflow of the Nile was the symbol of the cyclic regeneration of life and the imposition of order and harmony in the face of chaos. This cosmic order was expressed by a concept, also an abstract deity associated with Isis: “Ma´at”. The political interpretations of this symbolic construction were evident in a context of political crisis.

In this communication, I explore how these theological ideas from Pharaonic/Ptolemaic theocracy were integrated into the political discourse of restoration of pax deorum and concordia ordinum in Rome by the Flavian propaganda.

217-I Chrétiens Ariens et Nicéens en Afrique Vandale (Ve-VIe siècles). Enjeux Religieux, Politiques et Culturels d'une Coexistence Difficile

Giampiero Scafoglio

Les rapports entre les gouvernants ariens et la population en grande partie liée au credo de Nicée étaient traditionnellement considérés comme difficiles, mais ils ont fait dernièrement l’objet d’une révision allant jusqu’aux limites de la réfutation. Cette diversité de positions démontre la complexité d’une situation aux multiples facettes, qui change au fil du temps, avec les différents rois vandales et même dans les différents moments de leur règne; une situation qui ne reste certainement pas toujours conflictuelle, mais qui implique, au moins en certaines étapes, des difficultés et des frictions sociales, ainsi que des mesures de répression et des attitudes autoritaires du pouvoir.

Nous nous proposons donc d’étudier étudier les rapports entre chrétiens ariens et nicéens en Afrique vandale, en essayant d’en faire émerger les lumières et les ombres, avec une attention particulièrement
portée sur les raisons politiques du conflit impliquant la religion, sur la réaction des intellectuels - souvent de résilience - et sur les œuvres littéraires qui reflètent ce conflit.

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**222 Un Roi Arien et Une Reine Nicéenne : Le Couple Hunéric-Eudocia du Mariage à la Séparation (455-471). À Propos de Deux Passages de Théophane et Zonaras**

*Bertrand Lançon*

Université, Limoges, France

**Abstract**

En 455, à la suite de leur sac de Rome, les Vandales emmenèrent en captivité la veuve de Valentinien III et de Pétrone Maxime, Licinia Eudoxia, ainsi que ses deux filles, Eudocia et Placidia. À Carthage, Genséric donna aussitôt Eudocia en mariage à son fils Hunéric. Cela revenait à marier une princesse théodosienne nicéenne - elle était la petite-fille de Théodose II et la veuve de Valentinien III - à un futur roi vandale de confession arienne. Théophane (*AM* 5964) et Zonaras (*Hist.*, 13, 25-29) indiquent tous deux que seize ans plus tard, en 471, Eudocia quitta son mari et s’enfuit à Constantinople puis mourut au cours d’une visite-pèlerinage à Jérusalem. Pour les deux chroniqueurs, le motif de cette séparation était l’attachement d’Hunéric aux erreurs d’Arius. Ce qui nous intéresse ici est la raison invoquée par des auteurs tardifs : un différend d’ordre religieux entre une reine nicéenne et un époux dont elle aurait trouvé, après seize années de mariage, l’arianisme insupportable. Certes, on sait que, pendant son règne (477-484), Hunéric fit persécuter les nicéens, mais ce fut postérieurement à la fuite et à la mort d’Eudocia. L’arianisme ayant été condamné de nouveau au concile de Chalcédoine de 451, son actualité n’était apparemment pas évoquée lorsque Théophane le confesseur écrivit sa chronographie vers 810-815 et lorsque Zonaras composa son *Epitomé historion* au XIIe siècle. La fidélité à la doctrine de Nicée semble idéologiquement ancrée comme consubstantielle à la romanité et au magistère impérial de celle-ci. Elle est mentionnée par les historiens comme une possible leçon d’orthodoxie pour les empereurs de Constantinople, fondée sur un modèle théodosien. Il reste à évaluer dans quelle mesure l’arianisme peut être retenu comme un critère d’identité pour les Vandales ; les apparences d’un conflit religieux pourraient en effet recouvrir ou servir des buts politiques et diplomatiques.

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**237 Les enfants d’Hildéric. L’héritage chrétien de l’utérus romain**

*Amélie Belleli*

CRIHAM, Limoges, France

**Abstract**

But avoué du mariage, les enfants occupent une place centrale de la vie antique. Une descendance est avant tout perçue comme l’assurance de la continuité d’une famille ou d’une dynastie. Souvent privées de rôle sur la scène politique, les mères jouissent d’une position centrale dans la transmission de cette filiation. À ce titre, on dispose souvent de plus de renseignements sur la descendance issue d’une union que sur le mariage lui-même. Dans le cas de la famille impériale, ce devoir féminin devient politique, assurant la
continuité de la dynastie. L’utérus perpétue le sang impérial romain et celui qui naît d’une mère ceinte de pourpre peut prétendre à l’Augustat.

L’existence d’alliances romano-barbares souligne ce pouvoir d’intégration à l’Empire dont disposent les femmes. Ce rôle de « trait d’union » n’échappant pas au souverain vandale Genséric, il maria sa fille Hunéric à la princesse théodosienne Eudocia en 455. Évidente affirmation de son ambition, cette union lui offre un lien privilégié avec l’Empire et le pouvoir impérial. Répondant à ce double héritage, l’unique enfant d’Eudocia, Hildéric, eut à cœur de se proclamer gemini diadematis heres. Le poète Florentius l’inscrit dans la continuité du règne de Théodose. Dans ses veines coule en effet le sang romain, nicéen et théodosien, de sa mère. Ainsi, en 534, alors que Gélimer doit souffrir l’humiliation de la défaite devant Justinien, les propres descendants d’Hildéric se voient octroyer de précieux revenus, rappel de leur illustre parenté.

305 Religion ou politique? Pourquoi Hunéric, roi des Vandales, a choisi une stratégie de conflit face à l’église nicéenne et pourquoi il a échoué

Konrad Vössing
Universität Bonn, Bonn, Germany

Abstract


Il semble très probable que sa politique ait découlé d’une situation plutôt fortuite dans laquelle le roi s’est trouvé en ce qui concerne ses projets de succession: il voulait enfreindre la règle que son père avait fixée et avait besoin de soutien pour le faire. On sait que ces plans ont échoué, au plus tard à sa mort (fin de l’année 484). Mais cette stratégie était-elle réaliste ? En tout cas, même sans succès, elle a eu des conséquences considérables pour le royaume des Vandales, qui, cependant, étaient également dues à d’autres causes et, dans l’ensemble, n’étaient nullement accidentelles.

267 La résistance à l’arianisme vandale chez les poètes de l’Anthologie latine et chez quelques prosateurs chrétiens contemporains

Etienne Wolff
Abstract

Les poètes d’époque vandale de l’Anthologie latine, dont on peut avec de bonnes raisons supposer qu’ils étaient des Romains (non des Vandales) et des chrétiens nicéens (non des ariens), sont des poètes de cour. Logiquement, ils ont choisi d’éviter les sujets susceptibles de fâcher, c’est-à-dire la politique et la religion, au profit d’une célébration des rois vandales et de leurs réalisations. Cependant il est possible, dans certaines de leurs poésies et dans les interstices de leur discours, de distinguer des éléments de critique plus ou moins voilés. Certaines épigrammes attaquent nettement des dignitaires vandales ou leurs serviteurs en déguisant leur nom, d’autres émettent des accusations plus discrètes, sans du reste qu’il soit toujours possible d’établir de manière certaine si ces pièces hostiles aux Vandales sont antérieures ou postérieures à la chute de la dynastie vandale.

On relèvera et étudiera donc ces éléments de critique, puis on se livrera à une comparaison avec des auteurs chrétiens contemporains opposés aux Vandales (Quodvultdeus, Victor de Tunnuna) et dont les œuvres appartiennent à des genres littéraires complètement différents (sermons, chronique), ceci afin d’avoir une pluralité de points de vue. On fera notamment la différence entre les auteurs exilés, qui peuvent avoir une parole plus libre, et les autres, qui doivent s’exprimer avec prudence.

64 Modalities of Resilience in the Rereading of Mystical or Religious Experience (in Italian) ONLINE
09:00 - 10:40 Wednesday, 1st September, 2021

Alessandra Pozzo

Mystics are given an immediate experience of the divinity that is felt to be real. However, they are faced with the problem of the inadequacy of words to express what this represents, because there is nothing in common speech, or any common way to refer to what they are experiencing. Mystical experience oscillates, in fact, between the need for it to be formulated and the constraint inherent to its very nature, that of being unsayable. This conflict has multiple aspects. First, is it a defect in the rationality of an experience that presents itself in the form of intuition? Or are the expressive means at the mystic’s disposal merely inadequate? Or, again, is the mystical experience basically meant to remain formless?

The first question could be answered by suggesting that there is a rational operation specific to the intuitive act, although it is different from the one we associate with conceptual activity and logical-deductive processes. Intuition makes itself sensible to our perception and so we can partially make it sensible to our account of it. This perceptive act, which raises awareness, is already a rational approach. The second question, concerning the evaluation of the expressive means at the disposal of the mystic, implies a measured response according to the culture in which its rereading is developed. The everyday lexicon is still insufficient for the spiritual authors of the Christian West. Their work of rereading and transmission consists in the manipulation of a limited number of figures in order to adjust them to the aspects of the
experience of God. In the eyes of religious institutions, symbolic creativity has a bad reputation, commensurate with the experience of the mystic who claims to possess it. Just as that same symbolic creativity confers a greater conceptual autonomy upon the speculations of dogmatic theology, so the mystic is confined to an apparent poverty of expressive means with which to communicate the intuition of God, which is grasped without mediation.

The workshop Modalities of resilience in the rereading of mystical or religious experience analyzes the means used by Western culture and, in particular, by some of the mystics it has produced over the last century. The workshop will focus on the various literary, semiotic, or manipulative strategies, plus the rhetorical, anthropological and philosophical aspects that the mystic uses to take a new turn towards new perspectives in a movement of resilience.

58 Resilience of the Sacred and the Metaphysical Need
Massimo Prampolini
University of Salerno, Salerno, Italy

Abstract

1. In its many manifestations, the sacred (sacrality) fulfils at least two distinct functions, both constitutive of the anthropological dimensions of human beings.

2. The first function performs the need to enhance the cohesion among the members of the community. The sacred produces unity and maintains through its rituality its own constitutive condition. Ritual gestures and formulaic words ordain the sense of belonging, restating the necessity to carry out one’s own duties, to respect the prohibitions, to celebrate the events. Imposing the observance of the rules, the sacred becomes the guardian of the community.

3. To belong to a group is a constitutive condition of existence of many animals, of many not-human leaving species [herd (of cows), school (of fishes), pride (of lions), swarm (of bees), etc.]. Their rules are dictated by instinct, which must be considered a deterministic and necessary ratio. It is not so for humans, whose instinctive drives/compulsions are submitted to motivations which are complex and uncertain, and belong to a sophisticated and aleatory (random) ratio, which moves among different points of view. And here we have the sacrality which introduces in the aleatority (randomness) of the intellect and of reason, the necessity of the law and respect for the rules.

4. We have to be careful, there is no clear cut division between the determinism of the instinct and the aleatority of reason. On the contrary, the border is vague: also humans, not only animals, are subjected to instinctive compulsions (fear, hunger, escape, sex). But humans’ cognitive and emotional devices are intensely complex and they can manage and traverse contradictory itineraries. Furthermore: as Alfred Bühler showed in his analysis of languages and cultures, human beings can proceed in the so-called participated oppositions [A and (A and not-A)]. In the mind of a human being a shoe is, and at the same time is not, a footwear: the shoe may be conceived also as a percussive tool, an object to reproduce in a painting, a provocation device (as it was interpreted by Nikita Krushchev in the UNO Assembly in 1960). It is the same linguistic principle which permits us to use a word according to its literal meaning (denotation) and, at the same time, in metaphorical expressions (connotation). Vice versa it is improbable that a cat could conceive a mouse other than as a prey. What we call human reason is the dialectic of the instincts.
5. The second function of the sacred is to give an answer to the metaphysical need: we intend with that expression the need to attribute to single acts, words and texts, practices and places (i.e.: images, statues, books, food, buildings) an effect or a further power, able to move forward its ordinary factual reality. To move on, to go beyond the factual dimension, this is the sense of metaphysical: we use to say also that the human being needs transcendence: and this is another critical word, not easy to use.

65 Marthe Robin: Deciphering a Mystical Strategy of Resilience and Manipulation

Alessandra Pozzo
LEM-CNRS-Paris Sciences et Lettres, Paris, France

Abstract

Marthe Robin was a pious woman in the odour of sanctity, known among French Catholics for having lived for a certain number of years without having been nourished by anything other than a consecrated host. She was the repository of the grace of “mystical starvation”. This consisted of absolute fasting for a much longer period than would normally allow an individual to survive. This was not the only astonishing grace she received. For, among other things, she had supernatural visions, she engaged in a hard fight with the devil and every week she relived the passion of Jesus in her flesh. How did she come to this? Currently, there are contrasting hypotheses about the mystical graces of Marthe Robin: that suggested by the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, which has begun a process of her beatification, and that suggested by Conrad de Meester, a specialist in Christian mysticism, who revealed a “mystical fraud” by working for some ten years on all the material concerning her. This lecture investigates the modalities of the creation of a monumental “resilient” religious imagery, motivated by a desire for recognition of the young Marthe, ill and disabled, born of the illegitimate union of her mother with the boy from the farm next door and never recognised by her “father”, except at the civil registry office. For decades, the French Church recognized the marks of holiness in Marthe Robin’s life. Behind the scenes something else was going on. Deciphering a “holy” strategy of manipulation that made Marthe Robin a badge of resilience, regardless of the legality of the means used to take a new turn.


Fontaine, Christine, A propos de « La Fraude mystique de Marthe Robin »,
http://www.dieumaintenant.com/aproposdelafraudemystique.html


86 Resilience as Semio-Technique: A Case of Spiritual Warfare
Francesco Galofaro
Università di Torino, Torino, Italy

Abstract

Spiritual warfare can be considered a technique to face a difficult existential problem. Since it produces a meaning where a meaning seems absent or lost, it must be considered a semio-technique (Donatiello, Galofaro, Ienna 2018), enabling code-making (Eco 1976), which proposes the functives of a new coding correlation between body or mind states (previously undetermined and inarticulate) and spiritual interpretations. This correlation is performed through semiotic judgments, in form of metasemiotic propositions. For example, in letter 368 Padre Pio writes to his spiritual director: “For several days my soul has been plunged in deepest darkness [...]. My spiritual digestion is upset and there is a nasty taste in the mouth of my soul which makes the sweetest wine of this earth taste bitter”. This chain of metaphors and similes is not a pure invention of code, since it is performed according to a well-established tradition. For example, the expression “spiritual digestion” (in the Italian text: “stomaco spirituale”) is borrowed from Saint Francis of Sales’ works, whose ancient source is Origen’s doctrine of the five spiritual senses. This semio-technique allows the mystic to cope with a contingent crisis related to desire (gluttony, fornication, vainglory ...) providing a meaning to ascetic experience and its difficult trials, linking existential engagement and religious tradition.

88 “The dark presence”: Alda Merini’s Mistica d’amore
Magdalena Maria Kubas
Università di Torino, Torino, Italy

Abstract

Mistica d’amore (Frassinelli, Segrate, 2008) is a collection of five shorter books of poetries by Alda Merini previously published starting from 2000. The author, a lay woman, is the most important spiritual poet of the contemporary period.

In Merini’s collection evil is represented as the dark (l’oscura presenza) - its presence, which is continuous, can be inner or it comes from outside. In moments of weakness it attacks with a great power. Reading Mistica d’amore we prevailingly find the first grammatical person. Virgin Mary, Jesus, Saint Francis etc. speak using the pronoun “I”. Sometimes we also find a diegetic voice of an impersonal narrator who tells about the fight against evil.
The definitions of evil are multiple – our purpose is (first) to analyze its apparitions in order to understand how it threatens a contemporary mystical subject. We will (then) examine the moments of combat. If one continuously resists the *dark presence*, the attacks of the enemy, its failures and successes, require the subject to adapt and readapt strategies. One of them is to liberate the evil spirits on purpose. The resilience in Merini’s collection is a spiritual ability to speak directly to God (in poetry), to invoke Christian hierarchies, to use theological knowledge in order to call or even create beings – who can be traditionally Christian or fantastical – that protect and help those who fight or oppose evil.

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131 *Between the Presence and the Absence of God: Resilience in the Mystic Experience of St. Faustina Kowalska (1905-1938)*

Marco Papasidero  
University of Turin, Turin, Italy

**Abstract**

Maria Faustina Kowalska was a Polish nun, with many charismatic gifts, such as the ability to dialogue with Jesus and the Virgin, to see the souls in Purgatory - in order to pray for them -, and to watch over people’s hearts. Canonized in 2000 by Pope John Paul II, she is famous as the Apostle of Mercy, on account of the revelations received from Jesus, the spread of the Chaplet of the Divine Mercy and the creation - thanks to a painter - of a miraculous image of Merciful Jesus. She is the author of a diary, *Divine Mercy in my Soul*, which tells the story of part of her life, but above all her special relation with Jesus, both in moments of joy and in those of difficulty and suffering. Kowalska’s experience allows me to reflect on the theme of resilience, due to her need to summon up the energy and courage to fight the difficulties of everyday life, such as the fear of not being believed about her mystical experiences or the doubts that they might be wrong, just a trick or a form of pride. Furthermore, she is constantly afraid of being abandoned by God - like many mystics in Christianity - because of her sins.

The aim of my proposal is to analyze, through the personal testimonies included in Faustina’s diary, her experience in the light of her special charismas, focusing above all on the way in which her supernatural gifts and the words heard from God represent a powerful weapon against so many fears and in moments of ‘despair’. In particular, I will consider the mechanisms through which she engages in resilient behaviours, analyzing them from a historical-anthropological perspective, to underline how Faustina reacts to the constant alternation between the presence and absence of God in her life.
Fouad Gehad Marei

Shi‘i Islam is one of the two main branches of Islam, with about 10-15% of Muslims adhering to its various subbranches. Amongst the tenets that distinguish Shi‘ism is the perception that Prophet Muhammad’s descendants, Ahlul Bayt, faced injustice and persecution - a central tenet in Shi‘i hagiography, eschatology and jurisprudence. Informed by this, Shi‘i communities developed myriad modes of adaptation and resilience to cope with challenging circumstances, ranging from practices of precautionary dissimulation (taqīyya) to the various revolutionary ideas and movements punctuating Shi‘i history.

In this workshop session, we examine modes of adaptation and resilience of Shi‘i Islam in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, focusing on: a) modernization and consolidation of the Ḥawza (seminary center for the education of Shi‘i clergymen), b) the activities of globally interconnected Shi‘i public intellectuals, c) the social life of diasporic and exilic Shi‘is in Europe, and d) the ritual cultures and artistic expressions of Shi‘ism.

In the first part, we examine the intellectual and exegetical legacies of twentieth-century Shi‘i scholars, whose contributions constituted a shift in Islamic social theory. We argue that they contributed to the resilience of Shi‘ism in the face of immense socio-cultural transformations associated with the advent of modernity. Contemporaneously, Shi‘i jurists faced State-sponsored modernization projects committed to secularization and anti-clergy reforms. In an attempt to modernize and institutionalize clerical authority while resisting the elimination of religion from public life, jurists embarked on the establishment and consolidation of a modern Ḥawza in the early twentieth century. Almost one-hundred years later, Grand Ayatollah Ali Al-Sistani, arguably the most prominent Shi‘i jurist today, plays a crucial role in the sociopolitical life of Iraq and the broader Shi‘i world. Sistani’s jurisprudential opinions (fatwa) have the power to mobilize Shi‘is worldwide in the struggle against the Islamic State organization.

In the second part, we investigate intellectual connections between Shi‘is in Europe and the Middle East, showing how a hybridized Shi‘ism emerges through processes of translation and commentary. We show how second-generation European Shi‘is develop and practice transnational engagements and attachments not limited to the nation-state. Instead, theirs are attachments to a globally imagined Shi‘i world and localities in faraway geographies. We examine the role of ritual lamentation poetry in cultivating and promulgating these globalized and trans-localized imaginaries. Finally, we look into the role of ritual purveyors, whose ability to combine traditional and modern forms of devotion transforms ritual cultures, making them resilient to authoritarian State policies and modernist critique and more appealing to modern Shi‘i Muslims. We conclude with a presentation of how forms of art and exhibition have been used in twenty-first century Kuwait, in an attempt to resist anti-Shi‘i violence and memorialize those killed in sectarian attacks on Shi‘i houses of worship.

This workshop session is informed by multi- and interdisciplinary research conducted in Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Georgia, Germany, Iran, Iraq, Italy, Kuwait, Lebanon, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.

262 Resilient Sharia: Motahari’s Capabilities-Based Approach to Islamic Law and Human Rights

Christopher Pooya Razavian

University of Birmingham, Birmingham, United Kingdom

Abstract
Islamist arguments that the Islamic state protects human rights are criticized for being an apologetic reaction to the moral challenge posed by human rights and not a commitment to developing a political theory based on rights. However, Morteza Motahari (1919-1979), an influential Islamist during the Iranian revolution of 1979, develops a novel approach to rights that melds natural rights with traditional Islamic law by focusing on human capabilities: every individual is born with a series of capabilities and each individual has a right to bring these capabilities to their perfection. Motahari argued that this approach balances the demands of Islam’s universal laws, based on human nature, and the resilience required to adapt Islamic law to changing circumstances.

The question remains as to why Motahari turns to natural rights and capabilities, given that the common Islamist approach was based on the sovereignty of God. This paper argues that Motahari’s turn to a capabilities-based approach to natural rights is not an apologetic defence for political Islam, but is rather the outcome of a shift in social theory from a cosmological approach to an approach based on human needs that was put forward by his teacher Allamah Tabatabai (1904-1981). Tabatabai considered the primary motivation for human action to be self-preservation and developed a social contract theory on this premise. However, Motahari agrees with Tabatabai’s focus on human needs, but believed Tabatabai’s social theory was undermined by its relativism. By focusing on capabilities and rights, Motahari believed Islamic law can fulfil human needs and be resilient to changing circumstances without the relativism inherent in Tabatabai’s philosophy.

264 Intellectual Resilience in Modern Iranian Shiism: Islam, Progress and Science in the Qur’ān Commentary of Maḥmūd Ṭāliqānī

Oliver Scharbrodt
University of Birmingham, Birmingham, United Kingdom

Abstract

Maḥmūd Ṭāliqānī (1903-1979) was a senior Iranian Shi'i cleric and an influential ideologue of the Islamic Revolution of 1979. He undertook his intellectual work during the Pahlavi monarchy (1925-1979) at a time when Iranian society witnessed massive socio-cultural transformations as part of state-run modernisation policies and when Islam faced ideological challenges posed by Communism and secular nationalism. As a political activist prior to the Islamic Revolution, Ṭāliqānī emphasised the role of Islam in mobilising Iranians against the Pahlavi monarchy and advocated democratic participation and social justice as key elements of an Islamic socio-political order. This paper discusses Ṭāliqānī’s Qur’ān commentary Partuvī az Qur’ān (A Ray of Light from the Qur’ān), written between 1963 and 1978. His commentary is seen as an exercise in making Twelver Shi'i Islam intellectually resilient to both the immense socio-cultural changes within Iranian society and the ideological trends and movements that aimed at marginalising the socio-political relevance of Islam in modern Iran. Ṭāliqānī sought to make the Qur’ān accessible and relevant to modern-educated young urban Iranian Muslims and played a key role in mobilising several important activists of the Islamic Revolution. By discussing the relationship between Islam, progress and science in his commentary, the paper illustrates how Ṭāliqānī revived the Shi'i exegetical heritage for a modern educated audience and
translated the contents and approaches of modernist Qur’ānic commentaries from the Arab Sunni world to an Iranian readership.

275 Consolidation of the Ḥawza ‘Ilmiyya of Qum, Iran
Mohammad Mesbahi
The Islamic College, London, United Kingdom

Abstract

Following the crumbling of the central political authority in 1925, the Qajar dynasty fell giving rise to the era of Reza Shah (d. 1944), a new monarch with a new agenda. Reza Shah’s government envisaged a modernisation project with Western connotations: secular with a great deal of anti-clergy rhetoric. Subsequently, he spearheaded his modernisation plan and secularisation, hand in hand with a strong and fierce criticism of Islam, as practiced in Iran. Reza Shah’s authoritarian monarchy intended to remove all religious signs and institutions from public life in Iran, and remove Islamic identification in his drive for Iran, similar to events taking place in Turkey at the time. Reza Shah’s anti-clerical policies escalated following his visit to Turkey and his historic meeting with Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (d. 1938) in 1934. The intention behind this paper is to review the political settings and the resilience shown by the clerical establishment, particularly with regards to their newly formed theological school (hawza ‘ilmiyya) of Qum founded in 1921. This paper examines the political and social contributions of the triumvirate of Shi’i jurists who led the religious establishment following the death of the most influential Shi’i religious leader, Ayatollah Haeri Yazdi, in 1937. This work assesses the unique resilience shown by the triumvirate during the time of crises and against the tide of analysts’ assumptions that the religious sector would be eliminated from the Iranian political scene.

263 Reacting to ISIS: The Political Resilience of the Najafi Marja’iyya in Contemporary Iraq
Yousif Al-Hilli
University of Birmingham, Birmingham, United Kingdom

Abstract

On June 10, 2014, Daesh, or the group formally self-identifying as the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), captured Mosul, the second largest city in Iraq, leading to widespread fears over the territorial integrity of Iraq and the safety of Iraqi civilians. This prompted the Shi’i clerical establishment in Najaf, or the Marja’iyya, headed by Grand Ayatollah Ali Al-Sistani (b. 1930) into reaction. Ayatollah Sistani issued a religious legal opinion (fatwa), calling upon Iraqis to fight Daesh and protect Shi’i holy shrines in Iraq. Sistani utilised religious means to mobilize Iraqis into resisting Daesh, including weekly Friday sermons as well as religious statements. The Marja’iyya also released specific ethical edicts instructing fighters to maintain order. The Marja’iyya’s reaction to Daesh was in contrast to Ayatollah Sistani’s approach in the preceding years to political matters in Iraq. This paper investigates why Sistani intervened in reaction to Daesh, how the Marja’iyya adapted its political and religious strategies, as well as the impact of this intervention in the war against Daesh. This paper draws on interviews I recently conducted with Sistani and close aides of the Grand
Ayatollah, in addition to high ranking politicians, including Prime Ministers Nouri Al-Maliki and Haider Al-Abadi.

210-I Invoking the Guru ONLINE

09:00 - 10:40 Wednesday, 1st September, 2021

Kristina Myrvold

This workshop explores various religious and social contexts in which the Sikhs perform religious practices to invoke the guru from a multifaceted religious understanding of the concept. In the everyday life, during crises, and in times of political and social unrest these practices become valuable resources for comfort and coping. In the Sikh religion, the concept of guru is used both as a designation of the formless god and the ten human spiritual preceptors and worldly leaders who operated in Northern India between the fifteenth and eighteenth century. The concept also signifies the Sikh religious scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib that enshrines the compositions and teachings of the historical gurus, as well as the Sikh collective with followers of the guru’s path. Contemporary Sikhs perceive the scripture as their living guru with eternal spiritual authority, while the Sikh community and religious institutions represent the temporal power. Various religious practices, such as sacralizing spaces for the guru, performing compositions from the scripture, and engaging in social service for society, can become powerful performative tools to gain comfort and control and invest difficult experiences with significance. Narratives about the human gurus in the past have the capacity to inspire social and political action and can be used to redefine critical events within the framework of a meaningful history characterized by heroism, struggles and sacrifices. The Sikhs may use religious practices as strategies for adapting to new situations and environments while simultaneously assume reflexive attitudes and make adjustments that transform the same practices. As the papers in this workshop discuss, religious practices to invoke the guru in shifting social and historical contexts are attributed performative powers to transform persons, places, and events, and also involve ongoing processes of religious change.

09:00 - 09:20

171 Hosting the Guru at Home: Resilient Religiosity among Sikhs in Italy as a Way of Home-making in the Diaspora

Barbara Bertolani

University of Trento, Trento, Italy

Abstract

Religious and migration studies often present religion as an important instrument for migrants to adapt to new social, economic and cultural contexts and underline the transformative power of religious institutions to adjust to the new social milieus. Research on Sikh migrants often focuses on religious institutions and the construction of collective places of worship because of the various needs - spiritual, political, cultural, and
socio-economic – these places may serve, while less attention has been directed at the migrants’ religious practices at home. This paper examines how domestic religious practices among Sikhs in Italy can become resources for resilience and adaptation to changes due to migration, as well as means for redefining and transmitting cultural identity and for maintaining transnational relationships with people and homes. It analyzes how the sacralization of domestic space becomes strategies for adaptation and “home-making” in a new social, religious and cultural context. In particular, the analysis focuses on the arrangement of domestic spaces in Sikh families and how they establish devotional care and relationships with scriptures and religious objects that are considered sacred and alive. The paper also discusses how Sikh families in Italy adapt religious rituals to their migratory context through the use of new technologies.

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193 Sikh Pilgrimage and Identity

Knut Axel Jacobsen

University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway

Abstract

Pilgrimage is an important practice in the Sikh religious traditions. In spite of its importance, however, pilgrimage in Sikhism has often been misunderstood in academic scholarship. One reason of this misunderstanding is that Hindu pilgrimage has been taken as the model of pilgrimage in India as such. In this scholarship, a clear distinction between different forms of pilgrimage is often missing. The paper presents some characteristics of Sikh pilgrimage. It first analyses the statements about pilgrimage in the Guru Granth Sahib and then gives examples of Sikh pilgrimage to the cities of Nanded in Maharashtra and Patna in Bihar. It argues that these two places, far from Punjab, are examples of long distance pilgrimage and therefore particularly useful for understanding the role of pilgrimage in Sikhism. The paper finally highlights the importance of pilgrimage for the Sikh religious identity and tradition.

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810 The Role of Sikh Institutions and Organizations during the Pandemic in the United Kingdom

Opinderjit Takhar

Centre for Sikh and Panjabi Studies, University of Wolverhampton, Wolverhampton, United Kingdom

Abstract

This paper discusses how Sikh gurdwaras and organizations have and continue to be resources of comfort and assurance, to both Sikhs and non-Sikhs during the restrictions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic in the United Kingdom. Issues around accessibility and limited activities in religious institutions have had an adverse effect on the mental health and wellbeing of especially older Sikhs in the United Kingdom. The gurdwara, as both a social as well as religious community hub, is discussed in relation to experiences of
loneliness amongst older Sikhs. The discussion focuses on how theories around social prescribing have been key to applying the principles of the Sikh religion during the pandemic in the United Kingdom. Darsan of the Guru Granth Sahib - the act of seeing the Sikh scripture in the gurdwara - is embedded into the daily life of many Sikhs. This paper explores the various responses of Sikh organizations in the lead up to restrictions on places of worship in the United Kingdom and the impact this has had upon how Sikhs in the vulnerable category (as identified during the pandemic) adapted or not to the concept of darsan in their daily life without being able to visit the gurdwara.

10:00 - 10:20

194 "Dilli Chalo" (Let's Go to Delhi): The Indian Farmers’ Protest, Resilience and the Sikh Faith
Christine Moliner
OP. Jindal Global University, Sonipat, India

Abstract

This contribution will focus on the role of the Sikh faith as a tool of resilience in the ongoing social protest led by Indian farmers (mostly, but not exclusively, Sikhs) against a new legislation that would endanger their livelihood. The protest sites they have set up since Nov 2020 at the borders of the Indian capital are replete with references to past Sikh struggles against injustice and tyranny, Sikh sacrifice for the common good as well as Sikh theological concepts and socio-religious institutions, such as sewa (voluntary service) and langar (community kitchen).

Sikh tradition -born in Northern India in the late 15th century- represents a powerful inspiration for a social movement primarily organized by left wing trade unions, set to become the most potent opposition against the authoritarian, pro-corporate and Hindu supremacist agenda of the current BJP-led government.

10:20 - 10:40

829 Alcohol and Gender in the Midlands Panjabi Sikh community
Avneet Hunjan
University of Wolverhampton, Wolverhampton, United Kingdom

Abstract

Alcohol plays several roles within the Panjabi Sikh community: one such role being an increasingly concerning public health and social care threat. Despite this, the relationship between alcohol and the Panjabi Sikh community has largely been left unexplored and little theoretical knowledge exists about this phenomenon. In turn, the policies and practices of healthcare and recovery services for alcohol related

09:00 - 10:40 Wednesday, 1st September, 2021

Daniela Dumbrava, Bogdan Tataru Cazaban

In the early period of the Civil War in Lebanon, four academics came together to establish a series of lectures dedicated to the community of Muslim and Christian students, building an educational pattern. Accordingly, the team was formed by Prof. Youssef Ibish, professor at the American University in Beirut, and Prof. Hisham Naschabé, an Islamologist at the same university, Prof. André Scrima, theologian, and spiritual father of the Greek-Orthodox monastery in Deir-el-Harf, and Augustin Dupré la Tour S.J., professor at Saint Joseph University, Beirut. As far as the phenomenological approach is concerned, Fr. André Scrima for example, will speak at length to his students about the revealed word: the original function of the revealed word consists precisely in a concomitance: both to pronounce itself and to create itself. Scrima warns, however, that performative language is also possible to man as he names a thing, being a distant echo of an original word perceived as such always because of an intuition of the revealed word.

Our section proposes a methodological discourse related to the various possibilities of building resilience by peacemakers professing the Muslim and Christian religions in the times of civil war in Lebanon. First, we propose a discussion around the elements that build resilience at the personal level: is being religious also reflected in the inner state of the soul in times of a pressure or trauma caused in times of war? How? What are the religious elements on which self-confidence is grounded in extreme, wartime conditions? In addition, the support of a religious community (or communities) could prove to be just as much an element of cohesion and strong optimism and not just community pressure or risk. Our section also reserves the task of emphasizing the role of religious education within the university classrooms in Beirut, especially at Saint Joseph University, during the war years, accentuating the role of the various professors belonging to the Christian and Muslim communities, peacemakers in the process of pacification of the young multi-ethnic population of various religions during the time of the civil war. Does the comparative approach of the history
of religions, the phenomenology or the philosophy of religions form the basis of a rhetoric or a hermeneutic that brings together Islam and Christianity, according to the principle of unity in diversity, in order to avoid conflicts generated by the dogmatic framework of each of these religions? How to understand the religious phenomena not justifying from the religious point of view the massacres of the populations in Beirut during the civil war? What are the strong points to build inter-religious dialogue and how to sustain religious pluralism within an ethnically and religiously heterogeneous community? Do they represent a basis for community resilience in Lebanon? How can we relate to the inter-religious dialogue in the Middle East, after the Second Vatican Council, considering that the mediators of peace in Beirut also profess the Catholic confession and not only the Christian Orthodox one? These are the issues we wish to address in our section.

685 Résilience et Réalisation Spirituelle

Anca Manolescu

New Europe College - Institute for Advanced Study, Bucharest, Romania

Abstract

Au début de la guerre civile au Liban, quatre universitaires ont conçu un projet afin de réagir, de l'intérieur de leur compétence, contre la “sanglante incompréhension” qui opposait les deux communautés. Le P. Augustin Dupré La Tour s. j., Doyen de la Faculté de Sciences Religieuses de l'Université Saint-Joseph, et son collègue orthodoxe, le P. André Scrima, en collaboration avec deux professeurs musulmans de l'Université Américaine de Beyrouth ont fondé un Département qui deviendra ensuite un Institut d'études islamochrétiennes à l'USJ. Cette structure proposait des cours doubles, livrés par un professeur chrétien et un professeur musulman, sur un même thème. Chacun d'eux participait au cours de son collègue.

Cette solution mise à l’œuvre sur le terrain académique tient proprement de la “résilience” religieuse. Elle recourt au modèle de l'étude en dialogue. Pour ses initiateurs, le projet se trouvait néanmoins prolongé par des concomitances sur deux autres niveaux. Au niveau théorique, réflexif, il s'associait à la pensée de la diversité religieuse selon le modèle de la convergence des religions vers le Pôle divin. Au niveau existentiel, intérieur, le projet intensifiait, en chaque personne, la conscience d'être un voyageur attiré et guidé par la Vérité ultime.

Mon intervention traite de ces trois modèles, de la manière dont ils s’articulent et s’influencent réciproquement. Elle traite des trois niveaux en communication.

331 Tell Me a Story, Stop the War!

Ana Petrache

Angelicum, Rome, Italy

Abstract
The Bible and Quran offer narratives about what it means to live a good and meaningful life, by offering comprehensive narratives about suffering and loss, therefore they offer powerful tools of resilience in painful moments like wars and civil wars. By contrast, in some contexts, religious narratives can be and have been used to encourage conflicts and wars. Bearing in mind this double possibility to heal or to destroy, the paper focuses on the power of religious narratives used in a context of religious and civil war in Lebanon. The intentions, beliefs and hopes of the people in Beirut are often shaped by religious narratives: the aim of this paper is thus to inquire what is happening when one group of people is exposed not just to the stories of its own tradition but also to the stories coming from others’ traditions. More precisely, it investigates how Christian and Muslim narratives have been put together as an invitation to reconciliation within the Institute of Islamic-Christian Studies in Beirut.

490 Youakim Moubarac, an “Ancient Maronite Priest” Involved in Peacemaking in Wartime Lebanon
Yara El Khoury

History Department and The Center for the Study of the Modern Arab World Saint Joseph University, Beirut, Lebanon

Abstract

My conference contribution will take the form of a genuine testimony about an experience of peacemaking and resilience in wartime Lebanon. I have chosen to speak about Father Youakim Moubarac (1924-1995), a religious figure whom I had the honour to be acquainted with, and who sadly passed away when I was still in my early twenties.

Born to a religious family in Kfar Sghāb, a small village overlooking the Kadisha, Valley of the Saints, in the upper northern part of Mount Lebanon, Youakim Moubarac was raised by a Lebanese maronite mother, a mountaineer woman who enjoyed mostly the company of her rosary that seldom left her hands, and by three maronite priests, his father, and grandfathers on both sides. The family had strong links with the Muslim city of Tripoli, chief town and economic centre of the district of North Lebanon. Thus, young Youakim Moubarac grew up in a mixed environment, where Muslims were economic partners as well as companions of misfortune, mainly during the Allied blockade of WWII.

He left Lebanon aboard one of the first ships that crossed the Mediterranean to Marseille after the war was over. Since then, Paris was second home to him. He became a priest and a disciple of Louis Massignon. He devoted himself to his Parisian parish, university teaching and the Islamic-Christian dialogue through historical and contemporary perspectives. It was the latter topic that brought him back to Beirut in 1965. He was there when the Lebanese War started.

While I was taking my doctoral journey about the genesis of the Lebanese Front, the formation that led the political and paramilitary struggle of Lebanese Christians during the war, I encountered him. There he was, on the front pages of the daily An-Nahar, holding meetings with belligerent parties, both Lebanese and Palestinian, Christian and Muslim. He appeared to me as a peacemaker, one who showed resilience and was truly active in both religious, social and political life in Lebanon during the war. My doctoral research gave me the evidence that my family narrative about him had a historical background. Along with the information provided by the papers, and his own writings - mainly in French -, I have collected first-hand testimonies from his former partners in his peacemaking endeavour which included mediations for the release of people abducted on both sides of the torn city of Beirut, brokering ceasefire agreements between warring parties,
arranging meetings between warlords as Bachir Gemayel and Kamal Jumblatt and reflecting on peace settlement projects.

In my paper, I will give examples of his peacemaking activities and discuss the effect that his priesthood, coupled with his personal and intellectual background, had on his becoming a peacemaker, and the hostility he had to face from his fellow maronites who were more inclined to pursue the state of war, showing that he lacked the support of his religious community.

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323 Mircea Eliade and André Scrima. Spiritual Experience and Method in the Study of Religion

Ioan Alexandru Tofan

Institute for the History of Religions, Romanian Academy, Bucharest, Romania. "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University, Iași, Romania

Abstract

The paper aims at relating two separate methodological approaches to religion (that of Mircea Eliade and that of André Scrima) to specific spiritual experiences that both have described as fundamental in their inner biographies. On the one hand, Father Scrima’s encounter with the Burning Bush movement in the 1940s made him more sensitive to an “open” methodology in understanding religion (a word that he actually rarely uses) and more inclined towards a comparative view of spirituality. On the other hand, Mircea Eliade’s Indian experiences later inspired him to speak (in the interviews with Claude-Henri Roquet, for example) of the transformatory role of the hermeneutics of religion, emphasizing its role in the construction of the inner self, and not primarily in relation to the Other. On the basis of such comparative analysis, I will refer to the capacity that these two models/methodologies have to induce spiritual resilience in time of religious conflict. One meaningful example: the case of religious conflict in Lebanon, where Scrima was active as professor and spiritual guide at the same time. The basic question I thus want to address is whether the experience of openness to the Other can be seen as a fundamental condition of spiritual resilience. The consequences of this problem in the field of religious studies are important and can point towards the relevance of this academic discipline in society.

103 Engaging for the Common Good in Pluralistic Society: Religious Organisations, Resilience, and Civic Engagement

09:00 - 10:40 Wednesday, 1st September, 2021

Martin Baumann
It is common ground that religions can serve both as a source of solidarity and as a source of conflict. In this panel, we discuss the solidarity-side by looking at activities of civic engagement of religious organisations. Organisations such as churches, mosques, and temples continue to engage in a wide range of social areas such as feeding the needy, supporting the helpless, offering advice and comfort, and generally working for the common good. By providing support beyond the own group to potentially all, religious organisations in a resilient manner respond both to social crises and strive to endure lasting changes in society and politics.

The panel aims to comparatively discuss religious organisations and their motives and rationales for activities of civic engagement. What exactly are the reasons that some religious organisations engage for the common good while others attend to the own group and people only? And does the civic engagement yield some tangible results? By civic engagement, we understand individual or collective actions, implemented in public arenas in concert with other people or organisations, with the purpose of contributing to the shaping of lives of individuals and communities. In this regard, civic engagement can range from neighbourhood support to political demonstrations against social injustice. The panel invites qualitative and quantitative case studies studying the motives, rationales, and effects of civic engagement of religious organisations. Methodological and theoretical considerations are welcome to critically reflect to scope and concepts of this field of research.

838 “Like a Bird Flying with Two Wings”: Civic Engagement of Muslim Individuals in Germany
Karin Mykytyuk
Georg-August-University, Göttingen, Germany

Abstract

This presentation focuses on religious interpretations as well as the social embeddedness of engaged Muslim individuals in Germany. They are engaged not just for their own community, but for society as a whole – for example in the areas of ecological awareness, human rights, media, politics, welfare activities, or integration projects. The engaged Muslims are highly religious, engaged in a Muslim community like for example a mosque association or in newer Muslim groups, as well as engaged in nonreligious organizations. What role do these specific social networks play for engagement? How do the engaged Muslims justify their commitment? Based on extensive qualitative research, the presentation argues to differentiate four types of engaged Muslims: self-initiative social entrepreneurs (religiously motivated and not), progressive religious activists, structure-oriented integration assistants, irritated religious preservers. It turns out, that social or religious networks (peers, family, school, university, workplace, and others) play a decisive role as well as the long-time negative public discourses about Islam so that individual experiences and opportunity structures can lead to engagement for the common good.

869 Italian-style Engaged Buddhism: Contributing to Building a Better Society
Tiziano Bielli
Abstract

Over the last two decades in Italy the number of Buddhists has grown rapidly from 74,000 in 2001 to some 325,000 people according to recent estimates. In 2012 and 2016, the State signed two agreements with the Italian Buddhist Union and the Italian Buddhist Institute Sōka Gakkai, enabling them to receive public funds on the basis of the otto-per-mille regulation. To a large extent, these funds are spent on various civic engagement activities as well as in the midst of the pandemic last year, also as donations of 3 and 4.5 million euros respectively for the country’s recovery. This paper aims to address these research questions: (1) In which way have the purposes and features of Buddhist civic engagement changed since the agreements implementation? (2) Why at all are Buddhist practitioners and organisations civically engaged? (3) Which Buddhist and non-Buddhist concepts, principles and values do the organisations refer to for their engagement, and (4) what effects are observable in the local, regional, and national context? Combining conceptual approaches on civic engagement by Richard P. Adler & Judy Goggin (2005) and Fred Kniss & Paul D. Numrich (2007), the paper scrutinises past and current civic engagement activities of Buddhist organisations through qualitative methods such as expert interviews, ethnographic observations, and content analysis of Buddhist websites and grey literature. The paper argues that the two state agreements and its public funds prompted decisive changes in civic engagement activities, public role, relationships, and self-representation of Buddhist organisations. Furthermore, state acknowledgement legitimated and enhanced their voice in the public arena.

916 Believing in Participation: Young Evangelicals’ Civic Engagement in Crisis Ridden Greece

Alexandros Sakellariou
Hellenic Open University, Athens, Greece. Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences, Athens, Greece

Abstract

At the beginning of the 2010s, Greek society entered a period of severe social, political, and economic crisis which had a huge impact especially on young people. This paper, which is based on a large-scale EU research project on young people (Memory, Youth, Political Legacy and Civic Engagement, 2011-2015), focuses on young Greek Evangelicals and their civic commitment under harsh social and economic conditions. Through ethnographic fieldwork
and semi-structured interviews this paper tries to address the following questions: What are the main social activities in which young Evangelicals affiliated to the Greek Evangelical Church participate and what are their motivations of social participation? Is the activism they are engaged in directed towards inter-church objectives, society in general or both? Do they consider their activism as a calling from God or primarily a social act, an offer to society? Finally, are young Evangelicals at all interested in politics and how do they relate their activism to the socio-political context? Building on the concepts of social capital and religious social capital, this paper argues that apart from inter-religious practices civic engagement could be a key-element of religious groups resulting in strengthening their bonds with the broader society. The presentation aims to cast light on the role of a minority religious community in Greek society during the economic crisis. It will also make an effort to reply to a critical question widespread in public and academic debates from 2015 onwards, that of the role of religions in contemporary societies either as resilient actors or as agents of violence and conflict.

640 The Resilience of the Memory of the Vikings: Why the Viking Age Continues to Be Reinvented ONLINE

09:00 - 10:40 Wednesday, 1st September, 2021

Fredrik Gregorius
Vikings remain as popular as ever today, in movies, TV-series, music, computers games and as a source of spirituality. New religions based on the cultural construction of the Viking age are as vibrant as ever and modern-day Heathenism or Asatru seems to be one of the fastest growing forms of Paganism. As the use of Viking imagery is often associated with White nationalism and ethnocentricity this popularity can be seen as problematic. Is the recurring interest in the Vikings a sign of increased nationalism and romanticism and desire for cultural purity? The session will address how the Viking-age, particularly used as a source for spiritual and religious inspiration is a far more complex and varied phenomenon.

The session will consist of four papers, based on research done within the project “Back to Blood: pursuing a future from the Norse past”.

642 The Landscape of the Gods: Negotiating the Role of Place and Meaning at Old Uppsala
Fredrik Gregorius
Linköping University, Linköping, Sweden

Abstract

The paper will look at how a historically significant place, Old Uppsala, are treated and used in contemporary Sweden, with focus on the continued and changed meaning of the place. The paper address how Old Uppsala is being used as a spiritual site for followers of Heathenry in contemporary Sweden. While Heathens see the place as a sacred, the site has historically also been used for nationalistic agendas leading to a situation where the site has contested a history. The paper will address how different interpretations of Old Uppsala interact with each other, from Heathens, to those that see in the use of Old Uppsala a dangerous potential for ethnic nationalism.

Old Uppsala has since the 17th century been a contested place. Based on descriptions from Snorre Sturluson and Adam of Bremen the place was considered to have been the site for major pre-Christian cultic celebrations and the location of a large Heathen temple or Hof. In the 16th century it became the focus of early Nationalistic writers like Olaus Rudbeck who saw Uppsala as the true site of Atlantis. Today the site is most noticeable by three large burial mounds that dominates the landscape. During the 20th century the place was the site for ideological conflicts about the nature of Swedish history and heritage, leading to a situation during the 1960’s where it was dismissed as historically unimportant, partially due to the fear that it would encourage nationalism. Today Old Uppsala has become an important tourist attraction, with several thousands of visitors annually and in the year 2000 a museum was opened on the site and large-scale archeological digs have been conducted.

However Old Uppsala is not only a place of archeology and historical interest, for a growing number of people the place is also regarded as a sacred site, and modern Heathens, that is modern followers of Old Norse religion, will on a regular basis perform blots (religious ceremonies) on the site. There is also many who will journey to Old Uppsala for personal spiritual reasons, seeing the mounds as a gateway to religious experiences. Similar to Stonehenge in England, that is also used by modern day Pagans, Druids, and New Age-followers, this can come in conflict with the curators of the site, in the Swedish case the Swedish
National Heritage Board. One problem has to do with how to protect the three burial mounds from being damaged by large amount of people climbing them. In recent years as the interest has continued to grow this has become a recurring problem for Old Uppsala. So far there has been attempts to close of some of the mounds for a time but there is a need for a more sustainable solution. For Heathens this has at times been interpreted as religious discrimination. The paper will look at how these two views interact and at times will be in conflict.

657 Viking Identities in Mixed Martial Arts: Reception, Resurgence, and Resilience

Tao Thykier Makeeff

University of Stavanger, Stavanger, Norway

Abstract

As pointed out by r Thomas Birkett (2019): “The question ‘who were the Vikings?’ is one that scholarship is well equipped to address”. However, as he also notes, the modern meaning of the term Viking and its role in contemporary culture has received less attention by scholars than its Iron Age counterparts. The image of the Viking has been used frequently in the past centuries in the branding of both products, practices, social groups, and nations - and has recently seen an enormous growth in popular culture. As Birkett notes, the image of the Viking “has become a shortcut to a historical period (the Viking Age) as well as a broad cultural designation” of great significance to a plethora of stakeholders. Furthermore, this dual shortcut often also leads to contexts where religion seems to be awarded a central place, in one calibration or another. Due to the resilience and continuing resurgence of the Viking as cultural and religious symbol, receptions and reinventions of Vikings have changed significantly over time, adapting to new environmental and cultural conditions.

The present paper investigates the use of references to Vikings and old Norse religion by professional Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) athletes. Through a presentation and analysis of how combat athletes are presented and present themselves, both in the context of fights, on social media, and in merchandise and fashion, I will address how the resilient image of the Viking as a historically and religiously distinctly Nordic warrior is being reimagined based on a combination of historical sources, popular culture (such as TV, movies and gaming), and individual creativity. The paper will address issues such as gender, nationalism, and environmental aspects, by asking - and attempting to answer questions such as “how do MMA Vikings use religious references?”, “are all MMA Vikings men?”, “are all MMA Vikings from the Nordic countries? “Is this identity being used in both exclusionist and inclusionist agendas?“ And “Is nature and its sacralisation important to modern MMA Vikings?

The Viking as Cultural and Regional Tool: Resistance and Reformulation in Artistic and Spiritual Uses of the Norse Past
Anne Kalvig
University of Stavanger, Stavanger, Norway

Abstract
In this paper, Anne Kalvig discusses how the Norse past has been brought into a wide range of cultural, regional and bureaucratic processes in Norway. In such processes, the museum sector, local and regional administration, geographical site branding for the tourist sector and the event making sector convene in complex ways in order to pursue their goals where the Viking and the Norse past are focal interests.

Focusing specifically on the combined Viking and Metal festival Midgardsblot in Borre, Vestfold and Telemark county, Kalvig investigates, through in-depth interviews and archival material, how the actors involved view the processes they instigate and take part in, in making a festival that relies on cooperation between museum, county administration, tourist management, reenactment groups and music festival designers, management and performers.

With a decidedly pluralist, inclusive, global perspective in the uses and remediations of the Norse past, the festival might be seen as a resilient force against white power and ethnocentric claims towards the same past. What groups have shown interest in the festival, and what kind of participation and uses do the multi-sector apparatus behind the festival see fit? What specific uses of the past are seen as relevant to festival apparatus, and why? And not least: why has it been important to give the festival a spiritual dimension, and is this spiritual alternative a kind of resilience, resistance and reformulation towards trends and forces in contemporary society that the festival wants to address?

The New Skalds: How Do Music and Video Games Negotiate Power in Contemporary Heathenry?
Jane Skjoldli
University of Stavanger, Stavanger, Norway

Abstract
Wardruna vocalist Einar Selvik contemplates the runic alphabet he has had tattooed on his wrist as he composes his music. To the dark Nordic folk music group Heilung, bone and blood is part of their concert ritual. In the Viking-themed video game Assassin’s Creed: Valhalla, northern lights are found perpetually present in areas of virtual Norway where they are seen very rarely. What connects these examples, I argue, is the ongoing construction and cultural activation of a new religious interface that encompasses a language and topography seen as sacred, and popular culture content creators as guides and providers of connection with the superhuman agents that populate a new religious world.
Where earlier neo-paganism or contemporary paganism, Heathenry, Asatru, and other terms denoted relatively small fringe phenomena in the landscape of new religious movements that had low ambitions regarding recruitment, contemporary Norse-inspired religion has highly public profiles as its main representatives on the world stage. Wardruna tops music charts and contributes to one of the world’s most-selling game franchises. Together with Heilung and others, they have made defining contributions to new and widely popular music genres that reach far beyond the scope of earlier representatives of Heathenry. When making the Viking-inspired Assassin’s Creed: Valhalla, Ubisoft departed from their tried-and-true selling claim of historical accuracy and embraced an approach that goes far in promoting Norse myths at the cost of the old, historically oriented formula.

Heathenry is taking up a space on the world stage that enables its most powerful actors to shape its trajectory in many ways, including the construction, change, and control of a religious interface, as well as influencing the increasing flow of Viking-inspired pop-cultural products. What can we learn about the interconnections between popular culture, contemporary Heathenry and religious change if we pay attention to charisma and violence in the construction of the enchanted north? How does such negotiation add to and/or weaken the resilience of the blurred boundaries between Viking-inspired popular culture industry and contemporary Heathenry’s religious interface?

**115 Visual Media on the Move**

**09:00 - 10:40 Wednesday, 1st September, 2021**

**Philippe Bornet, Daria Pezzoli-Olgiati**

The panel explores images that move across different cultural, social and religious contexts. Images “on the move” undergo adaptation processes on various levels: as an object, an image can be materialized in different media, realized by means of different technologies, perceived in different ways; its motifs and narratives, as well as its effects are also affected by processes of diffusion through time and space. Inspired by theoretical works such as Mieke Bal’s *Travelling Concepts in the Humanities*, Serge Gruzinski’s *Images at War* as well as Michel Espagne’s notion of cultural transfers, the panel investigates the image as a cultural field that is always being “re-used”, “re-defined” or “reconfigured”. Processes of diffusion highlight the capacity of images and visual communication to promote multiple interpretations. These “caleidoscopic” reconfigurations allow images to resist change and transformation, to cope with crisis and to increase resilience for both communities and individuals. The panel addresses these questions as they arise in the following dimensions.

First, it focuses on adaptation processes of images that move through different contexts and locations focusing on semantic motifs, narrative and the reconfiguration of the visual communication process. What are the represented topics and associated attributes that can easily lend themselves to new interpretations, travelling across time, cultures, religious affiliations and social fields? What contextual elements are added in order to “localize” an image? How does such an adaptation transform the visual meaning making process?

Second, it explores the transformation of images in relation to media technologies. How do images travel? How are they copied, modified, re-contextualized in order to fit new contexts? Does the transfer of an image from one medium to another transform its meaning making processes? Under which circumstances?
Third, the panel analyzes what happens when images encounter different visual regimes and cultures that regulate the perception of an image within religious and social practices. What kind of resilient interpretations, misunderstandings or novelties can be observed when images travel and encounter new forms of visual regulation?

By considering the travels of Christian motifs, the selected papers highlight the circulation of visual motifs, narratives, practices and technologies through cultures and times as well as the circulation of religious images in different social fields.

09:00 - 09:20

116 The Connected History of a Visual Medium: Following the Travels of an Image of Maria Bambina from Italy to India (and Beyond)
Philippe Bornet
University of Lausanne, Lausanne, Switzerland

Abstract

The contribution identifies a few methodological issues concerned with the study of visual material “on the move” and introduces a perspective that seeks to reconstruct the “kaleidoscopic” history of an image by bringing together and comparing sources documenting aspects of its uses in different locations. As a “test-case”, the contribution analyzes an image of the Maria bambina (as modelled in wax, around 1735), as it travelled from Italy to India around the end of the 19th century, along with the development of the network of the Sisters of Maria Bambina in the region of Mangalore (Karnataka, India) and their activities in a hospital and an orphanage there. Retaining some of the characteristics of the “original” image (in particular, its relation to health), the Indian context gave it additional dimensions: besides new connotations – such as a relation to harvests – and ritual elements inspired from a South-Indian / Hindu framework – such as a traditional yearly parade – it also became an identity symbol for the Konkani-speaking Catholic community in Karnataka (and beyond). Comparing European and Indian evidence, the contribution finally asks in what measure the image’s usage in both contexts reflects (or not) different visual cultures.

09:20 - 09:40

117 Images of Madonna and Child in Premodern Japan: Maria-Kannon Reconsidered
Katja Triplett
Leipzig University, Leipzig, Germany

Abstract

According to popular understanding, Japanese Christians in the underground used Buddhist images of Kannon, the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, in their worship instead of statues or pictures of the Virgin Mary. It
is often assumed that during the long centuries of persecution from the early 17th century onward images of the so-called Maria-Kannon kept being used because “genuine” Christian images and other paraphernalia were confiscated and destroyed. Possession of Christian images, when discovered by the authorities, led to capital punishment. An image of Kannon, in contrast, protected the Christian worshipper from discovery. However, when taking a closer look at the surviving statues of Maria-Kannon from the period of the openly active Catholic mission in Japan (1549-1614) and from the time after its prohibition, a complex history of images “on the move” emerges. The paper aims at distinguishing between different forms of Kannon/Guanyin as well as of Madonna and Child found in Japanese Christian worship: While Portuguese Jesuits and later Spanish Franciscans and others introduced Renaissance images of Madonna and Child to Japan, the production of such images in Japan resulted in a metamorphosis not only of these European images but also of images from an Asian Buddhist background. The intercultural and interreligious encounters also led to the creation of new and unique images such as a wooden statue that can serve as both a Buddhist image as well as a Christian image by switching movable parts of the statue. Instead of perceiving cultural transfers as one-directional developments and regarding the European ‘original’ as superior to the non-European ‘copy’, the paper will focus on the multi-central developments of the Madonna imagery as well as on the Maria-Kannon imagery from the 16th/17th centuries. The paper highlights processes of histories of entanglement between China, Europe, Asian Christian missions and Japan by introducing material images from late medieval and early modern Buddhist and Christian religious cultures, in order to facilitate a more general discussion on “kaleidoscopic” reconfigurations of “travelling images”.

09:40 - 10:00

118 The Power of the Passion-play: Between Historiography and New Media
Cristiana Facchini
University of Bologna, Bologna, Italy

Abstract

The relationship between modernity and religion, if analyzed through the prism of modern media, proves of great interest for a better understanding of religious changes in the modern world. Focusing on local passion plays, as the one established in Oberammergau, this paper aims at exploring the relationship between arte sacra, new media, and representations of Christianity in the wake of the historiographical tradition devoted to the study of the historical Jesus. The passion-play, which was often established as a local medieval tradition of sacred theatre, underwent some significant changes during the nineteenth century becoming widely known when filmed and re-enacted in other settings, or through the dissemination of newspapers, pamphlets, and visual material. This paper aims at discussing the impact of filming passion plays, their multi-sensorial construct, and the relationship with other films devoted to the life of Jesus. I will especially explore the fascinating entanglement between images, narrative, and geography.
Travelling Pietà: From a Medieval Christian Devotional Practice to Contemporary Media

Daria Pezzoli-Olgiati
Ludwig Maximilian University, Munich, Germany

Abstract

The representation of the suffering Maria holding the dead body of her son on her lap became a popular iconography in 14th century Europe. Since then, this constellation can be found in very different adaptations in all sorts of media like caricature, feature films, documentaries, press photography and contemporary art. Furthermore, this Christian constellation recurs in various religious, political, and cultural contexts; it travels through time and places, assuming different connotation and stimulating multi-layered meaning-making processes. In this contribution, representation of the Pietà is in selected contemporary examples. The analysis a focus on the construction of the gaze between the mourning mother, the dead son and the viewer. This triangulation generates a meaning making process on the thin line between adaption and alienation, between resilience and disruption, between legitimation and novelty?

The case study is connected with a broader general reflection on the possibility to understand and conceptualise diffusion processes of religious constellation in media, politics, and art. On this theoretical level, it addresses the question about the role of religious references in culture and particular in visual communication. How can a religious constellation like the medieval Pietà generate practices of compassion in media and politics?

694 Pipes of Cathedrals: Anthropology of Religious Infrastructure in Post-Secular Societies ONLINE

09:00 - 10:40 Wednesday, 1st September, 2021

Ekaterina Khonineva

694 Pipes of Cathedrals: Anthropology of Religious Infrastructure in Post-Secular Societies

Ekaterina Khonineva1,2, Sergei Shtyrykov3,2, Jeanne Kormina4, Ekaterina Kapustina2, Agnieszka Halemba5

1Institute for Linguistic Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation. 2Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, Russian Academy of Sciences, Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation. 3European University at Saint Petersburg, Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation. 4Higher School of Economics, Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation. 5Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw, Poland
Abstract

The workshop addresses the infrastructural, organizational, and logistical dimensions of religious life and the connections between material infrastructure and practices of spiritual experience. In recent years, anthropologists have asked a wide range of questions about the peculiarities of “hard” infrastructure (including roads, electrical wiring, a network of water supply, gas pipelines, etc.), its invisibility and visibility on breakdown; the way it connects the technological and the social; political rationality and practices of government it evokes. Regarding the perspective of infrastructure users, the modes of engagement with technical systems on the surface of “the aesthetics of infrastructure” become the prominent matter of ethnographic research. Textures, smells, temperatures, sounds, movements, increased or decreased speed not only produce somatic experiences but also create a specific sense of modernity by being perceived as signs of progress and future.

Anthropological study of religion and infrastructure presents its specificities. Religious practices and places are constructed by political actors and managers according to different attitudes toward the semiotics of infrastructural elements. In religious contexts, many visible or palpable signs of infrastructure associated with modernity and inauthenticity are avoided to create the spaces of purely spiritual life but some of these signs are intentionally included there. Accessibility and concealment of certain infrastructural traces are nevertheless regulated at the technological level when infrastructure becomes a frame allowed to abstract material issues and concentrate only on the spiritual questions. The production of ambient religious experience through infrastructural means demands close anthropological engagement.

The very limits of infrastructure of religious experience are unstable, negotiated, and diachronically changed. Further conceptual understanding of what religious infrastructure is as an analytical tool and as an emic category, and what is the difference between religious infrastructure and the technical understanding of this term will become the main topic of the debate during the workshop. The speakers will focus on the local meanings given to the concept of infrastructure by religious actors. We intend to discuss modes of use and functioning of religious spaces, the work of shrine managers and pilgrimage route organizers, and the response of these activities to their target audiences. How do various religious cultures conceptualize the infrastructural conditions for the successful contact with agents of transcendental nature, and by what tools and technical means are these conditions created? How are the boundaries of what is considered religious infrastructure changing according to the context? And how do trouble-free operations or breakdowns of infrastructure influence the work of religious imagination and interpretation of the spiritual experience?

Sergei Shtyrkov The Price of Piety: Resources of the Neighborhood Community and Ethnic Feasts in North Ossetia (Russia)

Ekaterina Khonineva Signal and noise: Infrastructural re(silence) and ascetics in Catholic spiritual retreats

Jeanne Kormina The Tsar’s Road: Invisible Infrastructure, Pilgrimage and Historiopraxy in Russian Orthodox Christianity

Ekaterina Kapustina How to climb the mountain: The competition of infrastructure projects during the pilgrimage in Southern Dagestan

Agnieszka Halemba The Virgin Mary as an architect: On building a world-sized basilica in the Transcarpathian forest
47-I Rites, Rituals and Liturgies as “Places” of Resilience

09:00 - 10:40 Wednesday, 1st September, 2021

Renata Salvarani

The session focuses on relationships between rite and religious groups’ identity, aiming at highlighting the connections between celebration and resilience. In which ways can rites, rituals and liturgies become “places” of individual and community resilience? Can they provide opportunities to keep a strong identity even in dangerous conditions? Can a threatened or persecuted community find the strength to survive in its own performed liturgies?

Papers try to answer these questions from historical and religious historical points of view analyzing historiographical interpretations, documents, case studies. Cross disciplinary contributions are also welcome. The session focuses on the main monotheistic traditions. Connected topics are:

Rites and liturgies maintained, preserved, perpetuated to ensure continuity for religious groups’ identities;

Specific celebrations marking a resilience process (e.g. consecrations or re-consecrations, building and rebuilding sacred places, etc.);

Crypto religious identities and crypto rites (or gestures);

Liturgies and religious persecutions;

Prayer texts and liturgical formulae evidencing resilience processes;

Symbolic objects used during liturgies or personal devotions to mark identity and religious belongings.

References:


105 Hilltop Cults and Sacred Landscapes as Places of Community Resilience during the Po Valley’s Romanization

Silvia Fogliazza

Université Paris Nanterre, Paris, France. Sapienza Università di Roma, Roma, Italy

Abstract

Immediately before its Romanization, the Po Valley was a culturally heterogeneous territory, characterized by the presence of Ligurian people in the high areas of the Apennines and Celtic people in the high plains and hills.

It is precisely on the Apennine hills that we can observe traces of rituals linked to the hilltop cults and the survival of forms of worship of Etrusco-Padanian and Ligurian origin. What role did these sacred landscapes play in the mechanism of overcoming the traumatic event of the Roman conquest?

The analysis of these practices leads us to understand how the peoples who inhabited this border territory during the Romanization defined their identity among themselves and vis-à-vis the Romans, showing us how rituals can become “places” of community resilience.

241 In the Depths of Holy Springs: Places Associated with Pagan Rituals on the Island of Bornholm

Karolina Czonstke1,2, Bartosz Świątkowski1

1Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology University of Gdańsk, Gdańsk, Poland. 2Archaeological Museum in Gdańsk, Gdańsk, Poland

Abstract

Rituals and rites in ancient and prehistoric communities had various characters. On the one hand, they were explaining the world, the annual cycles and everyday life. On the other hand, they also dealt with life after death. Undoubtedly, both constituted an essential element of everyday life. Ritual behaviours were part of individual and group beliefs. Their form and the time and space in which they were carried out, also had a significant meaning. Capturing these subtle nuances in archaeological material is extremely difficult, but at the same time fascinating.

During the archaeological research on the Danish island of Bornholm, the remains associated with the sphere of beliefs were discovered. In the paper, we will present two fascinating archaeological sites where traces of the ritual behaviours from the Vendel period were observed. At the Smørenge and Sorte Muld there were archaeological remains of rites such as golden votive foils with zoomorphic and anthropomorph representations (so-called guldgubber), figurines, and numerous glass beads, weapons.
Their form and meaning are still ambiguous, but they can help shed a little light on the ethereal world of beliefs and rituals of the inhabitants of Bornholm and part of the Baltic Sea Region.

113 The Head of the Church: Rituals Around the Skull of Saint Mark in the Consecration of the Coptic Patriarch

Giuseppe Cecere

Università of Bologna, Bologna, Italy

Abstract

This paper focuses on a Coptic ritual involving the skull of Saint Mark in the process of the Consecration of the Patriarch. On the day following his official proclamation, the newly elected Patriarch, accompanied by the bishops, the priests and the people, visits the Church of Saint Mark in Alexandria, which is believed to stand on the place where the Apostle, considered the founder of the Egyptian Christianity, was martyred. There, the Patriarch performs a ritual marking his function of “Successor of Saint Mark” (khalīfat Mār Morqos). The culminating moment of this ritual is when the Patriarch, after performing the metanoia in front of the sacred skull of the Saint and reciting the introduction to Mark’s Gospel, brings the sacred head in a room, strips it of the old kiswa (silk cloth) and covers it with a new one. After that, all the attendees enter the room, one after another according to their respective ranks, in order to pay homage to the sacred head.

This solemn ceremony, usually referred to as taşrīʿa al-Baṭṭīyark (“Ceremony of Consecration of the Patriarch”), is hereby analyzed in its main liturgical components, as well as in its possible anthropological meanings and ideological implications. On the one hand, the taşrīʿa al-Baṭṭīyark is compared with “ordinary” liturgical moments centred on the figure of Saint Mark in the Coptic Synaxarium, namely the Martyrdom of Saint Mark on the 30th day of the Coptic month of Parmouti (in Arabic, Baramūda) and the Feast commemorating the Consecration of the Church of Alexandria and the Appearance of the Saint’s Sacred Head, on the 30th day of the Coptic month of Paopi (in Arabic, Bāba). On the other hand, this ceremony is linked with the complex and multi-layered historiographical and hagiographic traditions concerning the role of Saint Mark in the formation and history of the Coptic Church and in its subsequent life throughout the centuries.

The working assumption of this paper is that the taşrīʿa al-Baṭṭīyark is part of a wide set of discursive and ritual practices turning the skull of Saint Mark into an object of “embodied religious resilience”, a response to the many theological and socio-political challenges that the Coptic Church has undergone in the course of its history, from clashes with “Calcedonian” Byzantine authorities to falling under Muslim political domination, until the complex historical developments of the Arab and Muslim worlds in modern and contemporary times.
**106 Helvetic Lay Rituals and Religious Resilience during the Counter-Reform**

*Francesco Cerea*

LabiSAlp - University of Italian Switzerland, Mendrisio, Switzerland. CeSHeT - European University of Rome, Rome, Italy

**Abstract**

Despite the presence of a large Protestant minority throughout the 16th century, Valais remained faithful to the Catholic faith, demonstrating strong resilience. From 1520 until the 18th century, Valais was courted by both Catholic and Protestant Cantons. Despite periods of cooling relations and misunderstandings, particularly when Valais allied itself with the reformed city-state of Bern in 1536 to repel Savoy and conquer the Chablais, Valais's alliance with the Catholic Cantons was renewed throughout the Ancien Régime. The subject of the report will be the analysis of rites, rituals and symbols that characterized one of the most important renewals of alliance in the modern age in Switzerland. In fact, that of 1578, will be the milestone of the subsequent oaths, leaving also valuable artistic traces. The celebration of this significant event, will create an alternative dimension, transforming some places full of meaning into the ideal background where to meet as a community and reaffirm their religious principles.

**112 The Passover Seder as a Tool for Identity Resilience and Its Visual Representation in Heinrich Heine’s Rabbi of Bacharach**

*Mattia Di Taranto*

University of Eastern Piedmont, Vercelli, Italy

**Abstract**

The entire Jewish people lived for almost two millennia, from the destruction of the Second Temple (70 CE) to the foundation of the State of Israel (1948), in a condition of galut (exile), i.e. as a minority among different nations that, even when Jews were not subjected to open persecution, rarely guaranteed the right to express their faith publicly. These historical circumstances have understandably led, since the birth of rabbinic Judaism (the Tannaitic and Amoraitic periods), to the development of domestic rituals capable of ensuring and preserving the Jewish religious identity in spite of all kinds of adversities (expulsions, forced mass conversions, false and defamatory accusations such as the blood libel etc.). A significant example in this respect is represented by the Passover Seder which has managed for centuries to achieve this very purpose. In order to show the Passover Seder’s function in the resilience process, my presentation aims at giving a brief insight into its rich and complex apparatus of ritual formulas, gestures and songs by focusing on its use in one of the masterpieces of modern German-Jewish literature, Heinrich Heine’s *Rabbi of Bacharach* (1840).
When Pain becomes Love for God: The Self as Non-Object

Roni Naor Hofri
Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, Israel

Abstract

This paper shows how self-inflicted pain enabled the expression of love for God among medieval Christian ascetics in Europe. As scholars have shown, being in a state of pain leads to a change in or a destruction of language, an essential feature of the self. I argue that this transformation allows the self to transcend its boundaries as an object, even if only temporarily and in part. The epistemic achievement of love for God, a non-object, would not otherwise have been possible. To substantiate my argument, I show that the self’s transformation into a non-object enables the imitation of God: not solely in the sense of imitatio Christi, of physical and visual representations of God incarnate in the flesh of His son Christ, but also in the sense of the self’s experience of being a non-object, just like God, target of the self’s love.

Manifestations of the Mystical Phenomenon of the Dark Night of the Soul in the Contemporary Issues of Depression and Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder

Jakub Majchrzak
Doctoral School of Humanities, Maria Curie Skłodowska University in Lublin, Lublin, Poland

Abstract

The aim of the paper is to present the phenomenon of the dark night of the soul in Western mysticism and to show its topicality in contemporary contexts of mental health. In the course of the paper, I will point out the symptoms of the dark night of the soul, which can be distinguished at the level of the psyche of a contemporary man, and I will also refer to the offered, modern methods of overcoming this experience in the field of depressive disorders and obsessive-compulsive disorders. I would like to point out that contemporary crises of a spiritual nature are often incorrectly classified as mental ailments, so that the methods of treating them do not bring the expected results. At the same time, I would like to point out that psychological disorders do occur, of course, but when presenting the similarity of certain symptoms, I would like to point out that it is easy to confuse a specific mental disorder with the mystical experience of the dark night of the soul. The second context that needs to be considered is slipping to a different extreme and downplaying that actual mental crisis, even if you take the position that you are dealing with a dark night of the soul experience. Even if every human crisis, including the psychological one, has its source in
spirituality, it is essential to remember that the mystical experience of the dark night runs at a deeper level than, for instance, depression. Finally, there is also a third possibility, that is, the coexistence of overlapping experiences of the dark night of the soul and mental disorder. It turns out that these are quite frequent cases, and this is most likely due to the various types of similarities that occur between these phenomena.

710 The Concept of Vulnerability - Between Deficit and Resource of Transformative Power

Barbara Lorenz
University of Graz, Graz, Austria

Abstract

Vulnerability is an essential part of conditio humana. In particular, bioethical contexts and at least the struggle against a pandemic have focussed more strongly on this very phenomenon. Being a fundamental deficit and threat to human life, vulnerability in its ambiguity may at the same time be a complex and vigorous resource of transforming the power of resilience. Thus, vulnerability will be analyzed with regard to diverse aspects of human and social life, yet with particular regard to human body and corporeality. In a multidisciplinary approach, the paper aims to provide a conceptual hermeneutical framework as well as phenomenological descriptions. Distinctions will be made between an inherent vulnerability and situative vulnerable context related to specific risks. Assuming that moral valences of vulnerability and resilience are not fixed, ethical and religious (mystical) concepts are investigated with regard to the relevance of these notions. Finally, the impact of these perspectives will be united in an transdisciplinary understanding of the concept of vulnerability strongly committed to a humanistic and social idea of man.

684 Stiff or Adaptive? An Evolutionary Perspective on Religious Prejudice in Intergroup Contact

Kateřina Koppová
Department for the Study of Religions, Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic. LEVYNA, Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic

Abstract

The research on the topic of the nature of prejudice began to flourish thanks to the same-named book written by Gordon W. Allport in the 1950s, in which he also introduced the contact hypothesis and defined appropriate conditions that should contribute to changes of prejudice namely to their reduction. Following this delimitation, these conditions began to be investigated in many different domains, including ethnicity, age, gender, sexual identity and orientation, and religion. However, the topic of prejudice related to religion remains rather unsystematic and fragmentary. In my perspective, this incompleteness is, among
others, supported by the lack of a broader overarching theory, enabling us to ask not only about the nature of prejudice, but also other questions: Why do we have prejudices in the first place? Did they evolve throughout human history, and if, how? Are they just a by-product of other essential processes, or do they have their adaptive function? Are there some layers of prejudice that are the same regardless of the specifics of different environments, or are they just culturally learned? In this theoretical paper, I would like to introduce the topic of religious prejudice in the context of the broader evolutionary framework and outline future directions for this research.

907 Endangered Humanity - Research on Marginalised and Endangered Worldviews and Lifeworlds

Lidia Guzy
University College Cork, Cork, Ireland

Abstract

Marginalised and Endangered Worldviews Study Center (MEWSC) was established in October 2013 at UCC as an interdisciplinary research centre to promote the study of contemporary endangered cultures, religions, worldviews, religious cultures, and minority cultures and religions.

The centre focuses on tangible and intangible cultural expressions and the worldviews and lifeworlds of endangered and persecuted peoples, social groups and in particular indigenous communities (https://mewsc.wordpress.com; Guzy/Kapalo 2017).

MEWSC aims and vision is to shift the focus from a script and numbers centred logic towards orality and other marginalised knowledge systems. The Centre experiments with a post and anti-colonial imagination in order to strengthen a counter-imaginative power against the genocidal and culturecidal logic of a global neo-colonial industrial and post-industrial society. It also analysis and questions hegemonic anthropocentric and dualistic worldviews that marginalise all other forms of knowledge in order to successfully conquer, colonise, silence and exploit. The focus of the research Centre has been until recently South Asia, Eurasia (Eastern Europe and Siberia) and Latin America, but its interests extends globally beyond these regions.

The presentation explores how MEWSC's approaches and focus has shifted recently from indigenous and minority cultures to endangered humanity at large.

287-V The Resilience of the Science of Religion(s) between Hermeneutics and History

09:00 - 10:40 Wednesday, 1st September, 2021
In the field of contemporary religious studies, hermeneutical, or more broadly, understanding, approaches to the subject are regularly seen as contrasting with a rigid historical enquiry. The attempts to understand religious phenomena from within, in other words, to reconstruct the insider perspective on them, are criticized by some scholars as a step out from the frame of scientific research, chiefly defined by the requirements of intersubjective verification.

In this paper I will argue that the division between the understanding and classic historical approaches is in fact to a large degree artificial. I will take an example of a traditional topic discussed among the historians of the Middle Ages: The question is if there existed any alternative religious groups or movements in the later Middle Ages, which were transgressing the basic ethical norms of the period, in particular norms regarding the regulation of sexuality. While late medieval sources mention such groups quite frequently, modern scholarship generally perceives these accounts as fictitious, produced by the exponents of the Church mainstream to compromise dissident religious movements. However, as I will argue, this rejection of the factuality of medieval libertine religious groups only partially relies on the means of source criticism, the backbone of classical historiography. I will try to show, that the argument about the medieval religious libertines existing in fiction only includes a substantial element of hermeneutical reconstruction of the medieval religious thought, in which some beliefs and practices are perceived and contradictory to the medieval Christian mind. In other words, on the assumption that no late medieval Christian group would be committing such “obscenities”. This aspect of the argumentation, as I will try to demonstrate, is in fact closer to the hermeneutical-understanding approach to the religious phenomena than to what is traditionally perceived as a rigid method of historiography.

The classic of the phenomenology of religion, Gerardus van der Leeuw, wrote that every historian does the reconstruction of the phenomena they are studying beyond what the data are telling per se. According to van der Leeuw, the phenomenology of religion provided a normative and above all explicit theoretical-methodological basis for what every historian, not only of religions but a historian in general, is doing, often implicitly and unreflectively. Van der Leeuw’s programme of phenomenology of religion has often been subjected to multiple criticism as well as attempts at its development since the mid-20th century onwards. However, I consider his observation about every historian necessarily performing a reconstruction of studied phenomena valid, as well as his call for a methodology which would explicate the process of such reconstructions. I will put forward a question, what methodological tools, if any, can be used in the debates such as the one about alleged medieval religious libertines to move further beyond the implicit hermeneutics performed by many historians? With this question I will ask if the methodologies developed within the studies of religion cannot only borrow tools from historians, but also enrich the classical historiography with own perspectives?
487 A Search for the Soul of Contemporary Mushers

Jitka Cirklová

University of Finance and Administration, Prague, Czech Republic

Abstract

Shamanism has always been of great interest to scholars of religion. More recently it has been “discovered” by Westerners and by followers of groups that are labelled as New Age Urban Shamanism subcultures. This proposal presents some initial case studies, different from the previous Neo Shamanism studies. The work examines some forms of shamanism linked with groups active in sled dog breeding and racing, often in regions out of the Arctic and out of cultures where mushing is historically established practice. The aim of the research is to question Mirecea Eliade’s well-known definition of the shaman as the master of ecstasy and suggests that her or his role has to be seen as that of a master of spirits.

The nature of the shaman and the spirit world in the tough Arctic environment is far from the benign attitude towards shamanism in the New Age movement. The mushers very often make a drastic cut from the comfort of urban life and set on a life long journey that can be interpreted as a spiritual travel with his helping spirits on behalf of society. There are different accounts of the level of danger involved in this undertaking - from losing social status and financial security, being pushed out of their own dwelling by neighbours who are refusing to tolerate tens of barking sled dogs coming to their locality. The mushers are not participants of the neo-shamanic courses in the comfort of city zones. The mushers form a group where sled dogs are the centre of their lives, the helping spirits that accompany them on their quest to bring back a more balanced relationship between human and animal, between nature and society. A sleddog centred lifestyle is a prism that gives a unique insight into deep and mutual understanding of human-animal relationships in the past, present and future.

534 Resilient Slavic Animism and Polytheism: The Case of Russia

Giuseppe Maiello

University of Finance and Administration, Prague, Czech Republic

Abstract

Russian paganism, understood as both a Kievan religious system, but above all as beliefs of the Slavic-speaking inhabitants of Eastern European villages, had a secular persistence that can be traced back at least to the late nineteenth century. To acquire possible traces of this type of paganism, we must rely both on the interpretatio christiana, witnessed for the most ancient period in the Old Russian homiletic literature, and on “interpretatio ethnografica”, starting from the first half of the nineteenth century. The paper will focus above all on the animistic aspects of a possible Slavic paganism reconstructed on the basis of the analysis of the theological and ethnographic literature currently available to scholars. Then, considering the
expressions of contemporary paganism, we will try to understand if it can be considered a phenomenon of resilience, or rather an attempt at a romantic reconstruction without real relations of continuity with the Slavic pagan tradition.

**785 The Process of State Recognition of the Old Baltic Faith Romuva Movement**

*Rasa Pranskevičiūtė-Amoson*

Vilnius University, Vilnius, Lithuania

Abstract

The paper presents research into the process of state recognition of the Old Baltic Faith *Romuva* movement focusing on the communal perspective of this process. In order to reveal the dynamics of the relationship between Lithuanian religious minorities and the state and society, the narratives and the (political) strategies of the interpretations of the role of the Old Baltic Faith *Romuva* community in Lithuanian society are analyzed.

The paper reveals the peculiarities of the Romuvans’ narratives of religion and state, actuality of the status of being recognized by the state religious organization, and the strategies of Romuvans to achieve such a status. It addresses the dynamics of diverse alternative religiosities starting from the communist regime period up to today. It also studies the past and current socioreligious processes, discussing diverse manifestations, changes and resilience of religious phenomena concerning individual religiosities in (trans)national levels.

The findings are based on data obtained from the fieldwork in 2021, including participant observation and interviews with respondents in Lithuania. The research was done by referring to the thick description method, suggested by Clifford Geertz (1973). According to this method, focus is drawn not to the number of methods applied but rather to the intellectual efforts of a researcher to use all the cultural data available (for example, values, belief, rituals, etc.) to systematize it and then analyze the culture itself and its phenomena.

**416 The Trickster as an Archfigure Demiurg in Archnarratives of the American Indian and Russian Far East**

*Nikola Danišová*

Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, Nitra, Slovakia

Abstract

The so-called “trickster” is a special and important figure in the mythological and fairy-tale images of each civilization and cultural circle. The trickster is a controversial and often (seemingly) contradictory character
that belongs to the “culture of popular laughter” (Bakhtin). The aim of this paper is to present the trickster as an archfigure demiurg of the selected trans-genre and trans-cultural sample of ancient texts (myths and magic fairy tales) and conceptually grasp their archetypal significance at the basic level.

**Coffee Break**

10:40 - 11:00 Wednesday, 1st September, 2021

**Keynote Lectures (Lannoy)**

11:00 - 11:50 Wednesday, 1st September, 2021

**Andrea Raggi**

**924 The Spirit of Progress and its Changing Faces. The Academic Study of Judaism and Dynamics of Religious Resilience in Late 19th and Early 20th-Century Europe**

Annelies Lannoy

Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium

**Abstract**

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, evolutionary theories on the history of religions strongly dominated the academic study of religion. Modern scholarship regarding our 19th century predecessors has conclusively shown that the young discipline of ‘history of religions’ (also ‘science of religion’) developed at the interface of liberalizing Christian beliefs and secular historical-comparative methodology. In and through their purportedly strictly historical inquiries into the dynamics between the transformative forces and the timeless essence of religion(s), many scholars developed strategies to cope with the personal religious challenges posed by modernity. The result was that (modernized forms of) Christianity retained the dominant position in the history of religions, at the top spot of the evolutionary ladder.

But what about the position of Judaism in these grand narratives? Much in contrast to the well-investigated role of Christianity, both as object of inquiry and as hermeneutical horizon, that of Judaism has received much less scholarly attention. Was Judaism - ancient and modern - seen as able to absorb the evolutionary forces that allegedly ruled and shaped the history of religions? And to what extent did the young discipline of the history of religions reflect, or even enforce, specific religious ideas on Judaism and its potential for modernization among its Jewish, Christian, and freethinking representatives? With the drastic rise of antisemitic sentiment in our period under consideration, intersecting social attitudes towards Jews are a point of constant vigilance when trying to answer these questions.
In this lecture we take our departure from the fiery 19th-century controversy over the origins of Purim to offer more general considerations about the intimate proximities between the contemporary academic historiography of Judaism and ongoing religious transformations in European society. In the late 1890s James G. Frazer claimed that traces of primitive human sacrifices survived in modern Purim celebrations. The debate over Frazer’s ‘discovery’ mobilized leading scholars of religion across Europe, including, e.g., Franz Cumont, Salomon Reinach, Theodor Nöldeke, and Alfred Loisy, who left behind an exceptionally well-preserved corpus of private correspondence on the matter. A careful analysis of their letters and publications unveils that Frazer’s speculations not only catalyzed the test of the comparative method. Writing the history of Judaism’s struggle with its ‘primitive instincts’ forced all of these scholars to come to terms with their own, often conflicting religious agendas and intricately intertwined social-cultural biases.

Keynote Lectures (Pócs)

11:00 - 11:50 Wednesday, 1st September, 2021

930 Remnants of the Past in the Lived Religion of a Roman Catholic Community in Transylvania

Éva Pócs
University of Pécs, Pécs, Hungary

Abstract

Based on fieldwork I carried out between 2002–2016, I am writing a book about the religious life of a community on the boundary between Orthodox and Latin Christianity which had preserved its traditions intensely until the end of the 19th century and where religion is the most important normative regulating system of everyday life almost to this very day. The lived religion of this community is remarkable (similarly to a few other communities of this geographic environment living in boundary or peripheral positions) for preserving a handful of traits which many researchers would term “medieval” in character. (In the Middle Ages the traits in question were characteristic in certain areas of Western and Eastern Europe but - with a few exceptions - ceased to be part of religious life by the modern period.) The traits in question are the following.

A strong emotional charge; direct encounters with the sacred world - the importance of ecstatic spirituality (visions, significant dreams, unio mystica type phenomena). Co-existence of the sacred and the profane - the great importance of the sacred and its penetration into everyday life. A notion of permanent strife between the divine and the demonic world prevails. The normative role of belief in the other world which contributes to people’s constant efforts to secure their salvation and avoid damnation and influences constant direct communication with the dead and a broad range of sacrifices offered to them. In the same context, belief in and fear of the devil shapes an important role in everyday life strategies. Religious norms, taboos, the transgression of taboos and norms, as well as various other sins constitute a system of religious
sanctions. Blessings and curses; taboos and their transgression – an ambivalent, fair, punishing and avenging Old Testament God. A reciprocal exchange relationship with God and the saints (Max Weber), which manifests itself in a broad variety of sacrifices, oaths, vows, and divination. We find medieval forms of religious magic (magical religiosity), such as black fasting, and priests performing magic in the service of the believers.

One of the central questions of my research is what keeps these religious notions and rituals alive in this particular community. I am curious about what sort of changes these notions have undergone during their long existence and how they were adapted to the constant changes in their social and cultural environment. The following appear to be the most important factors.

Religion as an important normative regulating force of everyday life. To every problem and crisis in everyday life there existed a religious solution alongside other approaches, which was called into life by emotions of profound faith and fear. A lived religion is a “traditional coping mechanism - but genuine devotion was required for it to be effective” (Sari Katajala Peltomaa). Religion functioned as a personal matter and a social phenomenon, a communal norm and individual need. Members of the community are socialised into religious phenomena through collective discourse - story telling as a community act (Nancy Caciola). Religious folklore is also disseminated in writing; written forms survive and are transmitted (prayer booklets passed down in the family, religious chapbooks), as has happened to texts of a fixed form (prayers, verbal charms). The repetitive nature of Christian holidays, their calendar and festive rituals - marked by the phenomenon of “ritual fixity” (Maurice Bloch). Ritual practices are continuous and grow beyond the confines of particular special conditions. Religion plays a powerful part in strengthening identity (in Hungarian–Romanian and Roman Catholic-Orthodox relations alike). Orthodox influences play a part, too: the attitude of the Orthodox Church is closer to the people and contributes to maintaining closer ties with popular religion. The survival of distinctive medieval traits in Orthodox areas has been intertwined with the different attitude of the Orthodox Church to Satan and to popular demonology. We may note the perceived “benefit” of services offered by Orthodox priests and monks. Competition arises from the survival of imitations of Orthodox rites in the service of retaining a Roman Catholic identity.

Keynote Lectures (Stoyanov)

11:00 - 11:50 Wednesday, 1st September, 2021

Chiara Barbati

940 Resilient Diabologies and Dualist “Heretical” Religiosities in Early to Contemporary Christian Contexts

Yuri Stoyanov

SOAS, London, United Kingdom

Abstract
A marked emphasis on diabology and theodicy commonly forms the doctrinal core of Christian dualist currents, whether in late antiquity or contemporary imaginaries focused on conceptual or historicizing reinventions of medieval dualist heresies. Diabology, demonology and rites of demon control figured prominently in the baptismal and initiatory cultic traditions of such communities and were among the major factors fostering the appeal of their elites, especially at the level of popular religion and lived religious experience. Both learned and popular versions of such alternative and dualist diabolologies and demonologies proved particularly resilient at various strata of European and Eurasian cultures, having survived the historical decline and disappearance of the actual communities which professed them.

Customarily forced underground, such diabolical notions and models have proved capable of assimilating new and changing religious and cultural currents, while also manifesting a capacity to endure transformations and resurface at times of major religious-political and/or socio-economic crises, pandemics, etc. When brought to the surface in religious reactions to such crises, resilient diabolologies can provide influential explanatory models, most recently seen in the frameworks of revived (and re-institutionalized) exorcism and re-activated “moral vitalism” (with its focus on the spread of infectious disease/pathogens and the emergence of spiritual beliefs in a personified evil principle and contagious malevolent forces in pre-germ-theory cultures).

The consequences of the cross-cultural application and diffusion of such models to foster religious resilience and the manner in which they affect religious empathy, spiritual healing and remedies as well as the shaping of cultural defensive mechanisms and the objectification of moral beliefs require close attention and analysis. Further important and topical problem areas concern the instrumentalization of such resilient diabolologies to enhance religiously conservative stances in clerical establishments, inter-religious polarization and “apocalypticized“ conflicts as well as resistance to secularization and renewed programmes of religious purification.

ISC 19 Ethnography (Individual Short Communications)
11:50 - 13:20 Wednesday, 1st September, 2021

93 Varkled-Bodya, an Udmurt Animist Village: Initiations of Boys and Girls in the Week before Easter

Eva Toulouze¹,², Nikolai Anisimov³

¹INALCO, Paris, France. ²Tartu University, Tartu, Estonia. ³Estonian Literary Museum, Tartu, Estonia

Abstract

Varkled-Bodya is a special village in Tatarstan, near the Udmurt border. It is inhabited by Udmurts, whose ancestors fled from forceful evangelization after the integration of the Kazan Khanate's lands into what would become the Russian Empire. Thanks to their Muslim, more tolerant environment, the village
inhabitants have been able to retain, even throughout the Soviet period, their agrarian religious practice. Many rituals are still alive, while the population as a whole has not joined either Christianity nor Islam. We have been documenting only a small part of these rituals, the ones taking place in the week before Easter or more precisely, the Spring holiday (Bydz'ynnal) which coincides with it and which is packed with rituals of several kinds. We concentrate in our presentation on two of them, which are particularly significant, for Varkled-Bodya is the only place in which they are held. These are the initiations of girls and boys, who, after it, are considered in the community as grown up men and women, able to marry and to perform in religious ceremonies. The two ceremonies, one held on Thursday and the other on Sunday, are both flourishing and promise to remain so in the predictable future. They are both similar and deeply differ. The youngsters concerned are between 14 and 16 years old, and because of their school obligations, pressure from school teachers in the Soviet times have led to timetable adaptations, which finally changed the whole ritual configuration of this week. The authors did fieldwork together during that week in the village in 2017: as the gendered aspect of the rituals is relevant, it is important to have representatives of both sexes in research team. Moreover, it was important to have both points of view represented, the outsider’s and the insider’s. We shall comment upon the changes these rituals have undergone and the significance of the differences between them.

These rituals are important for the population. We know than in spite of the State prohibitions, they were held as usual in 2020, in the year of COVID 19. Moreover, while initiated boys stated that they did not want to connect their future with the village, thus intending to follow the urbanization trend, they all said that they intended to bring back their sons for them to attend the initiation rituals. This shows the great potential for resilience contained in these rituals, as well as in the whole ritual practice in the village of Varkled-Bodya.

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254 withdrawn? Modern Shamanism in Russia, and Its Role in the Pandemic

Aleksandra Pospelova

Northeastern State University, Magadan, Russian Federation

Abstract

Today, in Russia, there are three types of shamanism: traditional shamanism and neoshamanism parallelism. Traditional shamanism is present in the Russian Arctic and is widespread among the autochthonous peoples of the North who were not Christianized. Relict religious beliefs and shamanism are one of the conditions for their stable system of life. Shamans do not engage in medical practices with a foreign population and do not advertise their activities. Neo-Shamanism became widespread in Yakutia, Tuva, Kalmykia, Buryatia in the post-Soviet period and is associated with the formation of the national ideology of Tengrism. Neoshamans are focused on continuing the tradition of healing. Buryat, Tuvan and Yakut neo-Shamanism is especially popular abroad (Europe, USA, Canada). Traditional shamanism is never detached from its territory, while
Neoshamanism practices outside of Tuva and Russia. These trips are organized in the form of cultural events and commercial projects. Commercial projects in 2020 have become very popular, as they are focused on medical practices and are aimed at “protecting” against coronavirus. Parallelism - the phenomenon of large cities (particularly Moscow and St. Petersburg) - is based either on outright quackery (and fits into the general range of psychics, healers, magicians, healers, and so on) or on attempts at existential comprehension through scientific research, with the help of natural and medical sciences, of the “oddities” of spirit travel and “upper entities”. The audience of parashamanism is the creative intelligentsia (poets, writers, artists, actors, directors) and persons from among the regional and corporate elites and the upper middle class. Parallelism engaged in medical practice, “charms”, the rites of purification and so on.

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**358 The Ritual of Cocullo in Italy. A Relationship Between Humans and Snakes Founds Today a Religious Right**

*Lia Giancristofaro*

University “G. D’Annunzio”, Chieti, Italy

**Abstract**

This proposal adds a contribution to the countless historical-religious interpretations of this broad theme starting from the observation of the exemplary case of Cocullo, an ancient village in the province of L’Aquila. The author takes advantage of her 40 years of anthropological observation of the Cocullo ritual. Here, for at least three centuries, every spring the statue of San Domenico Abate was covered by live snakes with the approval of the local Catholic Church. Among the local inhabitants, now reduced to 300, the secret techniques to capture and tame snakes - handed down from generation to generation - in order to create this popular show, that seems to break some rules of the Catholic religion and seems to re-establish them in a new order. The study of the Cocullo ritual by anthropologists and historians of religion has built a school in the European panorama. Alfonso M. Di Nola (Naples 1926-Rome 1997) observed the ritual from 1973 to 1996 and wrote that this cult constitutes a stratified deposit of economic-food practices and symbolic-ritual devices. On the wave of Di Nola’s reading, and based on the ethnographic data that the author is still collecting in the field, this proposal highlights how the grammar of this cult today passes from the local dimension of “existential calendar” to a broader dimension, able to involve contemporary cultures and the new paradigms of “cultural heritage” and “religious rights”.

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**133 The Resilience of the Trickster in Africa: Survival Ways of Eshu, Legba, Anansi and Their Successors**

*Ana Canalejo*
Complutense University, Madrid, Spain

Abstract

The trickster is a complex and much-debated type of character in myth and religion. He can be found in many religions, regions and tales around the world, always with its distinctive features derived from its own culture: no trickster is completely identical to another and neither can it be expected that they would have a similar development.

Many tricksters can be found among African religions and the vast majority are of great importance to their communities, either as a means of teaching or as cultural heroes. However, have all these tricksters survived and changed in the same way throughout the years and the multiple crises they have experienced? Resilience can be studied in the common traits of the evolution of characters like Eshu, Legba or Anansi and the heritage they have left behind.

In this talk, each of these tricksters will be analyzed individually, explaining how they functioned in their original culture, and the changes they endured when making contact with other cultures or because of a context of slavery. These common changes will then be compared, and the question can be answered as to whether these characters have altered their nature or lost their original meaning and, in the latter case, whether another character has taken over the role.

To sum up, this paper aims to apply the consideration of religion and its internal elements as tools for resilience in relation to specific instances of the trickster character, particularly in a context of crisis such as that experienced by African slavers.

20-II Religion as a Key Factor for Resilience: From Rome to Constantinople

11:50 - 13:20 Wednesday, 1st September, 2021

Giorgio Ferri

261 Notes on the Carmina Marciana and the Calendrical Position of the Ludi Apollinares

Gianmarco Grantaliano

Universidad de Cantabria, Santander, Spain. Università "Sapienza", Roma, Italy

Abstract
In 212 BC, in the middle of the Second Punic War, the *ludi Apollinares* were established by a prescription by the *carmina Marciana*. The two *carmina*, built *post eventum* after the battle of Cannae, set in competition with the official Roman religion, particularly with the priesthood of the *decemviri sacris faciundis* that consulted the *libri Sybillini* after an express order by the Senate. After the first celebration, the *ludi* became yearly in 208 BC and took place in July (*Quintilis*) 13th. The aim of my study is to try to discuss the calendrical position of the *ludi* and their relationship with the other festivities of the Roman calendar (e.g. *dies Alliensis*, *transvectio equitum*, *nonae Caprotinae*, etc.) and, consequently, with the history of the city. I will try to demonstrate how the calendrical position itself was a quick response that Rome was able to give in one of the worst moments of the war. Moreover, I will try to demonstrate some possible consequences of that resilience that necessarily altered the representation of the power relationships in Rome’s political and religious structures.

128 The End of Imperial Cult in Hispania: Religious Change and Transition

Noelia Cases Mora

Universidad de Alicante, Alicante, Spain

Abstract

The chronology and development of the Imperial cult are one of the most valuable signals of political and religious change. This new cult was introduced by Augustus as guarantor of the ideological coherence of the Empire, that was composed of territories with diverse religious traditions. We know that while he was alive Augustus was the object of a cult in Hispania thanks to several epigraphic testimonies. In the same way we can track the latest epigraphical evidence of the worship of Roman emperors to determine how Hispanic society adapted to religious change.

The latest testimonies of worship of the Emperor in Hispania show the end of a period and the cultural change that entails the dissolution of a political system. The religiosity of the communities, their expression through the performance of cults, ceremonies, and dedications, are a community cultural expression. In this sense, civic religion also implies adherence to a political system and the divinization of the ruler’s power. The study of the final chronology of the Imperial cult supposes, therefore, the study of a time of transition towards something culturally different.

The worship of Roman emperors is certainly witnessed in Hispania until 245 (*CIL II*²/7, 255). We can also mention inscriptions without absolute chronology in which an Imperial virtue is worshipped (*CIL II*²/5, 311).
It is interesting to think about the causes and consequences of the end of the Imperial cult, particularly in the identity of citizens. Likewise, we want to talk about the new religious and social referents. The abandonment of civic religion and the acquisition of new religious behaviours undoubtedly constituted a dynamic process that would extend over time and space.

182 Resilience and Transformation: The Pontifical Law in Macrobius’ *Saturnalia*

Elisa Migliore

University of Pisa, Pisa, Italy

Abstract

The fourth and fifth centuries AD represent a troubled period for Roman paganism: Christianity becomes the religion of the State and triumphs over the ancient faith.

Despite this, authors try to retrieve the pagan values through their works. Among these, we find Macrobius’ *Saturnalia*, in which the religious issues play a pivotal role: in particular, the dissertation concerning the college of Pontiffs and the Augurs represents crucial points within the work.

However, Macrobius’ interest for the religious institutions was at first considered a sign of “committed paganism”, then of “sentimental antiquarianism”, namely a sense of nostalgia and idealization of the past. Nevertheless, these explanations are too simplistic. Given that pagan rituals are prohibited by the imperial edicts, the old religion must adapt to the new external circumstances to survive.

Thus, *Saturnalia*’s religion is not that of the current practice, but a collection of antiquarian issues: and this transformation is evidence of the resilience of paganism.

On this basis, the central aim of this paper is to study the college of Pontiffs as a resilient component in Macrobius’ *Saturnalia*.

Firstly, a survey of Macrobius’ background and the structure of the *Saturnalia* will be carried out. Secondly, an insight into the pontifical law, especially the aspects analyzed by Macrobius, will be given. Then, the most remarkable passages from the text will be studied, in order to retrieve the literary issues about which Macrobius was interested, such as the origins of the cult, its practice, its ritual objects, and their meaning.

In the end, a final evaluation on the pontifical law as a tool for the resilience of the religion in the *Saturnalia* will be provided.
Fulgence de Ruspe et l’Aristocratie Africaine Nicéenne au Début du VIe Siècle : Participation à l’Administration Vandale ou Fuite du Monde ?
Bruno Pottier
Aix-Marseille Université, Aix-en-Provence, France

Abstract
Cette communication analyse, à travers la biographie de Fulgence de Ruspe, l’éventail des options offertes aux aristocrates nicéens au début du VIe siècle. Fulgence, issu d’une famille clarissime, s’est très tôt caractérisé par sa volonté tant de fuir le monde en abandonnant un poste dans l’administration vandale que de fonder de nombreux monastères, y compris en Proconsulaire, conçus principalement comme des lieux de formation théologique offrant probablement des services liturgiques. Il a notamment bénéficié du soutien financier de plusieurs notables de Byzacène, sans doute parce que ceux-ci pouvaient de cette manière se dédouaner de leur propre participation à l’administration vandale. Dès la persécution d’Hunéric de 483 à 484, des monastères avaient été fondés par des évêques exilés, probablement comme substitut à une Église défaillante. Cependant, contrairement à ce que laisse entendre une tradition littéraire postérieure, représentée notamment par Victor de Tunnuna, les rois vandales n’ont jamais persécuté spécifiquement les monastères. Attachés principalement à rendre invisible l’Église nicéenne, ils ont toléré la multiplication de ces pôles de résistance à l’arianisme. D’ailleurs, à partir de la légalisation de l’Église nicéenne par Hildéric en 523, certains abbés de ces monastères ont refusé de se soumettre à l’autorité des évêques, ce qui a nui à la cohérence de cette Église.

Vers 516-517, le roi Thrasamund a choisi de faire de fait de Fulgence le représentant en titre de l’Église nicéenne en le rappelant de son exil de Sardaigne à Carthage pour répondre à différentes questions théologiques. Fulgence, qui n’avait rien écrit auparavant, est alors devenu le principal polémiste nicéen. Les traités polémiques nicéens, souvent interprétés comme étant un des principaux indices des résistances face à l’arianisme, ont en effet été souvent suscités par les rois vandales eux-mêmes, qu’il s’agisse d’Hunéric à partir de 477 ou de Thrasamund. Ce roi, selon des thématiques reprises par Fulgence lui-même et par un panégyriste contemporain, a ainsi défini la raison et l’intelligence comme les valeurs cardinales de son règne. En se mettant en scène dans un débat sans vainqueur ni vaincu, il a proposé d’intégrer la théologie, mobilisant des aptitudes rhétoriques, au sein de la culture de cour, à l’instar de la pratique de la poésie. Il indiquait donc qu’il était acceptable d’être nicéen et de participer à l’administration royale, à condition de pouvoir argumenter sa position devant des collègues ariens. Une lettre de Fulgence à un Vandale probablement de foi nicéenne, Scarila, montre comment le débat théologique pouvait être désormais
intégré dans l’*otium* littéraire. Ces considérations permettent de nuancer certaines interprétations anglo-saxonnes évoquant l’attachement des aristocrates africains à un espace séculier, religieusement neutre, dénoté notamment par la pratique de la poésie de cour. Cette pratique n’empêchait pas ces aristocrates d’affirmer discrètement leur foi nicéenne par le financement de monastères ou la participation au débat théologique, des actions qui n’étaient pas forcément perçues comme répréhensibles par les rois vandales.

219 *Dracontius et les Vandales : résistance, médiation, échec*

Giampiero Scafoglio

Université Côte d’Azur, Nice, France

**Abstract**

Orateur et poète reconnu, qui participe à la vie publique et culturelle de la ville de Carthage sous la domination vandale, Dracontius tente une médiation assez difficile entre les gouvernants ariens et la population liée en grande partie au credo de Nicée. Il célèbre en effet l’école de rhétorique comme le lieu idéal de la coexistence harmonieuse et collaborative entre les héritiers de la tradition romaine et ceux qu’il appelle les « barbares » : l’élégie du maître Felicianus, identifié à Orphée par le charme séduisant qui accroît l’efficacité de son attitude pédagogique, donne ainsi un exemple paradigmaticque d’un *modus vivendi* que l’école propose à la société (*Romul. 1*). Le souhait d’une telle médiation ne concerne d’ailleurs pas que le domaine culturel, mais aussi celui, bien plus controversé, de la religion, si l’on considère la signification allégorique attribuée à Orphée comme figure du « bon pasteur » dans l’art chrétien de l’Antiquité tardive. Cependant, devant la gravité de la situation, Dracontius ne se limite pas à la médiation constructive : dans la *Controversia de statua uiri fortis* (*Romul. 5*) il n’hésite pas à dénoncer les abus des puissants (sans doute à identifier avec les gouvernants ariens) au détriment des plus faibles et de toute la population, ainsi que le risque d’une dérive autoritaire et violente dans les rapports entre gouvernants et sujets. Là aussi, la religion est en cause : la question cruciale du droit d’asile attribué d’une manière historiquement infondée à la statue d’un citoyen éminent rappelle ce privilège conféré auparavant aux temples païens et plus tard aux églises chrétiennes dans l’Empire romain, mais plus généralement, il pose le problème de la violation même de la destruction de lieux de culte nicéen par les Vandales.

Dans ce contexte, l’emprisonnement de Dracontius n’est guère surprenant. La *Satisfactio* qu’il adresse au roi vandale dans le but d’obtenir son pardon, n’exprime pourtant pas une renonciation du poète à la cohérence en matière de religion, ni à la tentative de médiation : il ne nie pas sa position nicéenne, tout en reconnaissant son erreur politique et déclarant sa repentance. Il rappelle en fait des principes du symbole de Nicée qui ne facilitent certainement pas son approche avec le roi arien, mais qu’il met en jeu dans le but – ou plutôt dans l’espoir – d’instaurer un dialogue sincère et efficace avec son interlocuteur, au nom de la liberté et de la tolérance dans le domaine religieux.

Quand Dracontius entreprend la rédaction des *Laudes Dei*, il a perdu tout espoir de recouvrer sa liberté et célèbre Dieu dans un esprit désintéressé, en recourant à des arguments et des exemples qui suivent une inspiration créative et apparemment arbitraire ; enfin il affirme clairement sa position doctrinale correspondant au credo de Nicée et s’opposant ouvertement à l’arianisme des gouvernants vandales.
217 Chrétiens ariens et nicéens en Afrique vandale (Ve-VIe siècles).
Enjeux religieux, politiques et culturels d'une coexistence difficile

Giampiero Scafoglio¹, Bertrand Lançon², Konrad Vössing³, Étienne Wolff⁴, Bruno Pottier⁵, Amélie Belleli²

¹Université Côte d’Azur, Nice, France. ²Université de Limoges, Limoges, France. ³Universität Bonn, Bonn, Germany. ⁴Université Paris Nanterre, Paris, France. ⁵Université Aix-Marseille, Aix-en-Provence, France

Abstract

Chrétiens ariens et nicéens en Afrique vandale (Ve-VIe siècles).
Enjeux religieux, politiques et culturels d'une coexistence difficile

Les rapports entre les gouvernants ariens et la population en grande partie liée au credo de Nicée étaient traditionnellement considérés comme difficiles, mais ils ont fait dernièrement l'objet d'une révision allant jusqu'aux limites de la réfutation. Cette diversité de positions démontre la complexité d'une situation aux multiples facettes, qui change au fil du temps, avec les différents rois vandales et même dans les différents moments de leur règne ; une situation qui ne reste certainement pas toujours conflictuelle, mais qui implique, au moins en certaines étapes, des difficultés et des frictions sociales, ainsi que des mesures de répression et des attitudes autoritaires du pouvoir.

Nous nous proposons donc d'étudier les rapports entre chrétiens ariens et nicéens en Afrique vandale, en essayant d'en faire émerger les lumières et les ombres, avec une attention particulièrement portée sur les raisons politiques du conflit impliquant la religion, sur la réaction des intellectuels - souvent de résilience - et sur les œuvres littéraires qui reflètent ce conflit.

Bertrand Lançon

Un roi arien et une reine nicéenne : le couple Hunéric-Eudocia du mariage à la séparation (455-471). À propos de deux passages de Théophane et Zonaras

Amélie Belleli

Les enfants d’Hildéric. L’héritage chrétien de l’utérus romain

Konrad Vössing
Religion ou politique ? Pourquoi Hunéric a choisi une stratégie de conflit face à l’église nicéenne et pourquoi il a échoué

Étienne Wolff

La résistance à l’arianisme vandale chez les poètes de l’Anthologie latine et chez quelques prosateurs chrétiens contemporains

Bruno Pottier

Fulgence de Ruspe et l’aristocratie africaine nicéenne au début du VIe siècle : participation à l’administration vandale ou fuite du monde ?

Giampiero Scafoglio

Dracontius et les Vandales : résistance, médiation, échec

Each speaker will submit his or her own abstract to the panel within the submission period, specifying that the paper is part of a session.

107 Resilience, Change, and Magic in Late Antiquity
ONLINE

11:50 - 13:20 Wednesday, 1st September, 2021

Joseph Sanzo

This open session will focus on the relationship between the rubrics resilience, change, and magic as it pertains to the study of late antiquity. Since personal crises and the juxtapositions of old and new authoritative traditions are commonly found in the ancient sources deemed “magical,” late antique magic constitutes a particularly fruitful thematic site for reflecting on resilience and related concepts.
Scholars have long noted that the various late ancient Mediterranean texts, objects, and rituals we describe as “magical” (e.g., amulets, incantation bowls, defixiones [i.e., curse tablets], and the so-called Greek Magical Papyri [PGM]) often deployed names for gods, sacred texts, and the like in an ad-hoc fashion. These experimental assemblages or bricolages of authoritative traditions reflect the creative capacity of ancient ritual specialists to adapt and to modify what they inherited in order to manage personal crises of health, competition, and demonic onslaught. At the same time, these authoritative traditions were resilient; the extant record attests to the fact that certain divine names (e.g., Iaô Sabaôth, Jesus, Abrasax, and Horus) and sacred traditions (e.g., biblical texts) persisted over several centuries and transgressed diverse regional boundaries.

Yet this temporal persistence and wide geographical distribution of motifs raises probing questions about the heuristic utility of resilience and change for the study of late antique magic. Does the reconceptualization of a particular name for god by a new religious community in a magical context constitute resilience or change? Late antique Christian practitioners, for instance, incorporated into their magical texts names for God inherited from other communities and traditions (e.g., Iaô Sabaôth, Abrasax). In many cases, such names were reimagined and presented as completely “Christian” (i.e., without any hint of “Jewish” or “Pagan” associations). Many late antique Jewish practitioners engaged in similar practices. Are such instances best conceptualized in reference to the categories resilience and change? Would it be more helpful to apply to these situations a different analytical model altogether?

This complex interface of the categories magic, resilience, and change - as it relates to the study of late antiquity - stands at the heart of this open session. Papers might present cases studies that illuminate the diverse ways ancient ritual specialists creatively - if only momentarily or experimentally - engaged with traditional and new religious motifs, divine names, sacred texts, and even material formats. Papers might also explore the theoretical or methodological implications of a focus on resilience and change. How do such concepts recast common categories, such as syncretism and exoticism, especially as it pertains to the study of late antique magic? What are the implications of the terms resilience and change for the very category magic and its controversial relationships to other terms (e.g., religion and science)? Conversely, how does the magical evidence from late antiquity augment the categories resilience and change for the study of (late antique) religion?

348 A Word is a Word: Metaphor Theory of Innovation and Transfer of Learning as Templates to Understand voces magicae

Monika Amsler
University of Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland

Abstract

From the Imperial period onwards, metaphors comparing words to cures appear with a certain regularity. At the same time, rhetoric became a popular tool to verbally effect change in other people’s minds—be it superiors, opponents, and friends—by means of entertaining diversion, influence, persuasion. Words were perceived of having the ability to soothe, beguile, and enchant. It seems a small step from analogizing words with drugs to actually use words as drugs in a positive and negative way. Yet, it is a step that appears rather strange to the modern mind. The present paper aims at bridging this gap by evoking contemporary theories of “metaphor theory of innovation” (Knorr Cetina 1981) and “transfer of learning” (Schunk 2018) to explain this process.
The complex ways in which words were chosen to effect change parallel the ancient use of drugs. Just as ingredients in therapies never corresponded to their quotidian usage, which obviously had not succeeded in preventing the body from becoming ill, so curing words and names differed from everyday speech. Vowel strings, repetitions, backward spelling, but also the names of God(s) associated with different religious traditions were tools to separate everyday words from change-effecting words. Seen from this perspective, the invocation of divine names from other religious traditions for healing purposes—healing in a very holistic sense, including remedying cosmic and social disharmony—affects our understanding of orthodoxy and belief in late antiquity. If the god(s) that sustain the quotidian fail(s), the logical consequence is to resort to others—which, in turn, have to remain the other, the exception to serve that purpose also in the future. The "quotidian" god(s) remain important to secure everyday sustenance, identity and belonging, just like bread, late antiquity's staple food, which is never mentioned as a drug.

593 The Prayer of Mary "in Bartos": A New Trajectory of the Virgin's Veneration in Coptic Magic
Michael Beshay
Convent & Stuart Hall, San Francisco, USA

Abstract

The prayer of Mary “in Bartos” has been described as one of the most prominent examples of Coptic magic and ritual power. It derives its name from the historiola, preserved in one medieval Ethiopic text, of Mary praying “in Bartos” to release the apostle Matthias from prison. Several earlier witnesses to Mary’s prayer tell a story of resilience and change, from its early foundation in Manichaean and Gnostic theologies, to its subordination to traditions of Mary’s dormition, to the tale of prison break for which it is celebrated today.

Analysis of Mary’s prayer highlights a new trajectory of Marian veneration in antiquity. Scholars typically argue that Marian elevation was a reflexive defense of “orthodoxy”; yet careful examination of Mary’s prayer and apocryphal sources reveals extensive roots in “heretical” doctrines and practices. Long after their communities had supposedly disappeared, traces of Gnostic, Valentinian, and Manichaean speculations concerning Mary or similar motherly figures can still be found in Coptic literary and ritual texts.

A diachronic examination of Mary’s prayer also exposes shortcomings endemic in the study of “magic” and ritual devices. Far too rarely are these artifacts arranged diachronically or analyzed as redacted traditions, and dating of these materials is decided mainly through paleography, archaeology, or explicit chronological references. Unlike most historical documents, these artifacts are treated exclusively as objects—not traditions—an approach at odds with the fact that they appear in compilations constructed over centuries. Thus, Mary’s prayer offers a case study for exploring processes by which ancient experts engaged “magical” traditions over time.

255-II Transformative Resilience: Global Adaptations of Shi’i Islam in Times of Radical Change ONLINE
Hybridised Shi’ism as a Weapon against McDonaldisation: On the Origins of an Intriguing Paradox

Minoo Mirshahvalad
Independent Researcher, Turin, Italy

Abstract

This paper analyses the Shi’i intellectual heritage in Italy, the channels of its passage, and the changes it undergoes through relocation. Here, intellectual heritage is defined as the jurisprudential, theological, and political works produced within the Shi’i heartlands that have been either translated, commented on, or paraphrased in Italian, or have become the theme of Italian art. The research objective is to show how a hybridised Shi’ism emerges within some Italian intellectual circles. Thus, it focuses exclusively on those intellectuals that generate a paradox by revamping Shi’i tradition in Italy. The paradox derives from exploiting one outcome of globalisation to contrast another, namely hybridisation and McDonaldisation, as defined by Pieterse (2004). In the present case, hybridisation is adopted as a weapon against US cultural imperialism. In Italy, there are different groups of intellectuals involved in such productions. However, here to remain within the scope of the research, only Italian Shi’i converts and their traditionalist sympathisers are taken into consideration.

Today, traditionalism has become the moniker of neo-fascism, whose priorities are protecting national sovereignty and battling against globalisation and communism. Nonetheless, Shi’ism has no historical tie with the Italian “pure“ identity so dear to the traditionalist heart. Consequently, in the above-mentioned productions, Shi’ism has been equipped with what is necessary for this new context; in this way it becomes hybridised.

The article is the fruit of the analysis of various messages produced by converts and their traditionalist sympathisers in the form of written text (books and articles), besides audio-visual documents posted on Facebook, telegram channels, WhatsApp groups, and blogs. Repeating patterns of meaning and keywords (e.g. martyr, resistance, revolution, and homeland) have been detected and will be discussed during the presentation.


Oula Kadhum
University of Birmingham, Birmingham, United Kingdom

Abstract

Studies of second-generation diasporas has revealed contradictory results. On the one hand some scholars have claimed that second-generation immigrants are transnationally engaged with their homelands (Levitt and Jaworsky, 2007), while others disagree (Portes, 2001; Rumbaut, 2002; Kasinitz et al., 2002). These studies are important for underlining the complex, contingent and contextual difference in the attachments of second-generation immigrants towards their homelands. However, while most studies discuss belonging through a national lens, less has been explored about second generation attachments to religious sect as an alternative form of asserting belonging, particularly in the context of British Shiis. Using the case of the Iraqi second-generation Shia in London this paper proceeds by asking why second-generation Shia Iraqis identify more with their religious sect above their homeland and hostland nationality. The case study reveals the resilience of sect and why it trumps national ties to country of origin, providing an analysis that goes beyond understandings of sectarianism as a political phenomenon, but rather as a form of belonging that at once facilitates integration in the hostland, while creating personal links to the homeland. In this case diasporic belonging does not express itself in binaries, of “here” and “there”, cultural hybridity or cosmopolitanism, nor through socialisation processes passed down through family (Park and Ecklund, 2007; Singh, 2012), but in the form of a de-territorialised transnational space that transcends the tensions between both second-generation Iraqi Shias and their parents culture, as well as those between national belonging to either origin country and country of residence.

257 Resilience in Exile? European Shi’is and Articulations of Dissent through Ritual Lamentation

Yafa Shanneik, Fouad Gehad Marei
University of Birmingham, Birmingham, United Kingdom

Abstract

There is a growing presence of Shi’i communities in Europe, especially as European Shi’is establish their own religious, political and social infrastructures supported by religious authorities and political parties in their ancestral homelands. Members and supporters of different Shi’i-Islamist political parties found refuge in Europe and forged transnational links, connecting diasporic and exilic communities with their ancestral countries and hometowns. This paper examines how Shi’i lamentation poetry performed in ritual gatherings in Europe constitutes a medium for the articulation of political dissent among diasporic and exilic Shi’i communities in Europe. It examines how European Shi’is and ritual purveyors employ the lachrymal expressions that characterize Shi’i lamentation poetry not only to metaphorically identify participants with Shii hagiography and eschatology, but also to give meaning to geopolitical developments in the Middle East as well as to participants’ experiences of immigration, exile, denaturalisation and their new diasporic lives. This paper constitutes the very first attempt to examine the political contextualization of Shi’i lamentation poetry, embedded within the political discourses of two Shi’i Islamist parties, the Bahraini Al-
Wefaq Movement and the Lebanese Hizbullah. Different to other studies on Shi’i ritual practices, this paper is informed by a multi-sited ethnographic study of female-only and male-only ritual spaces in Bahrain, Iraq, Lebanon, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

259 Husayn’s Flag Will Never Fall: Ritual Resilience Amongst Shi’i Muslims in the Caucasus

Stefan Williamson Fa

University of Birmingham, Birmingham, United Kingdom

Abstract

During the almost 70 years of Soviet rule in the Caucasus religious activity and practice was heavily controlled or banned completely by the state. Rituals of mourning to commemorate the martyrdom of Imam Husayn during the Islamic month of Muharram were particularly affected. These had come under intense attack since the early 20th century, as associated practices of recitation, weeping and self-flagellation were criticised and labelled as backwards and incompatible with modernity and progress. While there is plenty of evidence of the continuation of these rituals in secret and informal contexts, the popularity and widespread commemoration of Muharram by Shi’i Muslims in Azerbaijan, Georgia and Dagestan points to a revival rather than a resurgence of these rituals.

This paper traces the development of Shi’i mourning rituals in the region by focusing on the growth in popularity of specialised devotional reciters called meddah. I draw on ethnographic fieldwork in Azerbaijan and Georgia, archival material and media analysis to show how reciters today draw both on traditional forms of devotional lament transmitted orally across generations as well as newer aesthetics and styles which are influenced by transnational trends across a wider geography. By examining changes in recitational practice and the narratives surrounding them I highlight the resilience of ritual aesthetics and sensory forms in a context of drastic socio-political transformation.

258 Art Exhibitions as Resistance? Kuwaiti Responses to Anti-Shi’a Violence

Nada Al-Hudaid

University of Birmingham, Birmingham, United Kingdom

Abstract

On Friday, 26 June 2015, during the midday prayers at the Imam Sadiq Mosque (a Shi’a Mosque located in the commercial district of Kuwait City), a man entered the praying hall fully wrapped in bombs around his waist blown himself and killing many. This incident - the first attack of its kind on a Shi’a mosque in Kuwait - prompted a show of solidarity from various segments of society. In response to this attack, a group of
Kuwaiti Shi’is organized an art exhibition, which received significant media attention. The exhibition allowed Kuwaiti Shi’is whose relatives were killed or injured in the attack to express their grief and demonstrate resilience in a unique manner. Kuwaiti Shi’is organize temporary and seasonal art exhibitions that coincide with the religious events that punctuate their liturgical calendar, including commemorations of the births and deaths of the Prophet Muhammad and the Shi’i imams. In this presentation, I offer an overview of the growing significance of such exhibitions. I examine how this practice has been applied to commemorate Shi’i worshippers killed in the attack on the Imam Sadiq Mosque, and how it constitutes as a form of resilience and resistance. Moreover, I look into how Kuwaiti Shi’is articulate their culture and express their experience of anti-Shi’a violence and how that makes the community more resilient.

210-II Invoking the Guru ONLINE

11:50 - 13:20 Wednesday, 1st September, 2021

Kristina Myrvold

11:50 - 12:10

815 “Stay at Home“: Reflexivity and Adaptation of Sikh Worship during a Pandemic

Narinder Kaur-Bring

University of Wolverhampton, Wolverhampton, United Kingdom

Abstract

In a televised announcement on 23 March 2020, Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced a nationwide lockdown, following an earlier classification of COVID-19 as a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO). All non-essential activities were restricted, which included visits to places of worship. Being in the midst of a pandemic shifted everyday norms for many, including the practice of religion in collective spaces. Using the synergy between the Sikh sense-making process (gurmat vichhar) and autoethnography, this paper explores how abstract, sudden, and immeasurable change brings about reflexivity and subsequent adaptation in religious practice to meet the conditions of a new environment. The paper firstly examines Sikh faith during the pandemic through the contextual and personal experiences of stress, grief, loss, alongside compassion and resilience. Secondly, it discusses the adjustments in religious practices, in particular the collective forms, towards cultivating a new normality that prioritizes an internal transformation through a connection with the self and Sikh teachings in the home. Finally, the paper suggests a reimagining what a connection to faith and community (sangat) may look like in the physical collective spaces of worship (gurdwara) post-pandemic, in ways that build upon their current function as spaces to congregate, celebrate, meditate, and pray.
812 Accessing the Impact of COVID-19: Religious Coping Strategies on Sikhs’ Mental Well-being within the United Kingdom

Supreet Kaur Uppal

University of Wolverhampton, Wolverhampton, United Kingdom

Abstract

In 2020, it was reported that Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities in the United Kingdom are at greater risk of dying once diagnosed with COVID-19 compared to white ethnic groups. COVID-19 has resulted in presenting a wide range of consequences, both direct and indirect which impact outcomes of health, including mental well-being, social and economic factors. This paper discusses how contemporary issues and challenges affect Sikhs attitudes in seeking professional help in the pandemic. The discussion will explore how methodology and theoretical framework can investigate the fundamental principles of the Sikh faith in relation to seeking help. Furthermore, exploring the correct methodology will allow concerns to be communicated and recover the lived experiences of the Sikh community that encompasses the beliefs and practices. Additionally, religious coping strategies used within the Sikh faith will also be discussed and explored. Psychological resilience is the ability to mentally or emotionally cope with a crisis or to return to pre-crisis status quickly. When an individual is confronted with traumatic life events and stressful situations, the methods used to cope can have a significant impact on psychological distress and that individuals overall mental well-being. Several themes will be deeply analyzed and explored, such as hukam (God's will), chardi kala (eternal optimism), gurdwara, family and community support which can be debated as comfort and coping tools within the Sikh faith.

12:30 - 12:50

212 Prophecies and Performative Practices on the Western Front: Religion as a Coping Strategy for Sikh Soldiers in the First World War

Kristina Myrvold

Centre for Theology and Religious Studies, Lund University, Lund, Sweden

Abstract

Studies on the First World War frequently mention that religion and rituals became important strategies for soldiers to endure and cope with the devastating violence and the unpredictable conditions they experienced. Men on all sides of the conflict turned to the supernatural to make sense of the chaos. The Sikhs constituted a significant group among the Indian troops who fought for the British Army on various war theatres. Based on detailed readings of their letters, regimental diaries, and other sources, this paper examines how Sikhs on the Western Front used religious traditions and practices to gain meaning and control in a landscape of death and destruction. Religion was certainly a powerful propaganda tool of the imperial army to maintain loyal soldiers but also a resource for the soldiers to understand and handle their experiences of the war. Apocalyptic narratives and sacrificial ideologies related to the historical Sikh gurus could frame military honor, duty, and loyalty to the British military and colonial power as a religious
obligation. When British officers awarded punishments for military offenses or corroding morale, the Sikhs recurred to collective purification rituals sanctioned by their religious tradition. The paper directs special attention to the use of popular narratives about the historical Sikh gurus, the establishment of temporary military gurdwaras near the front, and various religious practices and uses of texts that were invested with performative powers to afford protection and control in a chaos.


11:50 - 13:20 Wednesday, 1st September, 2021

Daniela Dumbrava, Bogdan Tataru Cazaban

596 When the Logos-Name of God Activates the Logos of Discourse

Daniela Dumbrava

Institute for the History of Religions, Romanian Academy, Bucharest, Romania

Abstract

Does the comparative approach of the history of religions, the phenomenology or the philosophy of religions form the basis of a rhetoric or a hermeneutic that brings together Islam and Christianity, according to the principle of unity in diversity, in order to avoid conflicts generated by the dogmatic framework of each of these religions? How to understand, from the religious point of view, the religious phenomena, not justifying them, linked with the massacres of the populations in Beirut during the Civil War? In response to these questions, my paper will focus on the language and hermeneutics used in Lebanese classrooms in the aftermath of the Civil War, particularly the academic courses offered by the Orthodox monk André Scrima in the 1970s. He was trained as a scientist (logical-mathematical) as well as a theologian. Extremely familiar with the circles of phenomenology and philosophy of religions (e.g. the colloquia organized by the philosopher Enrico Castelli Gattinara), Scrima succeeded in triggering a language where the word becomes a vector, a sign and a symbol for man and humanity rather than a factor in a divergent semantics, as is often the case in the Civil War in Lebanon. Beyond the liturgical framework, university education was the only channel through which religions were considered factors of cohesion and support in war contexts or conflict scenarios, the pivot of reconciling Christian and Muslim people.

597 Hospitalité et Résilience dans l’Herméneutique Religieuse d’André Scrima

Bogdan Tataru-Cazaban
and embrace, the keyboard of an utterance grafted onto the intelligence of the liturgical mystery celebrated in an hesychastic and Irenic community.

10-I Gender Law and Religion During the COVID-19 Health Crisis

11:50 - 13:20 Wednesday, 1st September, 2021

Adelaide Madera, Kerstin Wonisch

Looking at Covid-19 infection from gendered lens, it deeply affected individuals who are in a vulnerable position, as women, giving rise to new concerns about gender equity and inclusion. This scenario is deeply exacerbated when gender interacts with other markers of identity such as religious affiliation. Such intersection gives rise to a double vulnerability, and the risk is enhanced of new form of female discrimination, violence, hate speech and harassment.

In different legal contexts, women have many roles and responsibilities, and the interaction between gender, law, religion and COVID-19 is likely to have an impact in terms of disempowerment in the processes of building a “female identity”. This occurs not only in western countries, where migrant women fight for a full integration, but also in their countries of origin, where they suffer the costs of models of normative pluralism and the inadequacy of state legal responses. In different environments, the pandemic has not only generated an unprecedented health crisis, has it also gave rise to other social and economic issues such as an increase in gender-based violence in family settings, and gender inequalities in the access to fundamental rights (healthcare, education, workplace, justice).

In this complex framework, religious leaders have to face new challenges and to give effective responses to their communities, as well as the female role in leadership can play a significant role during a pandemic, in order to urge the implementation of new paradigms, more responsive to new needs social/cultural/legal change. All religious actors are called to guarantee not only guidance and support to the most vulnerable and marginalized members of their communities, but also to cooperate with governments to shape a better future where religious freedom, gender equality, gender justice and freedom from discrimination can develop.

The aim of panel is to investigate the impact of the pandemic on the status of women in faith communities, on the implementation of new balances between female religious/cultural claims and the compelling state interest to public welfare and on the development of new gendered intersectional perspectives aimed at implementing female full integration, equality and participation in civil society.

11:50 - 12:10

681 Indian Women between Patriarchal Society and Gender Empowerment during (and after) the Pandemic Emergency
Chiara Lapi
University of Pisa, Pisa, Italy

Abstract

In September 2020, the Indian government passed three farm laws - *Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act*, *Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act*, and *the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act* - which liberalize the agricultural market by cancelling the minimum price and eliminating intermediaries. Before the entry into force of these laws, farmers sold their products in local markets with a minimum price set for each product and the intermediaries bought from the peasants and resold to the big chains. Now, however, farmers are forced to negotiate directly with large chains without minimum prices, thus risking being crushed by large retailers. For these reasons the three laws have created a strong discontent among Indian peasants who are more than 250,000 people. The protests against agricultural laws, particularly widespread in Punjab and Haryana, two states where the economy is mainly agricultural, see a fundamental role of women. They are at the forefront in affirming and claiming their role as protagonists in agricultural families: they claim that they make a direct contribution as land workers and an indirect contribution in the care of children, the elderly and the home. The acquired awareness on the part of women of their role as protagonists in a predominantly patriarchal society is the symptom of a cultural and social change. Women underline their identity by reaffirming the ancient ancestral bond that binds the female sex to the motherland that produces fruit.

Agriculture is a key sector of the Indian economy severely tested by the COVID-19 pandemic. The active participation of women in protests against the three aforementioned laws could lead to the development of new models of management of the agricultural market. Meanwhile, the government has frozen the laws for 18 months and says it wants to engage in a friendly mediation with protesting farmers. What will happen in the future regarding the agricultural economy in India will also depend in part on the ability of women to be actors in the negotiation processes and on the willingness of society to recognize them as active voices capable of offering a decisive contribution in the post-pandemic reconstruction process, where agriculture plays a decisive role.

12:10 - 12:30

874 Religiosity and Gender during the Covid-19 Pandemic: Resilience and Coping on Social Integration among Men and Women
Rejina Selvam, Montserrat Gas-Aixendi

Universitat Internacional de Catalunya, Barcelona, Spain

Abstract

What has been learned about the intersection of religion, gender and social integration during the COVID-19 pandemic? How have religious beliefs shaped—positively and less so—the lived experiences of women? The present study demonstrates that religiousness influenced coping and resilience for the crisis response.
during the COVID-19 pandemic, in turn affecting positive perceptions of social integration and social support. Data from a national probability-based sample with a size of 1707 participants from the Spanish population show that highly religious individuals had high resilience and coping during the early stages of COVID-19 2020. Using a path model it was found that these highly religious individuals show high resilience and coping, which in turn showed positive perceptions on social integration and social support. Also, it was found that as individuals had positive coping, their perceptions over Governmental support influenced high social integration. Furthermore, we conducted multi-group analysis to see if there were gender differences in the relationship of the variables under study. The results from our sample showed that women have a stronger relationship between religiousness and resilience which in turn showed higher perceptions on social integration and social support. We conclude that religion can be a robust resilient tool for women in times of a crisis such as COVID-19.

12:30 - 12:50

621 Women’s Leadership during the Covid-19 in the Countries Beyond the Mediterranean: The Effects of a “Gender Emergency”

Caterina Gagliardi

Università della Calabria, Cosenza, Italy. Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II, Napoli, Italy

Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic, announced just over a year ago as a global public health emergency, has generated significant social, legal and economic implications.

In the countries beyond the Mediterranean, marked by unrelenting financial instability and an ingoing humanitarian crisis, the effects of the pandemic emergency seem to affect the already vulnerable status of women. In fact, the measures of isolation and social distancing have had worrying repercussions in terms of employment and access to work, have exacerbated episodes of domestic violence and made access to essential services, including health services, more complex.

A real “gender emergency” therefore seems to be developing. It’s clear that the response of the institutions must be “sensitive” to the problem and implement reform projects that support inclusion mechanisms to promote policies of rebalancing.

Even before the dissemination of Covid-19, for example, Saudi Arabia had started a process of socio-economic transformation that placed the role of women at the centre of decisions, especially with regard to guaranteeing equal opportunities in access to work and financial services. The pandemic emergency has certainly amplified the challenges currently facing women. On the other hand, the efforts made by the Saudi government to avoid persistent relapses lead to the hope that the pandemic can be seen as an opportunity to accelerate the already planned policies aimed at empowering women at different levels of society.

In this process, the active engagement of religious leaders can have an important impact. In the fight against increasing structural inequalities, interactions with local governments can contribute significantly to the implementation of social cohesion paths that emphasise the need to recognise the dignity of every human being everywhere.
Multiple (religious and intellectual) belonging, (un)sustainable network strategies within informal groups, intensive consumption of scientific and mystical literature from East and West, strong interest in alternative lifestyles, and dangerous future projects were a few of many other features of Eastern European holistic, or New Age underground during the late socialist period. From the late 1960s onward, by absorbing a wide range of esoteric ideas and (re)constructing practices, Eastern European and Soviet New Agers were directly or indirectly involved in the social and political processes. That led to the appropriation of the New Age symbolic languages and worldviews in politics, culture, the sciences, and even in older religious and philosophical traditions. Such processes were especially noticeable in the late socialist crisis period, accompanied by the flourishing of religious creativity and the replicating of New Age ideas and narratives in older and new media. Compared to the agenda of recent significant studies on New Age and esotericism in the US and Western Europe, the post-Socialist research is still dealing with particular New Age beliefs and practices at a micro-level, collecting materials under circumstances that do not allow unrestricted archival work. However, we would like to encourage a theoretical discussion on this research field and raise the question of how social theory and theories of religion can explain New Age spiritualities and their impact in this region. The session will bring together researchers working on empirical cases which are situated within the field of theoretical developments on New Age spirituality in Socialist Eastern Europe (the GDR, Hungary, Yugoslavia) and the USSR to outline the main activities and parameters of New Age communities, their imagination, symbolism, and the adaptive (dis)ability for/in crisis processes in the Socialist and post-Socialist periods.

"I am the root-connection to the power of Mother Earth". A Feminist Turn in the Hungarian Spiritual Milieu?

Judit Kis-Halas

Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, University of Ljubljana, Ljubljana, Slovenia

Abstract

At the beginning of the 1990s the change of the political systems in the Eastern and Central European countries brought religious pluralism into these societies. The invasion of new religions and religious-spiritual ideas from the West reconfigured the previous landscape with unprecedented rapidity. Within a decade an eclectic and heterogeneous religious culture has emerged blending - among many others -
popular belief, lay and theological understandings of Christianity, New Age ideas, neopaganism and nationalistic native faith movements.

The seeds of the latter found a fertile ground in Hungary, as urban shamanism had been brought here by Michael Harner in the late 1980s. Several of the “founding fathers” of the rapidly emerging native faith communities built heavily on their own experiences which they gained while attending the underground shamanic drumming sessions under Harner’s guidance. These prominent spiritual leaders, the táltos, were all men, in accordance with the gender roles of the reconstructed and reinvented religion of the ancient Hungarians. During the past decade, however, female shamans started to practise and had soon become the engines of small spiritual communities consisting mostly of women.

Drawing on ethnographic research the paper introduces the activity of several female shamans. Building on the respective archival material it highlights the gender aspect by confronting the present-day situation with the beginning of urban shamanism in late socialist and early post-socialist Hungary. It also poses the question whether the progress of female spiritual leaders reflects a feminist turn in the cultic milieu of present-day Hungary.

369 Astrological Prophecies and Their (non-)Sustainability in the Late and Post-Soviet Union

Anna Tessmann

Mainz University, Heidelberg, Germany

Abstract

In discussions on New Age religiosity, there are always allusions to various esoteric millenarist teachings with prophetic elements. One of the main is the notion of a "new age", which has a pronounced astrological character and has been spreading in American subcultures and, later, in other countries since the late 1960s. Some modern astrological teachings perceived the esoteric idea of a qualitative leap in human development, marking its transition from one Zodiacal sign to the other, the Age of Pisces to the Age of Aquarius. Whereas the starting point and duration of this process are interpreted quite differently by the astrologers of the world (and here, indeed, there are no two similar opinions), the consensus can be expressed in the idea of a new post-Abrahamic, anti-industrial, and environmentally minded humanity. In their predictions, Soviet and post-Soviet astrologers have been shared and continue to share such an Age of Aquarius' vision, using it in their predictions. In my paper, based on interviews and mass media publications, I will examine how the late and early post-Soviet political and cultural events have affected the prophetic mode of the post-Soviet astrologies and to what extent post-Soviet astrological predictions have been sustainable.
379 The “New Physiology” of Childbirth and Infancy: Intersections of Academic Science, Parapsychology and Esotericism in the Late Soviet Union

Anna Ozhiganova

Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russian Federation

Abstract

Igor Charkovsky, the creator of the Russian waterbirth method called “Aquaculture”, which was popular in 1980-1990s, argued that it was based on a thorough knowledge of physiology. Firstly, he believed that, when born on land, the newborn experienced a “gravitational shock,” which significantly limited his or her abilities. Therefore, it was very important to give birth in water and “prolong the state of weightlessness as much as possible” by water training. Secondly, Charkovsky talked about the benefits of hypoxia, which occurred when a child was dipped under water. He argued that diving caused blood vessels to spasm and oxygen to feed only the brain, which therefore grew quickly.

These ideas have unexpected parallels in the works of a famous Russian physiologist, academician Ilya Arshavsky (1903–1996). Arshavsky formulated the concept of the physiological immaturity of newborns and proposed compensation methods: cold strengthening, physical activity, swimming and diving. Like Charkovsky, he also claimed that a short-term oxygen deficiency, which arose during diving, was the “trigger” that stimulated the body. Arshavsky was well acquainted with Charkovsky and wrote many positive reviews of his aquatic activities with babies: he spoke about the benefits of water weightlessness and confirmed that according to his observations, “amphibian babies” were stronger and more developed than ordinary children. He also noted the benefits of prenatal training, citing the results of his experiments with animals: if the fetus received nutrients and oxygen in excess, then it had no incentive to develop and would begin to lag behind, while, in contrast, the lack of nutrients and oxygen stimulated its rapid development and growth.

Thus, Arshavsky worked on creating a kind of “new physiology,” in which there was a firm inherent belief in the huge but hidden reserves that infants have for their development. Infant strengthening was the main instrument for the mobilization of these reserves. This approach was simultaneously natural, or physiological, since it appealed to the image of harsh nature, which trained its creatures living on the brink of survival, and technological since the concept of strengthening was equated with metal hardening. “New physiology” represented utopian transcendental knowledge, incongruous with conventional scientific knowledge and thus provided the theoretical basis of the Aquaculture project.

At the same time, Charkovsky’s project belonged to the numerous esoteric, or para-scientific teachings that shared a faith in hidden human potential and the ability to master it through special technologies. In the peculiar anthology of Russian spiritual teachings, compiled by Russian transpersonal psychologists, one entry was devoted to the Aquaculture project: “Charkovsky’s research shed light on the unexplored human possibilities and has opened practical ways to improve the nervous system and brain of a newborn person”.

Thus, the Aquaculture and “new physiology” identified by Arshavsky and Charkovsky became two of the many examples of ambiguous collaboration of scientific and para-scientific knowledge that were rich in late Soviet and post-Soviet history.
Varieties of New Age in Communist Yugoslavia

Nemanja Radulovic
, Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade, Belgrade, Serbia

Abstract

It is known, albeit under-researched, that the 1980s witnessed a wave of interest in the New Age-inspired “alternative” in Communist countries, Yugoslavia included. However, a closer look shows that the roots of NA in Yugoslavia can be traced back to the 1960s. Moreover, NA appeared in various forms and in different societal sections. A group of artists in the 1960s and 1970s adapted NA themes, mingling them with the close but different phenomenon of French occulture. For them NA was a source of artistic inspiration, often polemical toward official regime narratives about art. Through their public activities, NA reached popular culture too (popular journals). For example, Marina Abramović’s interest in NA has the roots in her early artistic activities in the 1970s. At the same time, emerging occult milieus of the 1970s, although inspired by ritual magic and Thelema, gradually moved toward classical NA. Sources of these forms are both Western and Soviet (later specially in the 1980s), which points to the historical position of Communist Yugoslavia.

ISC 20 Media (Individual Short Communications)

11:50 - 13:20 Wednesday, 1st September, 2021

Chiara Tognolotti

The Abyss of Silence. Myth and Resilience in Neon Genesis Evangelion

José María Toro Piqueras

Universidad de Sevilla, Seville, Spain

Abstract

On March 20 1996, the ambiguous 25th episode of the Neon Genesis Evangelion series was released. A week later it came to its conclusion under sharp criticism: its spectators accused its director of aborting the climax of the “last” battle.

Like a barefoot Moses standing before the divine presence embodied in a burning and murmuring bush, Shinji undresses before himself. He will establish a dialogue in which his voice will respond, so he will be
questioned by himself. Lines breaking the screen with the symbolism that Terrence Malick gives to God in his The Tree of Life: the Trascendent and the Word made Image.

A plethora of mythical references (the Genesis devised by the Father, the Apocalypse, Adam and Lilith, the Messiah, etc.) will cause a sense of dread to the Rilkean “vermauerten Augen” (walled-up eyes) of the contemporary spectator, who will not understand that leap into the void. A reverse step from Science Fiction to trascendent etiology, from noise to the abyss of silence.

Thus, Hideaki Anno offers us his own way of salvation. Neon Genesis Evangelion was the culmination of an internal process of transformation and severe depression at the end of which the creator established a connection with the resilient sacred.

198 Contemporary Poetic Practice of Domination of Contingency, Inspired by Ramon Llull’s Ars Inveniendi Veritatem

Sergi Castella-Martinez

Pompeu Fabra University, Barcelona, Spain

Abstract

The Ars inveniendi veritatem, a combinatorial method of contemplation invented by the 14th-century philosopher and theologian Ramon Llull, has tenaciously withstood seven centuries of praise and disrepute, and is sometimes to be found today in the works and reflections of artists and poets. This study explores the poetic understanding of Llull’s Art by the media artist David Link (1971) and the poet J. V. Foix (1893–1985). Even though his method no longer serves as a rational device for the conversion of infidels, or as an infallible tool to find the answers to all queries, the religious thought that derives from Llull’s dynamic and Trinitarian system adapts to contemporary artistic concerns, and the artists address it to reassess fundamental questioning about the creative dimension of the relationship between the finite and the divine.

Poets and artists have thematized the Lullian Art as a “thinking machine,” an open-ended mechanism conceived to express the cosmic interdependency of all beings, and have reflected on the religious disposition of the Lullian “artist,” who is simultaneously a contemplative-creative agent. Foix’s systematic metaphorization of vibrant, ever-changing reality is indebted to Llull’s neologisms and rotating figures. David Link’s Meditationes translate Llull’s language to the automatism of computational combinatorics so that the unlimited possible associative combinations unfold. The religious contemplation proposed by Llull becomes a model of thought and practice that provides new poetic ideas and forms for experimental artists, and shows the adaptive and transformative value of religion.
Baghdad in my Shadow (2019): A political Thriller in a Multireligious Europe. Gender Emancipation and Fundamentalism in a Fictive Iraqi Diaspora Community in London

Tomas Axelson

Dalarna University, Falun, Sweden

Abstract


Also, film directors get themselves engaged in these issues and try to capture how life looks in the age of migration (Castles, Haas & Miller 2014, Trifonova 2020). One of the more recent and interesting films on this topic was made by a Swiss-Iraqi director Samir Jamal Aldin. The director presented his film Baghdad in my Shadow (2019) at the international film festival in Locarno, Switzerland, in August 2019. In this fiction film, the director invites us to a group of people with a multicultural background, rooted in various geographical areas, embodying a mixed cultural heritage, including religious traditions of different kinds. In a thriller format, he describes a family story with roots in Saddam Hussain’s Iraq during the 1980s and the 1990s, loosely based on his own Iraqi background.

The aim is to analyse Baghdad in my Shadow (2019) through theoretical perspectives on the re-negotiation of identities and migrant experiences in contemporary, multi-religious Europe. The director address charged matters and discusses issues related to tensions between diverse identity positions within a migrant family in a minority community. He shows characters taking on liberal gay rights and female emancipative positions as well as characters leaning towards traditional gender roles anchored in socio-centric world views. He also shows generational tension between secularized Muslim identities in the elderly generation in struggle with young relatives attracted to conservative Salafism.

The aim is furthermore to analyze audiovisual storytelling through theories on media as framing and amplifying complex issues in contemporary society, including religious affiliations. I will especially dwell on aspects on storytelling’s capacity to engage its audience through emotional engagement. Finally I will also tap in to the film’s capacity to stir up emotions in real-life dialogue between the director and the film’s audience, exemplified by situations taking place during the screening of the film at Malmö Arab Film Festival (MAFF) on 9th of October 2020.

Tomas Axelson (+46 703 39 82 76)

Associate Professor Religious Studies

Director Dalarna University Centre for Intercultural research and Development (DUCID)

School of Humanities and Media Studies
83 Identity, Diversity and (the study of) Religion
ONLINE

11:50 - 13:20 Wednesday, 1st September, 2021

Jørn Borup

Identity has become a highly contested topic in recent years, epitomized by mass movements such as Black Lives Matter, #metoo and the movement for LGBT+ rights. Diversity has increasingly become an equally contested ideal, encompassing both individual rights and group identities defined by race, ethnicity, gender or religion. At the macro-level, identity and diversity relating to culture and religion have been used in various nationalist and postglobal discourses around the world. On the local level a number of campaigns and social movements across the world rally behind the same types of symbols and ideologies of identity and diversity. These global and local discourses and movements can, according to some observers, be analysed as (disruptive or resilient) religion.

As influential social phenomena, identity politics and diversity management have also had an impact on academia, especially in the social sciences and the humanities. In the U.S., scholars and university management have responded with manifestos, public letters and campus campaigns to what they perceive as structural racism, whitewashing of university curricula, Islamophobia and cultural appropriation. Similar movements have emerged at European institutions of higher learning, particularly in the UK but also in a number of other countries. These movements have generated counter-movements and warnings that academic freedom and freedom of expression are being undermined in the name of campus ‘wokeness’. Long before these debates, however, the academic study of religion in the tradition of Religionswissenschaft has been a target for criticism in postmodern and identity-focused discourses and various postmodern turns, exposing ethnocentric and Protestant biases as color-, gender-, culture- and religion blind universality. Western and Protestant models have been deconstructed and challenged by relativist strategies presenting religions and cultures as more dynamic and fluid, while another revisionist deconstruction of contemporary identity perspectives insists on discourses of difference and re-essentialized and re-racialized understandings of religious and cultural identities.

The aim of this panel is to present and discuss 1) cases of contemporary identititarian movements as religion and 2) the relevance and impacts of identity politics on the study of religion. We ask what the study of religion approach can bring to an analysis of recent social movements calling for racial and gender justice and we ask how the academic study of religion will be affected by these movements.
Contemporary Theories of Identity and the Study of Religion – Towards a Philosophical Understanding of an Interpretational Dilemma

Dimitry Okropiridze
Heidelberg University, Heidelberg, Germany

Abstract

The Study of Religion (similar to other disciplines in the humanities) has adopted many of the constructivist tenets underlying the demands made by postmodernist theories of collective identities such as race, gender, and sexual orientation. This view maintains that social reality is collectively constructed and transformed throughout history and - by definition - the result of asymmetric power plays with winners and losers, hegemonic rulers and subaltern oppressed. This tendency continues to push the Study of Religion to ‘decolonize’ itself through repetitious self reflection of its hegemonic and therefore problematic approaches to religion in the past and the present. It has also, however, led to a thorough dematerialization of the very subject, the Study of Religion claims to examine. Under the primacy of postmodernism, any approach attempting to discover religion as a universal entity, showing itself to the observer as it is, has become so thoroughly suspicious that many scholars are shying away from generating, let alone testing productive hypotheses about religion, where the cognition, embodiment, experience, and materiality of religious actors and their interaction matter.

This paper takes a philosophically inflected look at the dilemma of interpretation, which is at the heart of the conflictual relationship between postmodern theories of identity and the Study of Religion. On the one hand, it will be argued that the postmodern approach follows an epistemo-ontological directionality, where the ontological reality of the the interpreted subject is constituted via the epistemological projection of individuals, collectives, and institutions. On the other hand, it will be maintained that the reverse onto-epistemological directionality, which had already been discredited even before the rise of postmodernism in the form of the phenomenology of religion and materialistic reductionism, has been almost entirely neglected due to the dominance of constructivist identity theories. The paper concludes by outlining an exit strategy for the Study of Religion, enabling the latter to equally accept the input of postmodernist theories of identity as well as returning to an empirically oriented and scientifically grounded approach to its subject of interest.

The Concept of Structural Racism as Theodicy

Torkel Brekke
Oslo Metropolitan University, Oslo, Norway

Abstract

A number of American scholars and writers found it useful to analyze anti-racist protests in 2020 as religious and there were several reasons for this. This paper starts out with a brief mapping of the ways in which the concept of religion was employed in that discourse. Then, the paper offers a new argument. Structural
racism is a key concept in contemporary debates about racial injustice. This paper claims that we should understand this concept as a modern theodicy, i.e. an answer to the problem of evil. The concept of structural racism provides people with an explanation for why the world is evil in spite of the goodness of human nature. Structural racism is mostly used to give an explanation of why there is racial discrimination in spite of the fact that racism is on the decline as individual attitudes and behaviors. In fact, structural racism has never really served as an analytic concept in a real sense, despite being firmly embedded in sociology, but it serves to pack description, explanation and condemnation into one black box. Using or hearing the concept of structural racism produces feelings of disgust and resentment but also feelings of awe and mystery because the structures are at the same time powerful and invisible. The paper continues with a comparison of the concepts of structural racism and structural violence in the writings of two father-figures of these two concepts: Eduardo Bonilla-Silva and Johan Galtung.


Marie-Therese Mäder
Ludwig-Maximilians-University, München, Germany

Abstract

With their professional experience as interior designer, chef, and fashion designer and Netflix’s funding, the host trio Jeremiah, Gabriele, and Thai organise and implement wishes for dream weddings in the reality romance series «Say, I do» (US 2020). The wedding show is sensitive in its inclusivity regarding race, gender and class evidenced in its choice of wedding couples and hosts. In the course of the first season a diverse group of couples (ethnically, economically and in sexual-orientation) are given their «dream wedding». Finally, the three gay hosts debate their experiences regarding relationships and weddings. I argue that on the one hand the mediatisation of the wedding ritual in which diversity becomes the norm is surprisingly traditional but religious symbols are shown with restraint. On the other hand the conservation of the ritual by the media provides orientation regarding identity: the couples identify as husbands and wives because of the traditional ritual.

The mediatisation (Hjarvard 2012) of diversity, gender identity, and religion in «Say, I do» opens up questions about the effect of mediated, inclusive, and imagined communities (Anderson 1983) constructed in the realm of entertainment. From an interdisciplinary perspective of the study of religion, cultural studies and media ethics the following three questions guide the contribution: 1) How are diversity, identities and religion represented in «Say, I do» and 2) which values and norms are mediated by the show? 3) How does a study of religion perspective contribute to the exploration of mediated diversity, identities and religion? Clips from the show will be included in the argument.

47-II Rites, Rituals and Liturgies as “Places” of Resilience

11:50 - 13:20 Wednesday, 1st September, 2021
95 Devotional Practices and Resilience in 17th Century. The Greek Rite Minority of Barile, Dioecese of Melfi

Francesca Vera Romano
Sapienza Università di Roma, Rome, Italy

Abstract

In the aftermath of the Council of Trent the Holy Office opened a season of repression of dissent within Catholicism, which involved every attitude deviating from orthodoxy, including abusive forms of popular devotion, considered superstitiones, to be uprooted through the work of local bishops and inquisitors.

This attitude was progressively reserved also for the oriental religious realities of the Kingdom of Naples which had enjoyed a fair amount of freedom until the Tridentine reformation.

With the Bull of 1564, Pius IV marked a decisive turning point in relations between the Holy See and the Greek Church in Italy, imposing the reform of the Greek rite and authorizing diocesan ordinaries to fight rites and liturgies of the local Greek communities. With the subsequent tightening against deviations from the orthodoxy initiated by the pontificates of Sixtus V and Urban VIII, the Greek rite was considered a dangerous vehicle of heresy and the “Question of the Greeks” was entrusted to the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide, initially established for non-Catholic territories, but which extended its competence also to non-Catholic minorities within Italian territories.

The bishops of the dioceses where Greek minorities were present, therefore, committed themselves to the implementation of the Tridentine dictates forcing the population of the small villages who professed the Greek rite to accept the Latin rite, both with excellent results and encountering important resistances.

Emblematic is the case of the Bishop of Melfi, Deodato Scaglia, who managed in a short time to force the faithful of the Greek rite to accept the Latin rite in two of the three Greek-Albanian villages of his diocese, Ginestra and Arenigo, while he had to undertake a long tug of war with the Greek-Albanians of the village of Barile, who did not bend easily to the will of the ecclesiastical authority.

In 1634 the prelate presented a report to the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide entitled Relatione degli errori, et abusi dei Greci nel Regno di Napoli, e particolarmente nel Casale di Barile, currently kept in the Episcopal Archive of Melfi.

In the report, the bishop argued that the Greek rite which the majority of the inhabitants of Barile professed, was superstitious, abusive and with no adherence to the true Greek rite and that it was only a pretext to settle accounts between the local families without religious significance. Moreover, the rite constituted an economic ploy because, the Greek minority directly addressed Constantinople, which professed it could evade the payment of ecclesiastical tithes.

In the only church where both Greeks and Latins officiated mass, at alternate times and days - Scaglia also complained - there were quarrels, theft of sacraments and acts of vandalism, so religious rites and
ceremonial pre-eminence were crucial elements of the territorial jurisdiction of the two factions which in practical acts, such as expenditure on decorations, saw a form of remission towards each other.

199 Crisis and Containment: French Catholic Liturgy of the Late 19th Century
Efrat Urbach
Bar-Ilan University, Ramat Gan, Israel

Abstract

The French Catholic church, so called “eldest daughter of the church”, has known many crises and triumphs since its foundation in the 2nd century. Its reaction to the crisis of faith during the 19th century may be approached via musical analysis of mass and motet settings, an area rarely ventured. Studying the musical scores created in French cathedrals of the second half of the 19th century, when the debate over church-state separation was approaching its boil, allows us insight into the resilience of the church during this turbulent era, where its musical tradition contained the crisis effectively.

Utilizing Otto’s definition of the holy as awe-inspiring and terrifying, I wish to link Agnosticism and Atheism, together with its many kin, with a similar reaction. The perception of the world as non-understandable through Catholic or other religious dogma represents another form of the “wholly other” experience, that of continual doubt which may produce anxiety and horror as well, and which is well discussed by 19th century contemporary sociologist Emile Durkheim in his study of religion and society. In this presentation I will examine liturgical settings which reflect, within the walls of the cathedral and during the moments of immediate encounter with the holy, i.e., communion, a link with the mysterium tremendum inherent to both orthodox and Agnostic or Atheist leanings via musical means. The Catholic church, allowing, even commissioning these reflections of spiritual doubts, albeit not endorsing them, thus proves resilient to the spiritual processes her followers are undoubtedly dealing with.

282 Responses to the Plague in Early Modern Ashkenaz: Pandemics and Piety as the Key to Health in Seyfer Atsiros Hamageyfe (Frankfurt De-Oder, 1771) [Seyfer Atsiros Hamageyfe = Ritual Book for Stopping Pandemics, UB Rostock Library, LCL 354]
Daniella Mauer
PhD student, University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Netherlands

Abstract
When it came to pandemics, not only to Jews, but to Christians as well, the plague was deemed as a general punishment of entire populations and remedies of all kinds were sought everywhere. Even when most people accepted the ultimate divine origin of the plague, they also acknowledged the role of other aspects, including famines, troop movements, “miasmas,” prodigies, and many more. Acknowledging the divine source of the disease did not prevent people from seeking assistance from healers and doctors. Besides the religious restoratives of penance and prayer, people turned to natural remedies and dietary prescriptives as well. Physicians and surgeons bled patients and lanced buboes hoping to eliminate corrupt humors and restore health.[1]

Many Yiddish medical treatises include references to epidemics that struck the Jewish communities of Europe during the early modern period, popularly called ḣpush in Yiddish. Yiddish catered Ashkenazi Jews who insufficiently understood the Hebrew language sources.[2] Yiddish was often the only available means to promote, enrich and renew Jewish knowledge of those unable to acquire knowledge directly from original or primary sources. In my examination of the Yiddish books of remedies, like body and soul, remedy and piety are integrally connected. While bodily illness stems from natural as well as unnatural causes, the sickness of the soul is rooted in defective moral and religious behavior. The early modern Jew believed that one must treat such sickness by returning to a life in accord with God’s will, through repentance and prayer.[3]

In my preliminary research of the Yiddish medical books, there is an undeniable tension between piety and remedy. The mainstream guideline in the Yiddish remedy books is adamant in that above all, one must treat sickness by returning to a life lived according to God’s will, through repentance and prayer. Roy Porter’s research testifies that religion, in general, shared common ground with medicine.[4]

As part of the corpus of Yiddish medical treatises that I examine in my research, I would like to present to you Seyfer Aṭiras HaMageyfe, and demonstrate with this text how the spheres of spirituality and piety intersected with the medical domain and were of utmost importance as they preceded any form of remedy, if a Jew wished to keep away from all diseases. With the approbation of Rabbis and doctors, this booklet gives the Ashkenazi Jews all the medical and spiritual tools in order to overcome the plague (May G-d have mercy).


464 Religion and Public Schools: International Perspectives

11:50 - 13:20 Wednesday, 1st September, 2021

Tim Jensen

464 'Religion and Public Schools: International Perspectives'
Tim Jensen¹, Angela Bernardo², Jenny Berglund³, Marie von der Lippe⁴, Ingela Visuri⁵, Andrea Rota⁶

¹University of Southern Denmark, Odense, Denmark. ²Sapienza University, Rome, Italy. ³Stockholm University, Stockholm, Sweden. ⁴University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway. ⁵Dalarna University, Falun, Sweden. ⁶University of Bern, Bern, Switzerland

Abstract

The EASR working group on 'Religion in Public Education', in collaboration with a similar IAHR project, has asked five European based scholars (Angela Bernardo, Jenny Berglund, Tim Jensen, Marie Lippe, and Ingela Visuri) to present their reasons for being actively engaged, past or present, as co-chairs and members, in the work of the steering committee of an AAR group on 'Religion and Public Schools: International Perspectives'.

What were or are their motivations and aspirations, what (if any) their frustrations? Are they primarily or only pursuing a personal research interest, or do they (also) pursue other aims, and if so, which ones?

The five presentations (10-15 min. each), will be followed by a response by Andrea Rota, and after a brief discussion among the presenters, the floor will be opened to comments and questions from other colleagues, comments and questions linked to the AAR group, the EASR and IAHR working groups, and/or whatever issues deemed relevant to the EASR and IAHR projects on religious education (RE) and their relevance as regards the furthering of the stipulated general aims of the EASR and IAHR.

287-VI The Resilience of the Science of Religion(s) between Hermeneutics and History
672 Strategies for Meaningful Existence in Culture-Forming Arch-narratives

Ľubomír Plesník¹, Mariana Čechová²

¹Constantine the Philosopher University, Nitra, Slovakia. ²Constantine the Philosopher University, Nitra, Slovakia

Abstract

This study focuses on the verbal representation of life strategies in an old Indian collection of stories. On the basis of the aspect of gain ~ loss, two basic life strategies are identified. The first one is defined by an attempt to obtain material gain, which is attained at the cost of a spiritual loss. The second one negates the first one (spiritual gain attained at the cost of a material loss) and it is an internally diversified series of axiological models.

417 “Spiritus in patientia”: Postmodern Hermeneutics/Post-Hermeneutics of the Resilient Religionswissenschaft

Mustafa Alici

Erzincan Binali Yildirim University, Erzincan, Turkey

Abstract

Postmodernism represents a variegated critique of the Enlightenment humanism that undergirds modernism with its totalizing, rationalist gaze. At the new extreme edge lies the postmodern position in Religionswissenschaft, which does not spurn Comparative Religion.

To quote with Nietzschean expression as “that which does not kill us makes us stronger”, Postmodern study of religion or Post-Religionswissenschaft takes up seriously having being strengthened with the main composites of the Postmodern anti rationalistic-negative-skeptical critiques by insisting on its academic impact on spirituality as “post-religion”, upholding or rejecting various absolute premises. It, being still in historical comparative mode, also demonstrates newly invented comparative approaches figured out by Post-Eliaden American scholars, especially in analytical and hermeneutical studies of the religious texts seen as “world-view modeling”. Post-hermeneutics of the study of religion has resilient elements such as subjective and multi-dimensional “presently felt-time as history”, “multi-voci and loci narratio as sacred stories” and anti-aesthetics as “iconic figures”

Therefore, postmodern hermeneutics of Religionswissenschaft denounces any regular absolute, anti-contextualistical orders but itself orders principles in favour of new beginnings, "inventions of other distinct
approaches, difference” and further wishes to “destruct the status quo in favour of the fluxus quo. Here, Postmodern resiliency of the discipline is clarified by the distinctive and resilient academic field, “keeping the faith its approaches as well as post-religio spirituality; to end with the motto of Jonathan Z. Smith, we may say, Vive la difference! for the Religionswissenschaft.


László Koppány Csáji

Institute of Film and Media, Budapest, Hungary

Abstract

During the last few years, I have worked out a new method for anthropological research, combining classical interpretative anthropology with the theoretical frame of cognitive semantics, and discourse analysis. I will show in my paper how I use this hybrid method as a useful tool for my particular analysis of contemporary new religious movements in Hungary, Romania, and Serbia. This method focuses on the meaning construction and how the participants change their perception of reality. I will show the transforming semantic domains of the notion of “energy”, “resonance”, and “angel”. For my demonstration, I chose a religious movement that originated in Romania (Transylvania), and whose leader was a folk prophet. This ecumenical movement has been spreading to Serbia and Hungary since 2008, and now forms a vivid new religious movement in the Carpathian Basin. The group is an interpretative community, although it overlaps (by status) with different hermeneutical dimensions.

528 Horizons and Boundaries of Digital Religion Studies: Morphological and Functional Aspects of the Online Rite

Antonio Salvati

Università della Campania «Luigi Vanvitelli», Caserta, Italy

Abstract

What is Digital Religion? This term describes the technological and cultural space created as a result of the integration of online and offline religious spheres. In other words, the Digital Religion identifies and tries to interpret both the “typical” features of digital religion and the attempts made by religious institutions to use new technologies, thus placing itself in a new media context that is the lived expression of the religious in contemporary culture.
The methodologies used to analyze this space and the phenomena that arise or find a place within it are still very vague, and often contradictory, starting from the very instruments the historian has at his disposal to identify the online religious phenomena in the context of the Web which is, by definition, resilient.

An example, in this sense, was the widespread use of social media platforms during the first lockdown to keep communities of the faithful united and participating. An across-the-board phenomenon for all confessions, which has interested the Dalai Lama and the Pope but also the priest of the small country church who now broadcasts the Mass on Youtube.

It is precisely the configuration of the rite that represents a fundamental element of study through which it is possible to identify and fully describe the relationship between online and offline religious spheres. The transfer of the celebration of a rite onto a digital platform opens up several reflections.

From a morphological point of view, it is interesting to understand if and how the rite is shaped according to the platforms used, but also how the technology bends to the needs of the rite itself. Studies in this area have produced heuristic models that identify the stages (transformation, innovation and exclusion) the rite would go through before being transferred online. From a historical point of view, but this is perhaps caused by the characteristics of the historical approach itself, there is no study of the inverse path, that is to say studies regarding the modifications of the rite that from the online returns to real life, modifying the tradition.

On the other hand, the situation of the studies on the functional aspects of the online rite is different. Fundamentally, they revolve around the question: does the sacred action, which is a founding element of the rite, have the same efficacy even if it takes place in a virtual space? Does an initiation, for example, which is an autonomous rite central to all religions, produce the same effects on a spiritual level even if “celebrated” online? In this sense, the answers given so far tend towards a subjectivism that leaves it up to the participant to “decide” whether the ritual has worked or not, and this does not in fact facilitate the elaboration of analytical schemes.

Lunch

13:20 - 14:40 Wednesday, 1st September, 2021

922 "Gurt Vös'", A Village Ceremony (62 min) (Ethnographic Film)

14:40 - 16:00 Wednesday, 1st September, 2021

Liivo Niiglas
922 Liivo Niglas: "Gurt vös'", a village ceremony. (62 min) (Ethnographic Film). F-Seitse.

Liivo Niglas
Tartu University, Tartu, Estonia

Abstract

In Bashkortostan Republic (Russia), where Udmurts live in 19 villages located close to each other, a village worship takes place at the beginning of June in almost every village, among them Bal’zyuga. Ritual porridge is cooked under the supervision of the priest, using the meat of the sacrificed animal and groats collected from the villagers. Part of the porridge is eaten on site during a common meal, the rest is shared between the inhabitants of the village. The film observes the preparations for the ceremony as well as the ceremony itself. The Balzyuga village’s young priest Friedman and his assistants are the main characters here as well as in all the four films we have shot and edited.

20-III Religion as a Key Factor for Resilience: From Rome to Constantinople

14:40 - 16:00 Wednesday, 1st September, 2021

Giorgio Ferri

57 Monotheisation: A Template for Economic Resilience

Alex Feldman
Warburg Institute, University of London, London, United Kingdom. University of Birmingham, Birmingham, United Kingdom

Abstract

Numerous adoptions of various monotheisms for many centuries, going back to Christianization in the wake of the 4\textsuperscript{th}-c. Roman emperor Constantine, have shown a few central, common denominators which demonstrate the continued attractiveness of monotheism. Whether choosing to adopt Christianity, Islam or Judaism, centuries of previously pagan rulers across the world have been attracted to these forms of monotheism for a basic economic reason: monotheism provides a set of sacred laws which protect and preserve the wealth and ruling legitimacy of their descendants - the ruling dynasty. By comparing the Christianizations of Sts. Constantine, Vladimir, Stephen, the Judaization of the Khazarian \textit{khağıns} and the Islamization of the Volga Bulgarian rulers across nearly 600 years, we can note the common economic factors which followed the adoptions of these monotheisms and made economic resilience a central feature.
of monotheisation. Ultimately, this comparative study will demonstrate that regardless of the form of monotheism (Judaism, Christianity or Islam), monotheisation was a collective, centuries’ long process which occurred for reasons of social and economic stability.

55 ‘Thou Hast Invincible Might’: Devotion to the Theotokos at Constantinople as Christian pax deorum

Jack Turner

University of South Carolina, Columbia, USA

Abstract

During times of extreme societal stress, the inhabitants of Constantinople turned to the vernation of the Virgin Mary, both to plead for her divine protection and to bolster the morale of the population. Nowhere is this more evident than the processions with the Virgin’s Icon around Constantinople’s walls by the Patriarch Sergios during the Avar siege of the city in 626. The processions boosted popular morale and helped the army repulse a numerically superior force over a period of six weeks. Though devotion to the Theotokos preceded the Avar siege, the role of Mary as the protectress of the city and the use of her cult to boost morale in times of crisis would be bolstered as a result of the city’s survival. This devotion to the Virgin represents a Christianized form of pax deorum as exemplified in the Akathist hymn, written in 626; here, the Virgin is supplicated to deliver the faithful from mortal danger in exchange for continued veneration. This paper will describe the process by which the Virgin became regarded as the protectress of Constantinople during the Avar siege and its direct impact on the resilience of its inhabitants and its similarities to pax deorum.

25 Nullam… sapientem nec iniuriam accipere nec contumeliam posse (Sen., Dial. II, 2, 1). I prodromi senecani del concetto moderno di resilienza.

Arduino Maiuri

"Sapienza" Università, Roma, Italy

Abstract

Il concetto di resilienza, anche se diversamente espresso, è ben presente nelle civiltà antiche, poiché indica la capacità di reagire ai rovesci esistenziali, sia da parte di singoli individui che di realtà politiche e sociali. In questo contributo si propone, nello specifico, di esaminare un caso esemplare all’interno di un momento decisivo come quello della dinastia giulio-claudia, con la storia romana ormai stabilmente disposta sul binario monodirezionale dalla repubblica al principato. Il vir sapiens è Seneca, già protagonista del quinquennium aureum di Nerone ma ormai osteggiato dalla sua protervia e dunque costretto ad arroccarsi in una turris eburnea. Tacito (Ann. XV, 60-65) critica la fragilità che egli dimostra negli ultimi istanti della sua vita, ben diversa dai precetti etici ed etologici che aveva dispensato ai suoi lettori. Per degnare di una giusta analisi questa apparente aporia si può anzitutto far leva sui testi del Cordovano, quindi esaminare le
ancihe fonti parallele e i contributi più recenti della letteratura critica, in modo da tracciare un quadro d’insieme sorretto da un solido apparato bibliografico.

218 Resilienza e Cristianesimo Antico: Forme e Motivi

14:40 - 16:00 Wednesday, 1st September, 2021

Fernando Soler

Il Panel verterà sul concetto di resilienza negli autori cristiani dei secoli II-IV e consterà di tre presentazioni, una risposta e uno spazio finale per domande e discussione.

La prima presentazione, intitolata Per una definizione di resilienza religiosa negli autori cristiani: Cipriano, Gregorio di Nazianzo e Gregorio di Nissa, di carattere introduttivo, e presentata dal Prof. Domenico Accorinti (Pisa), avrà la finalità di discutere cosa si possa intendere per “resilienza religiosa” negli autori cristiani con esempi tratti dai tre Padri della Chiesa menzionati nel titolo del contributo, dimostrando che tale nozione non è da intendersi esclusivamente come resistenza e perseveranza, ma anche come riconfigurazione e trasformazione di sé. I successivi interventi verteranno invece su particolari “case studies” tratti da autori greci della tradizione di stampo alessandrino e cappadoce.

La presentazione di Sara Contini (Bristol-Tubinga), dal titolo Origene e Celso sull’umanità di Cristo, intende analizzare la strategia argomentativa impiegata da Origene per rispondere all’attacco del filosofo pagano Celso contro la nozione cristiana di Dio e della sua relazione con l’umanità tramite Cristo. Il paper presenterà il modo in cui Origene dà prova della resilienza della fede cristiana, capace di sopportare attacchi esterni integrando elementi della cultura circostante, e reinquadrandoli in un nuovo discorso sulla filantropia di Dio.

Nel terzo ed ultimo intervento, dedicato alla figura di Gregorio di Nazianzo, qui considerato soprattutto in veste di poeta (titolo dell’intervento: “Molte cose ho sopportato in questa vita”: la sopportazione di Gregorio Nazianzeno fra teologia e autobiografia), Andrea Rossi (Macerata) presenterà le forme dell’autorappresentazione del poeta cristiano e degli ostacoli della vita nell’ottica della narrazione autobiografica sviluppata dall’autore nelle sue opere in versi, ove sono sempre intrinseche, percorse dal fil rouge della Scrittura, non soltanto la narrazione delle difficoltà con la conseguente capacità di sopportazione, ma anche una stabile forma di reattività e un delicato riassestamento di sé nell’attesa della vita ultraterrena.

Concluderà il panel un intervento da remoto del Dott. Fernando Soler (Santiago del Cile), che risponderà alle tre presentazioni evidenziandone i punti di raccordo. Il Dott. Soler svolgerà anche la funzione di chair.

La discussione intende dunque analizzare come il messaggio cristiano, mediato dalla tradizione patristica, possa offrire strumenti atti all’assorbimento di un processo di trasformazione prodotto dall’esterno, le cui ripercussioni possono influenzare altresì l’interiorità dell’individuo e della Chiesa tutta.
Towards a Definition of Religious Resilience in Christian Authors: Cyprian, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa in the Face of Adversity

Domenico Accorinti

IIS Galilei-Pacinotti, Pisa, Italy

Abstract

As Clemens Sedmak and Małgorzata Bogaczyk-Vormayr point out in their introduction to *Patristik und Resilienz Frühhchristliche Einsichten in die Seelenkraft* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2012), human resilience must be understood as the ability to change oneself in response to a crisis, i.e. not to return to a starting point. For “Resiliente Menschen sind nicht die, die angesichts des Gegenwindes stehen bleiben (vielleicht ein Verständnis von ‘Resistenz’), sondern diejenigen, die angesichts eines Sturms gehen, wenn auch vielleicht in eine neue Richtung” (Einleitung, p. 3). Through the analysis of some passages of Christian authors such as Cyprian of Carthage (c. 200–258 CE), Gregory of Nazianzus (c. 329–390 CE), and Gregory of Nyssa (c. 335–395 CE), this paper seeks to address the problem of defining ‘religious resilience’ as a notion that implies not only resistance and perseverance, but also reconfiguration and transformation.

Origene e Celso sull’Umanità di Cristo

Sara Contini

University of Bristol, Department of Classics and Ancient History, Bristol, United Kingdom

Abstract

La presentazione si propone di analizzare la risposta fornita dal teologo ed esegeta cristiano Origene nel trattato *Contro Celso*, composto intorno al 249, alle accuse che avversari come il filosofo pagano Celso rivolgevano alla nozione cristiana di Dio, con particolare riferimento al tema della relazione che Dio instaura con l’umanità tramite il proprio Figlio incarnato.

Passaggi chiave come *Cels*. 4.14-16 e *Cels*. 7.14-17 saranno esaminati allo scopo di evidenziare le strategie argomentative adottate da Origene per affrontare le critiche di Celso alle affermazioni dei cristiani sull’incarnazione, passione e morte di Cristo, che, secondo Celso, non sarebbero “appropriate” o “degne” di un essere divino.

Emergerà dunque il modo in cui Origene dà prova della resilienza della fede cristiana: nella propria difesa di quella che Origene percepisce come la base del messaggio cristiano, cioè l’unione tra il divino Logos e Figlio di Dio e l’anima umana di Cristo, Origene dimostra, sia agli oppositori pagani che ai fedeli in cerca di guida e supporto, che la Chiesa è capace di sopportare feroci attacchi esterni mantenendo il nucleo fondante della propria identità, ma anche incorporando elementi della cultura circostante, specialmente il linguaggio e gli strumenti ermeneutici della filosofia greca, e inquadrandoli in un nuovo discorso centrato sulla filantropia di Dio.
“Molte Cose Ho Sopportato in Questa vita”: La Sopportazione di Gregorio Nazianzeno fra Teologia e Autobiografia

Andrea Rossi
Università di Macerata, Macerata, Italy

Abstract

Nel terzo ed ultimo intervento della sessione “Resilienza e Cristianesimo antico: forme e motivi”, unicamente dedicato alla figura di Gregorio di Nazianzo, Andrea Rossi (Università di Macerata) presenterà il tema della resilienza e le forme dell’autorappresentazione del poeta cristiano e degli ostacoli della vita nell’ottica della narrazione autobiografica sviluppata dall’autore, principalmente nelle opere in versi, in cui sono sempre intrinseche, percorse dal fil rouge della Scrittura, non soltanto la narrazione delle difficoltà con la conseguente capacità di sopportazione, ma anche una stabile forma di reattività e un delicato riassistemiento di sé nell’attesa della vita ultraterrena.

ISC 21 Renaissance (Individual Short Communications)
ONLINE
14:40 - 16:00 Wednesday, 1st September, 2021


Paolo Portone
CIRE, Como, Italy

Abstract

Tra il 1587 e il 1589 la paura delle streghe scatenò nella valle Argentina (IM) una violenta azione repressiva da parte delle autorità religiose e secolari che partendo da Triora finì con il coinvolgere numerose località della riviera di Ponente portando all’arresto di decine di persone, tutte donne ad eccezione di un uomo, che solo al termine di un tormentato iter processuale furono rilasciate, per l’intervento della Congregazione del Sant’Uffizio che avocò a sé la causa delle streghe liguri. Questa ben nota vicenda giudiziaria, tardiva recrudescenza del fenomeno persecutore nella penisola, si inserisce in una fase storica caratterizzata da un nuovo orientamento delle autorità ecclesiastiche in materia di stregoneria diabolica, ispirato a maggiore cautela e scetticismo nell’accogliere le confessioni delle streghe e nell’accreditare i loro delitti. La caccia a Triora e dintorni come sappiamo non si concluse con i roghi, ma non per questo fu meno dolorosa per le persone che vi furono coinvolte; donne del popolo, illetterate, in molti casi avanti con gli anni, vittime del
pregiudizio e di un meccanismo processuale implacabile che non esitava a infierire sulle loro debolezze. Le privazioni e le vessazioni patite in carcere, le torture subite, misero a dura prova la resistenza delle accusate: alcune di loro cedettero confessando anche i crimini e le azioni più inverosimili, altre morirono per gli stenti in carcere, altre ancora mosse dalla disperazione si levarono la vita, suicidandosi. Una sola seppe, tuttavia, tenere testa con coraggio e intelligenza ai suoi giudici: Franchetta Borrelli, donna disobbediente e irriverente, strega ostinata per i suoi giudici, che fino all'ultima ora della lunghissima tortura a cui fu sottoposta, non confessò un solo reato di quelli a lei contestati, perché “Dio era testimone della sua innocenza”, e che ebbe la forza di rinfacciare al commissario inviato da Genova di averla torturata oltre il lecito, perché “il cavalletto non dura se non otto hore et io li sono stata una notte et alquante hore di giorno”. Grazie alle recenti ricerche d’archivio è oggi possibile gettare nuova luce sui processi trioresi e illuminare di nuovi particolari la vicenda umana di una donna dagli “oscuri natali” che a suo modo contribuì a mettere a nudo le contraddizioni e i pregiudizi dei suoi accusatori.

38 What a Radical Reformer like Michael Servetus Took from Erasmus: From concedo nulli to Martyrdom in a Holy War
Elaine Sartorelli
Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil

Abstract
It is well known that Erasmus, who had satirized the mores of the religious orders and corrected the imprecisions or mistakes in the Vulgata, was accused of having given rise to the Reformation. It is also known that his refusal to adhere to the Lutheran movement caused him considerable criticism and enmity. “The prince of the humanists” suddenly became the target of bitter disapproval, including being labelled an old-fashioned conservative. Therefore, a much less investigated aspect of his reception is the role played by him in the Radical Reformation. Antitrinitarism, antipedobaptism, refusal of Post-Nicene Fathers etc are consequences of a humanistic philological approach to the Scriptures; the non-negotiable defence of free will and the value of the good deeds against the Lutheran sola fide and the Calvinist predestination are Erasmian. More specifically, this paper will comment on the presence of Erasmus in a Radical masterpiece: Christianismi Rerstitution, by the “arch heretic” Michael Servetus. Although such a radicalization of Erasmus does not seem to be Erasmian itself, Erasmus is there, as a clearly open and explicit reference or as a kind of an inner logical framework. We will also reflect upon the way the ideas and propositions of a man whose motto was concedo nulli (“I do not agree with anyone”) and who was born in an environment of scholarly investigation had rapidly become the ground for a Radical movement at war, a holy war, in which “Michael and his angels fought against the dragon”.

335 Everyone’s Saint? The Scandinavian Cult of Saint Lucy
Sissel Undheim
University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway

Abstract
Judging from the popularity of the annual Saint Lucy celebrations in the Scandinavian countries on December 13, the otherwise so standard perception of Scandinavia as Protestant/Secular/non-religious may seem like a big paradox. How did a Sicilian, Late antique virgin martyr become the center of such a pan-Scandinavian “cult”? The paper will discuss the celebrations of the annual Saint Lucy’s day in Norway as an example of contemporary practices that are simultaneously understood as religious and as “non-religious” by those who organize and take part in these rituals. With a particular focus on the processions that take place in Norwegian schools and kindergartens, the aim is to highlight some contemporary changes and negotiations over religion, tradition and secularity that we find in Scandinavian countries. The ethnographic material will be supplied with other sources, such as the televised advent calendars for children from the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK) and images from Instagram, Twitter and news media.

By basing the analyses in theories about religious processions, multimodality and material religion, as well as lived religion and religion and media, the aim is thus to shed light on some hitherto unexplored aspects of Saint Lucy Day celebrations and their place and role in schools and kindergartens, and, by extension, also say something about religious resilience and change in Norwegian and Scandinavian contemporary societies.

861 Karl Kerényi and the Hungarian Science of Religions – Resilience and Varieties of Religious Entities and Ideas

14:40 - 16:00 Wednesday, 1st September, 2021

Bulcsú Hoppál

The Hungarian Association for the Academic Study of Religions (HAASR) has launched a scientific programme in commemoration of the famous Hungarian religious scholar Karl Kerényi. The Karl Kerényi Program includes research studies, publications, translations, conferences, and it will certainly determine the frameworks of the research of religious studies in Hungary for the next decades. The aim of our panel is to outline the main points and milestones of the Program. This however raises methodological and theoretical issues. The panelists will discuss these problems from historical as well as from a systematic point of view. Each paper will discuss relevant aspects of the Karl Kerényi Program and will address general theoretical-methodological issues in religious studies.


Valerio Severino

NKE, Research Institute for Politics and Government, Budapest, Hungary. University of Rome La Sapienza SMSR, Rome, Italy
Abstract

The paper aims to offer a new account of the activities of the International Association for the History of Religions during the Cold War. By focusing on the IAHR membership of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1957, the paper shall evaluate the impact of the Iron Curtain on scientific academic programmes. The results of a research study conducted on the archives of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences will be presented, with regard to unpublished international correspondences, bureaucratic requests, confidential reports submitted by the delegates of the Academy after their participation in IAHR congresses in Western Europe and the USA. Facts and insights about leading Hungarian scholars and internal processes of the IAHR will be reconstructed. Through doing so, the paper aims to appraise the permeability and resilience of the Iron Curtain, the exchange of knowledge between the opposing blocs, the ideological control exercised through the Academy and the ways in which academics subjected their work to this obligation.

877 How to Do Religious Studies in Middle-Europe 30 Years After the Political Turn?

Bulcsú Hoppál

Budapest Corvinus University, Budapest, Hungary

Abstract

After the political turn in 1990 there was a huge expectation both on scientific and social levels. After the collapse of Communism, scholars of religion have started to redefine what religion is and relocate their position free from ideological and theological concerns. In my paper I will list Hungarian institutions (and names of outstanding scholars of religion) that have contributed these questions and I will show some new religious phenomena emerging recently. My question is whether ideologically nonbiased, free scholarship can explain all the questions of new religious phenomena? I will answer this question with the help of some concrete examples.

947 Resilience to the Postmodern. Ancient and Modern Myths as Part of Human Beings’ Nature, or A Fall Back to the Primordial?

Ábrahám Kovács

Debrecen Reformed University, Debrecen, Hungary

Abstract

This paper seeks to sketch out some selected contributions of Karl Kerényi, Sándor Ferenczy and William James to the Study of the Science of Religion with a particular view of myth and faith as well as their relation to healing and the well-being of individuals. The intention is to bring into dialogue some of their theories and views about religion as such. This presentation first intends to identify the psychological and philosophical tools and approaches they offer. Then, by applying them it tries to probe into the issue of how
10-II Gender Law and Religion During the COVID-19 Health Crisis

14:40 - 16:00 Wednesday, 1st September, 2021

Adelaide Madera, Kerstin Wonisch

14:40 - 15:00

515 Early Marriages between Health Crisis and Gender Discrimination

Federico Gravino

Università degli Studi della Campania “Luigi Vanvitelli”, Santa Maria Capua Vetere, Italy

Abstract

The effects of the Covid-19 pandemic are devastating worldwide. Poverty, inadequate standards of health protection, reduced social well-being, limited access to work, strong limits to social relations and to the exercise of personal rights are just some of the consequences of the health crisis.

This is the cause of an increase in already existing inequalities, in terms of cultural deficits, economic gaps and lack of resources. Attention to local needs and the requirement to face the consequences of the pandemic emergency have in fact increased the development of practices that damage the rights of the most vulnerable, as in the case of early marriages. This practice is implemented as a survival strategy by particularly poor families. The incidence of the health crisis accelerates the use of this practice, as the ‘bride price’ can contribute to family economic support.

Unanimously the phenomenon is placed among gender inequalities. In fact, the girls constitute mere bargaining chips and are sold to older and wealthier men with the aim of meeting economic needs, even more serious due to the health crisis, and guaranteeing the honour of the family and community to which they belong.

Regulatory protection, at every level, takes the form of prohibitions that have not yet stemmed the spread of this practice, based on social, cultural and religious codes. We therefore need a meeting between the political institutions and the representatives of the religious communities in which early marriages are rooted. Confessional rights could contribute to the identification of concrete strategies and channels for applying the law and promoting women’integration.
811 “The Church is Woman”: Women Ministers in the Catholic Church After the Covid-19 Pandemic

Mariangela Galluccio

Department of Law - University of Messina, Messina, Italy

Abstract

Despite the struggles and achievements aimed at implementing equality for women, the Covid-19 pandemic has certainly caused a worsening of women’s conditions in many contexts, as has been highlighted in recent documents of the Catholic Church.

In this regard, the contribution of religion is fundamental for a change of mentality, in order to restore the right role of women as subjects with rights and active members of ecclesiastical and social life.

On the basis of these considerations, this contribution aims to evaluate the impact of the latest normative innovations in the Catholic Church (in the liturgical, pastoral and juridical sphere) on women in general and on female ministers in particular, in order that recognizing women as having an equal and official role within the mission of the Catholic Church may result in a greater integration of a woman as a person and a practising member of the ecclesiastical community, as well as in a greater promotion of her condition in the social context.

717 Religious and Anti-Gender Rhetoric in Present-Day Romania: A Story of Resilience and Adaptation

Ana Raluca Alecu

National University of Political Studies and Public Administration (SNSPA), Bucharest, Romania

Abstract
In an October 2018 referendum, a broad-based coalition of NGOs and various religious groups (the “Coalition for Family”), counting on the full support of several religious denominations in Romania, was soundly defeated in its attempt to change the Constitution by defining marriage as the union between woman and man. While its rhetoric echoed that of similar religious anti-gender movements in other Central European countries (Croatia, Slovakia, Slovenia), its influence began to fade as its plans to reposition itself as a prospective pan-Christian conservative party remained only a dream.

Just over two years later, a new “anti-system” party, the Alliance for the Unity of Romanians (AUR), echoing Poland’s populist and nationalist Law and Justice party, became the fourth-largest party in the country’s parliament, with an agenda mirroring the Coalition for Family’s anti-gender and religious agenda, albeit with a more pronounced nationalist and pandemic-oriented twist.

Bringing together religious conservatives, anti-vaccination activists, COVID-19 deniers and hardcore nationalists, this new far-right party secured a major surprise result in Romania’s latest parliamentary elections, harnessing the political support of a Romanian diaspora disenchanted with the political milieu at home, and surpassing by far any political ambitions once held by the Coalition for Family.

My paper will argue that the success of AUR can be seen as a case-study in religious resilience, as AUR absorbed the lessons offered by the failure of a more religious diverse and anti-LGBT oriented Coalition for Family, and wisely adapted its otherwise strongly nationalist and pro-family agenda to better suit the new social and political context, dominated by the COVID-19 pandemics.

Moreover, my paper will show, aside from the shock it caused in the Romanian political sphere, AUR legitimises now, from the benches of Parliament, a profoundly intolerant discourse targeting gender, migration and minorities, to a level that echoes more and more the radical anti-gender religious campaigns in Central European countries like Poland or Hungary.

333-II Revelations, Networks, and Crisis in Socialist East European and Soviet New Age Underground

14:40 - 16:00 Wednesday, 1st September, 2021

Nemanja Radulovic

804 Vladimir D. Trokut and Neo / Post / Avant-Garde Subversion by Esotericism in Yugoslavia

Suzana Marjanić

Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, Zagreb, Croatia

Abstract
The works of Vladimir Dodig Trokut - who sees himself as “the first artist of black magic” - were already written in the period of the group Red Peristyle (with their key action Red Peristyle in 1968) in contact with land art, e.g., the projects of burning the sea and the land, the exposure of air, water and earth, coating the rocks in gold foil, etc. Specifically, Trokut’s actions from 1968 and 1969 - e.g., Printing the Waves (Uzimanje otisaka valova, Split, Ovčice Bay, 1969), Underwater Exhibition (Izljožba pod morem, Split, Ovčice Bay, 1968), Reflex (Mapping) of the Sky (Refleks (Preslikavanje) neba, Split, Vestibule, 1969), Burning the Sea and Land (Paljenje mora i kopna, Split, Ovčice Bay, 1969), and Trokut Exhibits the World (Trokut izlaže svijet, Split, street bulletin boards, 1969) - show that he was interested in working with nature and the possibility of involving the non-voluminous in the work itself, while the action Writing Messages on Trains (Ispisivanje poruka na vlakovima, Split, train station - Solin, 1968) included magical meanings. Furthermore, Vladimir Dodig Trokut also proposed remote transmission of the energy of thought as part of artistic actions (rejected the proposal of performing within Tendencies 6).

Specifically, in 1966, V. D. Trokut became engaged in visual (signalist) poetry, within the framework of which he implemented a series of works related to particular syntagms and sentences, e.g., black-it-out, black corner, or the alchemic performative element of his art as alchemy at the level of reality - This Space Must Remain Blank. It is exactly in this system of permeation of conceptual art, signalist poetry and esotericism where his aforementioned action of writing magical meanings on trains came into existence.

Alongside the above-mentioned subversion, which he proclaimed by merging conceptual art and esotericism, in 1972 Vladimir Dodig Trokut subverted another socialist platform. He initiated the Antimuseum as “the first private initiative in the territory of former Yugoslavia, which includes responsible, professional and systematic addressing of the problems of contemporary art, museology, intellectual property, and all of those phenomena beyond the rigid institutional system.”

352 Esotericism and Computers in the USSR and Russia: From Biological Wireless to the Internet
Stanislav Panin
Rice University, Houston, USA

Abstract

The presentation analyses an impact of esoteric ideas on shaping of computer science and information technology in Russia. The main argument is that the development of these fields in Russia was subjected to influences of esoteric ideas inherited through several channels, including Soviet cosmism and discussions about parapsychology during the 1960s.

To provide an example, in his 1982 book Cybernetic Mixture (Kiberneticheskaya Smes’) a Soviet popularizer of cybernetics Victor Pekelis dedicates a chapter to his encounters with Soviet parapsychology. The chapter begins with a story about a 1959 lecture of a Soviet engineer Bernard Kazhinsky about “biological wireless” or, simply put, telepathy. In the 1920s he participated in telepathy experiments organized in Petrograd by a neuroscientist Vladimir Bechterev and an animal trainer Vladimir Durov.
Kazhinsky described these experiments and summarized his theory of telepathy in a 1962 book *Biological Wireless* ('Biologicheskaya Radiosvjaz').

As Alaina Lemon recently pointed out, despite a proverbial image of Soviet academia as a desert dominated by a figure of Vladimir Lenin, unconventional topics such as telepathy were also a prominent part of academic culture of the early 1960s and reflected a diversity of philosophical positions among Soviet intelligentsia (*Technologies for Intuition*, University of California Press, 2018, 47-49). These discussions affected engineers as well as philosophers. Wladimir Velminsky, for instance, explores a figure of Pavel Gulyaev, a cybernetic scientist who was a proponent of concepts of telepathy and “biological energy” during the 1960s (*Homo Sovieticus*, MIT Press, 2017, 76-82). In Gulyaev’s writings, visions of the Soviet future appear as a mixture of science fiction and concepts inherited from esoteric literature such as “auras”.

Another path of transmission of esoteric ideas into academic circles was related to influence of cosmist philosophy, particularly an idea of “noosphere” popularized by a biogeochemist Vladimir Vernadsky. The notion had a significant cultural impact and, among other things, influenced Yuri Lotman, a Soviet semiotician and cultural historian from University of Tartu who proposed a concept of “semiosphere” - a special domain related to sign processes that constitutes our cultural environment. A concept of semiosphere that resembles an esoteric notion of “astral plane” and, as I argue, indeed has a historical connection with a Theosophical notion of subtle planes, later on inspired the development of information technologies in Russia. As Roman Leibov, a pioneer of Russian Internet and a student of Yuri Lotman put it in an interview to Andrei Loshak, “when the Internet arrived, we saw what the semiosphere is”.

In other words, discussions about telepathy and universal connection of all living beings characteristic of the early Soviet culture of the 1920s did not vanish over time but were gradually transformed and incorporated into the culture of the late Soviet technical intelligentsia where they ultimately informed interests to cybernetics, artificial intelligence, and computer networks in which centuries-long esoteric dreams finally got a chance for material realization.

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895 Surviving or Thriving? The Surprising (Hi)story of Popular Esotericism in Late-Socialist Bulgaria

*Victoria Vitanova-Kerber*

*University Leipzig, Leipzig, Germany*

**Abstract**

Socialism aimed for a utopian atheist society, where religion was supposed to become superfluous and therefore disappear. Despite the strong anti-religious campaign in socialist Bulgaria religion did not vanish but remained in the periphery of public and private life. That applied not only to traditional orthodox Christendom but also to different theosophical groups and ideas and even more to popular esoteric phenomena like clairvoyance, palm reading, and fortune-telling. Based on biographical and archival material about the most popular Bulgarian seer Vanga, the unusual relationship between the religious, the political, and the scientific sphere in this socialist state will be presented. Deconstructing the popular narrative of a “spiritual vacuum” in socialism, followed by a “religious boom” in the 1990s, I will argue that some esoteric phenomena not only survived socialism but even thrived in its ecosystem and came out all the more influential in the last decade of the 20th century because of this.
601 The Early Modern Notion of Religion – Translation, Recognition and Control

Niels Reeh

University of Southern Denmark, Odense, Denmark

Abstract

In this paper, I argue firstly that the notion of religion in its singular indefinite form emerged as a discursive vehicle to translate across religious divides: first between Christians and Jews and Christians and what was then called Turks, later between Protestants and Catholics, and finally to be used on a global scale. Secondly, I argue that the notion of religion rose to prominence during the Reformation, especially in the context of peace negotiations and treaties (both of which are also forms of translation) as well as church ordinances, which one should not forget were legal texts. Thirdly, I argue that from the Reformation onwards, the modern notion of religion has been used and defined by states. After the US Constitution and the French Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen, the rest of Europe – and subsequently almost all states across the globe – followed suit with some constitutional mention of “religion” or “religious.” Based on these social facts, I argue that the fundamental definition of religion in its singular indefinite form has been shaped primarily by states and not by scholars. As scholars of religion, we may therefore be liberated from defining religion, and instead content ourselves with theorizing, studying and understanding the actors in the field which historical processes and not least state actors have constituted as religion.

127 Cultural Religion – A Resilient Form of Majority Religion

Anne Lundahl Mauritsen

Aarhus University, Aarhus, Denmark

Abstract

The concept of cultural religion or ‘culturalized religion’ is gaining ground, particularly within the study of contemporary religion. Often, cultural religion is used to describe a pattern of majority religion where the historically dominant religion still plays a religion, but in a transformed form. However, scholars have yet to
agree further on the content and application of this concept. In this talk, I present analyses of the use of cultural religion through case studies of three separate contexts: firstly, the socio-religious context of individual and organizational religion. Secondly, the political and societal contexts in relation to debates concerning the role of religion in increasingly diverse countries; and, thirdly, the academic discourse. This will form the basis for a discussion of the potential heuristic value of cultural religion with a focus on Denmark as well as comparative perspectives to other religious and cultural contexts. Based on the presented data, I argue for an understanding of cultural religion as a form of resilient majority religion today, and for a definition of cultural religion which encompasses low levels of belief in traditional, doctrinal content, a high level of celebratory practices in the traditional religious tradition and an institutional affiliation based on emotional identity.

695 Completing the Circle: How Cognitive Perspectives Can Revitalize the Study of Religion and Education

Ingela Visuri

Institution for Culture and Society, Falun, Sweden. Interacting Minds Centre, Aarhus, Denmark

Abstract

The history of education is intertwined with the history of psychology, and influential thinkers such as Johann Herbart, William James, John Dewey, Jean Piaget and Jerome Bruner employed psychological perspectives when developing their ideas on knowledge and learning. This connection however appears to be weak in contemporary studies on religion and education, despite the expansive progress seen in both psychology and the cognitive sciences. This paper introduces areas where cognitive perspectives can be useful in developing a broader understanding of religion and education. Such gains both pertain to the theoretical understanding of how to develop religious literacy among pupils and students, as well as didactic aspects of the work conducted in classrooms. The ideas presented are centered around an ongoing study on educational LARP (live action role playing), with focus on ‘learning by doing’, the role of emotions in enhancing memory, narrative didactics, and how experiences support the understanding of others and may bridge between pupils with differing identities. By involving cognitive perspectives, we can complement the understanding of the ‘what’ and the ‘how’ with comprehension of why certain topics and methods provide more profound insights and learning outcomes than others.

703 Religious literacy - a sharp analytical tool or "one size fits all"?

Fredrik Jahnke

Södertörn university, Stockholm, Sweden

Abstract

For some years the concept of religious literacy has been popular within the field of religious education. There is, however, no agreement on how to interpret or use this concept as an analytical tool or as an explanatory term. Thus, the following question is justified: do we really know what we mean by religious literacy? Or put differently: Would we be better of with a more precise understanding of religious literacy? This paper argues that we would.
The origin of the term stems from new literacy studies and its focus on the social and contextual practices in which learning to read (and interpret) take place. When the concept of literacy became popular and applied in other fields of study it often transformed from its original meaning. This is the case in religious education. In some sense, and perhaps somewhat hard drawn, in religious education religious literacy has become more or less similar to the well-established term learning about religion (in a wide sense). One effect of this that can be observed is that the concept of religious literacy has become vague, wide and imprecise. Some might argue that this is a strength. I do not.

From my point of view religious education research is not served by yet another concept for knowledge about religion (regardless how important that is). However, religious literacy is not a redundant term. Quite the opposite. In this paper I argue that religious literacy should be re-transformed to a definition closer to its original meaning. If so, I think it could be used to study and discuss sense making and dialogue in relation to religion.

47-III Rites, Rituals and Liturgies as “Places” of Resilience
14:40 - 16:00 Wednesday, 1st September, 2021
Giuseppe Cecere

381 Minority Religious Groups, Liturgies and Controversies in the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem
Renata Salvarani
European University of Rome, Rome, Italy

Abstract

The city of Jerusalem is a memorial space shared between different Christian groups since the first centuries and, at the same time, a symbol of the unity of the oikumene. It is the theatre and the protagonist of the dialectic between unity and difference, between the aspiration to communion and the defence of group identities (theological, linguistic, cultural, ecclesiological). Such dynamism is materialized and emblematized in the physical urban space on a long and very long duration, up to the present day. Within it, the resilience of the weakest Christian communities is made evident through the rite, thanks to the continuity of the performed celebrations and thanks to the presence of praying bodies.

In particular, the area of the Holy Sepulchre and Golgotha, generally recognized as a memorial fulcrum of the whole of Christianity, becomes the living realization of specific forms of “praying together, paying apart”, a sort of model of aspiration to unity keeping the differences. We deal with a living ensemble animated by the liturgical celebration, where body and gesture perform and give life to religious meaning, making real the presence of the Sacred.

The same subdivision of the spaces and their semantization depends on the liturgical gesture and the devotional gesture. The status quo (the division of spaces and times of the rite between the various
communities crystallized in the Ottoman era) does not completely regulate all aspects of living coexistence in the common space: some margins of flexibility open the possibility of dialectics and conflicts.

Major and minor communities have created hierarchies of importance and established relations of strength; relations within are the dynamic mirror of relations between the communities to which they belong, with diplomatic, political, cultural, and ecclesial implications. So much so that the very survival of the weaker groups (those least supported by the mother communities or linked with exiguous communities) is at risk.

The continuity of the celebrations within the spaces of the Holy Sepulchre becomes, therefore, the “place” of identity defence. The case of the contemporary religious, juridical, and diplomatic controversy between the Ethiopians and the Copts is indicative in this sense. The rights of the two communities are claimed on a historical and documentary basis, but the liturgical implications are preponderant: the continuous presence of the praying bodies in the space of the Holy Sepulchre ensures the religious groups’ own lives.

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603 Liturgy as Assumption of Historical Time

Daniela Dumbrava

European University in Rome, Roma, Italy. Uniuerstatea 1 Decembrie 1918, Alba-Iulia, Romania

Abstract

Lebanon is an extremely small country with a heterogeneous ethnic and religious population configuration. The Civil War in Lebanon began precisely in 1975, on the one hand, we have a strong nationalist, Phalangist opposition of the Maronite Christians and, on the other hand, a coalition between the Palestinians, Lebanese Sunnis, Shi’ah and Druze. Christians celebrated the liturgy by considering all the signs of the times in the Civil War in Lebanon, consolidating not only the resilience of their Church communities, but also interfaith dialogue, thinking about the relationships between these heterogeneous communities. More
importantly, the liturgy is not only considered as a space opening towards divine contemplation, but also sacramental, historical and mystical, emphasizing the transformative character of the Holy Communion. My paper will focus on the theoretical framework of liturgy as a generator of resilience in the Orthodox Christian community, expounded by pr. André Scrima in the Advanced Institute of Liturgy, at the Holy Spirit University in Kaslik, Lebanon.

16 Place of Memory: Gravestones at Muslim Sections of the Central Cemetery in Vienna

Martin Klapetek

Department of Philosophy and Study of Religions, Faculty of Theology, University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice, České Budějovice, Czech Republic

Abstract

The paper presents research of the Vienna Central Cemetery. Attention is paid to the form of the gravestones. The Muslim sections at the cemetery appear to spread from the edge to the centre of the cemetery, which makes the gravestones more visible to ordinary visitors. Gravestones made of granite and marble most often respond to a standard offer of funeral services, more complicated gravestones are exceptional. Every fourth tombstone emphasized the religious affiliation of the deceased. The emphasis on state, cultural and worldview identity of the buried seems marginal. Information about the deceased was inscribed in the Latin alphabet and therefore it is intended for all visitors. Additional inscriptions in Arabic script are focused on Muslims. The researched gravestones show the ethnic diversity of the contemporary Muslim population of Vienna from the mid-1970s to the present. The low number of religious decorations of the tomb did not confirm the hypothesis that religion plays an irreplaceable role in the construction of a “place of memory”. Many ordinary decorations were observed on the graves but only a small part of them refers to the relationship between the deceased and survivors. Planting evergreen shrubs conventionally defines the graves in all parts of the urban cemetery, though Muslims plant them also for religious reasons. A large amount of floral decoration can be understood as a proof of acceptance of the surrounding society’s customs. On the other hand, some lessees of Muslim grave sites consider floral decoration as an inappropriate and disturbing element.

737 Religiously Ritualizing Anti-religion: The Ceremonies of The Satanic Temple

Gianni F. Trapletti

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Abstract

The Satanic Temple (TST) is a non-theistic organization based in the U.S.A., but it also has missions in Canada and Great Britain. It is sometimes associated with Anton LaVey’s Church of Satan, but actually they are two distinct groups.
Since 2013, when it was founded, TST has gained public attention through some initiatives that have caused a great stir, the most notorious of which is the production of a 2 and a half metre high bronze figure of Baphomet with two adoring children, which should have been placed at the Oklahoma Capitol.

The teachings of TST are essentially humanistic; its references to the figure of Satan and its use of Satanist symbology are to be understood as expressions of a form of opposition to a social and cultural environment considered excessively Christianized.

TST has elaborated some ritual ceremonies, although it does not consider them religiously significant or magically effective. They can be performed in a special building of worship or in other places: public prayers in school assemblies, the pink mass and the black mass, the blessing of weddings (heterosexuals and homosexuals), a “pentagram ritual” to favour the election of their own exponent to the California Senate, etc.

This presentation aims to analyze the interpretation of these ritual practices, which are ambiguously placed on the border between the propaganda action directed outside the group (often with controversial purposes) and the initiative that favours a process of identification of the followers and that strengthens the bonds between them.

547 Cultural Immunology as a Paradigm for the Study of Resilience in Religious Traditions
14:40 - 16:00 Wednesday, 1st September, 2021

Jeppe Sinding Jensen, Jesper Sørensen

Religious traditions are commonly conservative but they may also react creatively to changes in their environments by e.g. ignoring, incorporating, transforming or rejecting novel stimuli from inside as well as outside the tradition(s). Sometimes novelties are accepted, at other instances rejected. We want to know why and how e.g. religious ideas, myths, rituals and institutions act as they do when ‘under pressure’. When does resilience govern and when does it break down?

Understanding the mechanisms behind both positive and negative patterns of action may require explanations of many kinds and, thus, here we select a focus on immunological psychological functions of institutions in minds and on discursive immunological functions in sociocultural formations with a special emphasis on religiously validated social institutions. Our basic premise is that collective and individual agents require structurally stable socio-cultural patterns and scaffolding for their continuance and the maintenance of normative collective life. We consider ontological as well as phylogenetic occurrences of resilience in relation to changes in religious traditions, whether they ignore, incorporate, transform or reject internal or external actions. We shall also consider mediations patterns such as blends, hybridizations and syncretisms.

As applied here, the immunological perspective contends that any cultural system forms an ecology of concepts that aligns mental representations between members of a group. Such concepts facilitate communication and coordination of behavior and impose selective constraints on the acquisition of new
ideas as a function of their degree of fit with already present ideas. Based on recent developments in cognitive neuroscience and theoretical biology we present an innovative model of (a) what cultural systems are and what they are good for, (b) how they attain resilience and stability with a special focus on religion, and (c) how they interact with other cultural systems and with social institutions. In short, we suggest a radical rethinking of the very ontology of resilience in the ‘cultural sphere’ as an immunology of cultural systems.

In that respect, the histories of religious traditions, as stable feedback loops, demonstrate how cultures arise and persist, how ideas spread and how and why transmission matters. Case studies in the epidemiology of representations show how cognitive attractor positions and predictive processing in individual minds are reinstating the importance of cultural systems in collective representations and the formations of cultural expectancies. Perceptual enactivism, distributed cognition, social entrainment and the emergence and stability cultural systems all point to the salience of a cultural immunology explanatory framework and the idea of culture as an immunological system coordinating organisms and limiting interpersonal prediction error. This latter is precisely what social institutions offer: stability and resilience of cultural systems. Religions provide ample and substantial examples here and we shall provide a range of them as prime instances of socio-cultural resilience.

919 Why Cultures Persist? Towards a Cultural Immunology

Jesper Frøkjær Sørensen
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Abstract

The persistence of cultural traditions, including those traditionally termed ‘religions’, is a source of constant debate in the study of religion. In this paper, I will present an outline of a theoretical project, cultural immunology, that grounds cultural stability in three theoretical dimensions: in cognitive theories of predictive processing; in processes underlying the evolution of human cooperation; and in models of immunology from theoretical biology.

I shall argue that previous evolutionary accounts of religion have underestimated focused on competition and hence disregarded the tendency to form higher level, cooperative systems such as multicellular organisms able to extract resources from the environment at a higher level of complexity. In nature, synergy is more a rule than an exception and even organisms are better conceived as so-called holobionts constituted by numerous microorganisms whose functional integrity is ensured by immunological control systems. Amongst humans, this tendency is ubiquitous; everywhere and all times humans congregate in smaller or larger groups and in this process, we mutually align our mental models in order to enhance behavioral coordination. This is evident in the spontaneous alignments structuring face-to-face interaction, as well as in the material engravings of increasing systematicity that enable the construction of larger imagined communities. At the cognitive level, this process can be explained as a social rendition of a general process also guiding individual cognition: the constant urge to eradicate prediction errors by enhancing the model-to-environment fit of our mental and cultural models as our brain tries to presage ‘what comes next’. Accordingly, the world we experience is largely determined by our internal models. In social interaction spheres these models undergo perpetual alignment processes leading to the formation of cultural systems that stabilize the social sphere but, simultaneously, erect an immune boundary or membrane controlling engagement with the environment.
Is there a special role for ‘religion’ in this general process? I shall argue that religion initially serve two basic immunological functions enhancing the integrity of social interaction spheres: First, it alleviates the potentially disruptive effect of different sorts of inequality by means of cultural technologies distilling and redistributing abstract force (mana). This addresses the problem of experienced contingency. Second, rituals align the motor behavior of participants while imbuing these actions with emotions thereby creating felt, imagined communities that transcend interaction spheres solely defined by their pragmatic function. This addresses the problem of solidarity beyond pragmatically defined interaction.

918 Romantic Resilience. Text Mining Typologies of Re-Enchantment in Nineteenth-Century Denmark

Katrine Baunvig
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Abstract

I dedicate this paper to religious adaptation and ‘re-enchantment’ within a naturalist world-view. That is, I dedicate this paper to strategies that emerged within the Romantic movement and flourished in diverse forms of nineteenth-century literature in Denmark. More precisely, from the work of influential authors such as N.F.S. Grundtvig (1783-1872) and Hans Christian Andersen (1805-1875) as well as newspaper material of the period, I seek to draw the contours of a nineteenth-century ‘re-enchantment typology’ sensitive to social contexts. I seek to show a difference in narrative preference and tendencies between stories told a) in the emerging national-public sphere; b) in the emerging nuclear family sphere; and c) in the ‘adaptive’ religious sphere.

The structure for this typology is extracted from French anthropologist Phillipe Descola and his neoclassic monograph Beyond Nature and Culture (2013), in which he delineates a fourfold ontological typology. The types of structurally different ontologies are: animism, totemism, analogism and naturalism. My argument is that there are three types of re-enchantment at play in nineteenth-century Denmark and that these are re-introductions or echoes of past ontologies within the main-frame of naturalism. That is, I argue that the specific types of re-enchantments are consistent with / are ‘predictable’ from / or confirm Descola’s ontological schemata. Moreover, I gravitate towards the observation that ‘childish’ competences (e.g. a vibrant imagination) became the foundation of the three types of re-enchantment.

The study is based on three digital corpora – on the one hand the works of N.F.S. Grundtvig and H.C. Andersen both of them available in high-quality XML/TEI format and on the other the Danish Royal Library’s digital newspaper archive accessible in a raw OCR format. The different types of material allow for different types of distant reading strategies - from the targeted reading-though large bulks of texts to computationally more demanding text mining procedures. In other words: underneath the subject of this paper runs an undercurrent of digi-methodological considerations.
Thinking with(out) Borders: A Remark about Peter Sloterdijk’s and Roberto Esposito’s Ideas of Immunology and Religion in Relation to the European Wars of Religion

Erik Sporon Fiedler
The Danish Academy in Rome, Rome, Italy

Abstract

Borders are a central concept in much political theory. At the same time the theoretical fruitfulness of the concept can be problematized when it comes to thinking about human group organization and the delimitation between an inside and an outside. Through a reflection on the idea of immunity as it comes to the fore in various writings of the philosophers Peter Sloterdijk and Roberto Esposito I will discuss how their different ways of thinking about immunity posits two different accounts of how social organizations and religious communities are delineated. In my presentation I will assess how these different ways of theoretising immunity has consequences on Sloterdijk’s and Esposito’s understanding of religion and on how they understand the role of religion in societies, both historically and contemporary. Under this perspective the rise and formation of the European state-system in the wake of the confessional wars of the 16th and 17th century and it’s juridification in the peace treaties of Augsburg and Westphalia are seen in a different light.

The Resilience of the Science of Religion(s) between Hermeneutics and History
14:40 - 16:00 Wednesday, 1st September, 2021

Gabriel Badea

The Psychic Inflation of Transhumanism in a (Post-)Jungian Perspective

Giovanni Sorge
C.G, Jung Institute, Küsnacht/Zürich, Switzerland

Abstract

C.G. Jung’s hermeneutics of the psyche lays on an essentially dynamic assumption: the psyche represents a - and is in - “relation” between two dimensions - conscious and unconscious, and by extension immanent and transcendent. The result is a continuous warning against the identification with the contents of the “collective unconscious”, and the overwhelming power of the archetypes. Accordingly, Jung called “psychic inflation” the phenomenon of an illicit enlargement of the boundaries of human understanding towards instances that belong to a super-human, divine sphere. Jung claimed to have experienced this phase through the figure of Philemon described in the Red Book; he also saw in Nietzsche’s identification with Zarathustra a remarkable example of that. With the expression “mana personality”, he indicates a stage of the process of individuation, in which the individual stumbles into a superior, initiatory figure (personified by a wizard, a magician, or a Great Mother) that gives him/her a sense or superiority and, as he used to say,
“similarity to God” (Gottähnlichkeit). Moreover Jung, similarly to Freud, applied his psychological paradigm to the understanding of socio-political phenomena, and thought he recognized a projection of mana personalities in dictatorial figures (like Hitler and Mussolini) during the 1930s and 1940s within a secularized scenario in which states and mass-movements replaced traditional beliefs. For Jung, only in overcoming the identification with the “mana personality”, can the individual attain the Self, the deepest centre of the personality that harbours the image of God. Otherwise, such an encounter ends up trapping the Ego in a hypertrophic self-divinization - or getting lost in mass-movements, ideologies and pseudo-religious expectations.

In the transhuman epistemology (in its ambiguity between improvement and enhancement, in its longing for an overcoming of biological limitations, and in its blending human and divine instances) one can recognize a proclivity to a psychic inflation and to a possession by an archetype in terms of Jung’s depth psychology. In particular, the transhumanistic inclusion of death among the human diseases that are supposed to be surmounted, reveals an image of man that resembles Jung’s description of “mana personality”. Moreover, transhumanistic belief in technology and science (and in their supposed limitless progression) turns out to be a new (pseudo)religion that creates a kind of (immanent) transcendence that removes the trascendence (and the unknown) itself, while disregarding the inevitable “shadow” aspects behind (and, according to the Analytical psychology, inevitably connected with) the bright perspective of such a super-human (scientific, technic, digital, genetic) endeavour. The “Christian transhumanists” - who have been vividly defined by Russell Moore “carnivorous vegan” - even affirm that AI and brain machine-interfaces will substitute the holy spirit in allowing human beings to communicate with God.

In my presentation, I will discuss the psychological danger of the transhuman anthropological and religious approach through the hermeneutic paradigm of Analytical psychology.

885 L’Ermeneutica di Giorgio Colli
Ludovica Boi

Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Filosofici, Napoli, Italy. Centro Studi Giorgio Colli, Torino, Italy. Università di Verona, Verona, Italy

Abstract

La prospettiva ermeneutica di Giorgio Colli (1917-1979) si distingue per la sua profondità e originalità. Nutrendosi dell’eco della sapienza arcaica - non ancora piegata alle esigenze della comunicazione scritta -, il pensatore torinese ha sempre inteso lo studio filologico e filosofico come un tentativo di risalimento al cuore di una sfuggente interiorità, che, così come la physis protagonista di un suo celebre scritto, «ama nascondersi». Il metodo nietzschiano finalizzato a risalire alle spalle della tragedia si trasforma, in Colli, nell’opera di regressione alle spalle del logos, alle spalle, cioè, della (filo)sofia letterariamente condizionata, che quasi rimuove la sua discendenza misterica.

Scopo dell’intervento sarà, allora, ripercorrere i punti di contatto tra logos e mythos, espressione razionale ed estasi mistica. Quasi assecondando l’idea di un percorso circolare, si interrogheranno i primi testi colliani, Apollino e dionisiaco e Filosofi sovrumani (risalenti agli ultimi anni Trenta), mettendoli in stretta comunicazione con le estreme intuizioni animanti il progetto de La sapienza greca (1977-1979). In questa cornice, la visione eleusina rifulge come sorgente della sapienza, in quanto annulla e al contempo fonda
ogni determinazione, mostrando che Dioniso e Apollo sono, in fondo, lo stesso. Ciò che un pensiero raziocinante intorbidì, è la visione a illuminare.

Alla radice del pensiero filosofico si scopre la “resistenza” del multiforme universo del mito, della religione e della poesia greche arcaiche, dimensioni che danno forma alle intuizioni dei primi sophòi o sapienti. A un’attenta analisi, Colli non appare interessato a una discutibile mitizzazione delle origini, ma nel suo metodo è ravvisabile, piuttosto, la constatazione dell’insufficienza di approcci che adeguino contenuti storici antichissimi a concetti e schemi propri del modo di pensare contemporaneo.

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599 Between Hermeneutics and History: The Religious and Interreligious Research of Alberto Caracciolo’s Genoese School

Elisabetta Colagrossi

University of Genoa, Genoa, Italy

Abstract
The aim of my paper is to emphasize the important value for the religious sciences and the history of religions of the research of the Philosophical School founded at the University of Genoa by Alberto Caracciolo (1918-1990). Caracciolo was one of the most original and profound Italian thinkers of the second half of the twentieth century. Founder, in 1965, of the first Italian Chair of the Philosophy of Religion, he started research that, moving from philosophers such as Croce, Kant, Jaspers, Heidegger, aimed at affirming the value of the “religious” in the face of modern processes of secularization and contemporary nihilism, recognizing the resilience capacity of religion and of the religious sciences against those philosophical and cultural processes. It can be said that in Caracciolo the resilience of religions is affirmed not “against”, but “within” those phenomena, showing that secularization and nihilism are not irreligious facts, but rather problematically and aporetically religious.

After his fundamental volume of 1962 La religione come struttura e come modo autonomo della coscienza, an authentic “manifesto” of the Genoese religious and interreligious school - in which the religious is recognized as a constitutive, transcendental structure of conscience, and at the same time it permeates all the ways of existing-, Caracciolo’s research faced a fundamental figure of German historicism during the 1960s: Ernst Troeltsch, whose Die Absolutheit des Christentums und die Religionsgeschichte he translated.

The problem of the absoluteness of Christianity was central to both Troeltsch and Caracciolo: Is it possible to preserve, after modernity and in a plural, multicultural and multireligious context, the principle or the claim of absoluteness of a single religion? Should that principle not have to be rethought, revisited, so as to safeguard both the peculiarity of a religious tradition and the rights of other religions to assert themselves as true?

This is the starting point for Troeltsch’s critique, which Caracciolo shares, of that type of supernaturalism affirmed by orthodox theologies which detaches the religion, declared to be true, from all the others, thus generating exclusivist claims. My paper, in examining this topic, finally intends to show its deep consonance with the biblical research of Jan Assmann, documenting how his critique linked to the “Mosaic distinction” is very similar to the critique of supernaturalism traced by Troeltsch and Caracciolo.

Coffee Break
16:00 - 16:10 Wednesday, 1st September, 2021

General Assembly
16:10 - 18:30 Wednesday, 1st September, 2021

Concert (Santa Caterina Church)
18:30 - 20:00 Wednesday, 1st September, 2021
Vocal Chamber Ensemble "Vincenzo Galilei"
174-I Religion as Resource of Resilience – Diachronic and Interdisciplinary Perspectives
09:00 - 10:40 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021

Anna Katharina Rieger

Why does religion often take center stage when societies and individuals think of resilience and resilient strategies in times of crisis, individual or global catastrophes, and significant (and negative) changes in humans’ lives? Religion and religious practices of any kind seem to offer tool kits how to act or re-act resiliently: They set a structural frame of organizing relationships to co-humans, to supporting transcendent beings or to nature; at the same time religions are always in the state of transformation due to their manifold expressions and rituals. Both, stability and adaptability make religions as such a resilient strategy. However, several issues of religion and resilience remain unclear: i) How exactly can religious practices, expressions and agents function as a resource of resilience? ii) How can societies, communities and groups act resiliently or be resilient: is it the sum of individual resilience or is there an collective resilient behaviour? iii) How are shaken relations and links to co-humans, to the environment or to supra-natural beings re-established or transformed?; and iv) How can resilience in relation to religion be conceptualized, since it was transferred from economics to environmental studies and recently to psychology for describing behaviour of individuals in situations of problems such as illness, stress and loss?

The panel seeks to find answers to these questions from interdisciplinary and diachronic perspectives (religious studies, theology, archaeology, anthropology, sociology) and clarify the functioning of religion as source of resilience in situations of uncertainty, contingency, or crisis on a collective level. Contributors are asked to discuss examples from various cultural settings and different historical periods that shed light of fields of practices from daily routines such as prayers or text-readings to religiously framed large-scale rituals for expiations, thanksgivings, or victories. They should reflect on the relation of individual and collective strategies in crises expressed in religious practices and inquire the theoretical framings of how religion functions as resource of resilience. Particular historical situations as well as global societal challenges are as interesting as what remains of the resilient strategies and how traditions and power relations may have changed when a crisis is over.

660 R.I.P. German Long-Hauling? Resilience to an Occupational Automobility in Crisis through Religious and Non-religious Signs. An Anthropological Case Study amongst East German Truckers

Manuel Moser

Max-Weber-Kolleg, Erfurt, Germany
Abstract

The aim of the paper will be to discuss, how religion functions as a resource of resilience in contemporary East German trucking. It will be divided in two parts, the first arguing that East German trucking is an occupational automobility in crisis (Gregson 2018), destabilized through falling freight prices and failures in national and European politics, as well as in recent times the coronavirus pandemic. Furthermore, on an individual level it will be shown, how the fragility of human lives on the road creates a culture of death (Vidal 2013) amongst lorry-drivers. The inherent dangers of the profession together with the effects of the collective instability manifested in excesses of workload and imploding salaries for the individual drivers strengthen a necessity for resilient strategies to deal with the crisis on its multiple levels. Therefore, the second part will investigate empirically, based on an ongoing ethnographic field research, how religion in the milieu is used as resource in individual and collective resilient strategies. On the microlevel, I will discuss how religion serves as a toolkit to deal with the unruliness of the personal life. Starting from the example of talismans, we will see how religious and non-religious things (Heidegger 2000) entangle in an actor-network (Latour 2005) of truck, driver, family, idols and supra-natural beings. On a more collective level, we will investigate how religion is used as resource in strategies of commemoration and re-action to what is experienced as burial of the profession, e.g. how mourning bands are combined with calls for strikes. We will also look into why a missionary trucker church gets invited to perform sermons and truck blessing rituals on music festivals. Relating the panel’s question to reflect on the relation of resilience and religion, my input shall not search for defining a “pure” nature of religion in contrasting it to non-religion, but challenge the idea of a separate field of religion by investigating the processes of intermingling in everyday life.

References:


863 The Concept of Resilience on the Website of kath.ch

Alice Küng

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Abstract

The aim of the paper will be to discuss, how religion functions as a resource of resilience on the Swiss website of the catholic media centre kath.ch. Kath.ch is an online news portal financed by the swiss bishops' conference. The topics of the article are mostly «objectify» written and talk about the catholic church, religion in general, society, culture, and politics. The base of this paper will be an empirical research of the articles of the resilience calendar of 2020. Due to the actual pandemic kath.ch initiated this calendar as a
form of advent calendar with 26 texts about how to «resist» the uncertainty due to Corona. The paper will be divided into three parts.

First, the paper will examine how kath.ch deals with the concept of resilience from a theological and journalistical point of view. It will be shown, how the journalists from kath.ch become in these articles actors themselves and how their perspective plays a role. By their selections of topics and interview partners, kath.ch frames the concept of resilience.

Second, the paper will discuss how kath.ch uses the concept of resilience for their own profit as a catholic media centre as well as for the catholic church itself. Due to the ongoing decrease of membership numbers the church is forced to find new ways and new concepts to reach people and in the case of kath.ch website users.

Third, the paper will evaluate how kath.ch wants the concept of resilience to be understood on a collective and social ground. How can these 26 texts be used in the milieu as a resource in individual and social resilient strategies? This means: How can kath.ch serve as a toolkit to deal with the unruliness of the personal life?

Relating the panel’s question to reflect on the relation of resilience and religion, my input shall not only look for the «definition» of resilience for kaht.ch and its authors but also explore how kath.ch uses the concept of resilience for their own reputation. Even though I am a journalist of kath.ch myself, I am at the same time a religious scientist and will look at this research from a critical perspective.


Athanasios Vionis¹, Giorgos Papantoniou²

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Abstract

This paper explores the materiality of the Orthodox Christian cult of the Epitaphios on Good Friday of 2020 when, during the COVID-19 pandemic, social distancing and isolation were deemed the most effective means of protecting societies from exposure to the virus. Epitaphios is a metonym that references a venerated object, a decorated cloth or wooden icon bearing the image of Christ prepared for burial. It is placed upon a wooden bier, representing the Tomb of Christ, also called the Epitaphios. During the pandemic, people reacted inventively with resilience to restrictions imposed on practicing this communal cult publicly in churches by constructing homemade Epitaphioi and displaying them in privately-owned spaces. We examine the materiality of the homemade Epitaphioi in the context of popular religion, evaluating how crisis may divert the forces of the longue durée into a different channel, and how ethnographic analogy may be useful for understanding ritual and cult in archaeology. Considering ‘resilience’ as a concept we also monitor the cult during the 2021 ongoing pandemic.
180-I Coping with the Krisis. Phenomena of Religious Acculturation and Enculturation: Patterns and Policies of Resilience from the Hellenistic-Roman Period and Late Antiquity
09:00 - 10:40 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021

Alice Bencivenni, Giuseppina Paola Viscardi, Beatrice Girotti

The present workshop proposal aims to analyze change and resilience in ancient individuals and society, in particular with respect to acculturation and enculturation phenomena occurring in times of *krisis*, as in the Hellenistic Age and Late Antiquity, taking into account the modern definition of acculturation and enculturation concepts.

Essentially, acculturation is defined as the extent to which people are participating in the cultural norms of the dominant group while maintaining the norms of their original culture. Rather, the term enculturation can be helpful in more fully describing the experiences of these individuals, considering enculturation as the process of socialization to and maintenance of the norms of one’s cultural heritage, including the salient values, ideas, and concepts. Based on this definition, it can be explained that the “cultural maintenance” process that is described above might be better represented with the broader terminology of enculturation.

With these premises, focusing on the Hellenistic age and Late Antiquity as two turning points that marked radical changes “in the ancient political systems, social structures, religious beliefs, philosophical thinking, economic models and cultural trends”, we intend to explore policies and strategies of transition, transformation and mutation with related repercussions on the level of collective and individual perception and creation of new patterns of adaptation, absorption or even resistance capable of facing the collapse of ontologies that results from transformation and, thus, of ensuring the survival of groups and individuals.

In this perspective, the main topics of the workshop sessions are:

- perception and rationalization of change by ancient individuals and societies;
- development of forms of religious resilience to cope with processes of ontological blur, anxiety and discontinuity (e.g., attempts to manage and adapt to change; compensation for the negative consequences of transformation; planning for the future);
- effects of change on human behaviour and society;
- methods and strategies for detecting and measuring real and long-lasting changes in antiquity, in the face of the absence of immediate effects on society.

We encourage responses from a diverse range of methodological perspectives (historical, religious, anthropological, sociological, cognitive, etc.) and with multidisciplinary approaches (from historiography, philosophy and literature to documentary and material evidence).

References:
699 A Contagion of Soteria: A Cultural History of the Epithet Soter among Hellenistic Rulers

Stefano Caneva

Università di Padova, Padova, Italy

Abstract

Who were the first Hellenistic civic communities using the term Soter as an epithet of euergetic rulers? And by which traditional deities were they inspired? When did Soter first turn from a denomination used in occasional acclamations and/or local honorific practice into a standard royal epithet? What factors and specific needs prompted the passage of the epithet Soter from one dynasty to another? Did Soter ever change its field of applications as it became an increasingly common epithet of Hellenistic kings, civic benefactors, and Roman generals? And finally, do different sources cast a diverging light on the use of soteria as a point of encounter between civic and monarchic agendas?

Soteria is a prominent word in the vocabulary of Greek religious and political history and a category intimately connected with the techniques of, and expectations for, resilience in times of crises, both at the societal and individual level. Scholarship has repeatedly investigated the success of this concept in Hellenistic culture, identifying it as a crucial field prompting contacts and transfers from religion to politics, and vice versa.

At the collective level, soteria has received particular attention as regards the relationships between civic communities and political leaders, both internal and external. However, the vast documentation about the link between soteria and the resilience of civic communities in the Hellenistic world is far from having been fully exploited. To date, we can count on a satisfactory understanding of why soteria was considered as an effective category to describe the expectations of communities undergoing periods of severe crisis as well as to fashion the (self-)representation of monarchs and other major political figures as religious figures. However, this general understanding still lacks a detailed analysis of the specific factors, agents, and contexts that promoted the diffusion of soteria as an efficient concept and consequently underlie the creation of a durable cultural tradition.

In order to contribute to this research, we must go back to a fine-grained study of sources. Accordingly, this paper will reassess the diffusion of the epithet Soter in use for Hellenistic rulers with a fresh focus on what aspects made its use different from context to context, and with the related purpose of identifying points of rupture and change in the tradition, beyond the more known surface of similarities and continuities.
Roman Statesmen Refusing “God-like” Honours: Religious Resilience, Ethical Choices and Political Prudence

Margherita Facella
University of Pisa, Pisa, Italy

Abstract

The refusal of isōtheoi timai by some emperors and members of the imperial family, attested by literary, epigraphic and papyrological sources, has always attracted the attention of the scholars (see already S. Lösch, Deitas Jesu und Antike Apotheose, Rottenburg a. N. 1933). The establishment of what has been defined “a system of exchange” linking subjects and ruler, rested on Roman acceptance of the cult, so while the rejection of these honours certainly speaks in favour of the flexibility of the system, it nonetheless requires an explanation. In an article which has become the standard work on the subject, M.P. Charlesworth (PBSR 15, 1939) argued for an “Augustan formula”, a tradition of polite refusal set up by Augustus and followed by some of his successors. Cases of refusal attested earlier than the age of Augustus are often mentioned in later studies, but never deeply discussed. The present paper intends to focus on the rejection of cult honours by Marcus Tullius Cicero and Vaccius Labeo from Kyme. Most recently Christopher P. Jones (in Hommage à Jean-Louis Ferrary: Philorhômaiós kai philhellên, Paris 2019) has asked whether beside the intention not to burden the provincials with further expenses, Cicero “felt that such honors were due to gods rather than humans” (p. 478). A close examination of ad Q. fratrem I.1.26 and ad Att. V.21.7 can be helpful to fully understand the nature of Cicero’s concerns and to grasp similarities and distinctions with the later examples of refusals.

Transfer of Cults in the Hellenistic World as Crisis and Resilience

Beate Dignas
Somerville College, Oxford, United Kingdom

Abstract

The paper looks at the phenomenon of cult transfer within relationships between different political and cultural entities in the Hellenistic world. Famous examples, such as the transfer of Cybele to Rome, or that of Sarapis to Alexandria, illustrate that even in a highly volatile and changing political landscape the resilience of religious traditions was enormous. On first sight, the appropriation of cult images and deities by Hellenistic and Roman rulers was an expression of one-sided power relations in which local religious identities were violated at the core. However, close examination reveals the processes and implications of such cult transfers as symbolic and open-ended. Ultimately, the religious factor allowed local players to emphasise strong cultural identities well beyond the reach of their political sphere of influence and to turn a situation of crisis into one of opportunity.
“Gnosticism” can be considered as one of the most “resilient” religious traditions in history. Though the term is modern and has been questioned, it can still be used to describe a constellation of religious texts, groups, and traditions which exhibit some common essential features (e.g., a more or less explicit dualistic view of the divine, the kosmos, and the human being). In Late Antiquity, Gnosticism flourished in a multitude of diverse forms, spread throughout the whole Mediterranean area. Gnostic traditions were able to transform themselves to cope with crises such as persecutions or dialectical confrontation with the so-called “Great Church” (one can think of the theological adaptation of some currents of Valentinian Gnosis from the second to the fourth centuries); they were able to endure changes and to last for centuries, in renewed forms (some scholars include Manichaeeism and Mandaeism, as well as medieval dualisms, in this longue durée history of Gnosticism). In a famous comprehensive book, Birger Pearson has spoken of “The persistence of Gnosticism” even today, in the sense that “ideas put forward by ancient Gnostics still have a resonance” (Pearson 2007, 339, emphasis added; see also DeConick, The Gnostic New Age, 2016; Trompf, ed., 2019).

This panel welcomes contributions that aim at analyzing this “transformative” character of Gnosticism, in a twofold sense: 1) how Ancient Gnostic groups and texts were able to grow and transform themselves by using, interpreting, and rewriting their wide range of sources (Jewish, early Christian, Platonist ones, etc.); 2) how Ancient Gnostic ideas and trends survived in later philosophical and religious traditions and texts (including e.g. Islam). Papers could discuss any kind of sources, from any methodological perspective(s).

(A. Annese; F. Berno) Resilient Gnosis. Ancient Gnosticism, Its Sources, and Its Transformations
Francesco Berno, Andrea Annese
Sapienza University of Rome, Rome, Italy

Abstract

“Gnosticism” can be considered as one of the most “resilient” religious traditions in history. Though the term is modern and has been conveniently questioned, it can still be used to describe a constellation of religious texts, groups, and traditions which exhibit some common essential features (e.g., a more or less explicit dualistic view of the divine, the kosmos, and the human being). In Late Antiquity, Gnosticism flourished in a multitude of diverse forms, spread throughout the whole Mediterranean area. Gnostic traditions were able to transform themselves to cope with crises such as persecutions or dialectical confrontation with the so-called “Great Church” (one can think of the theological adaptation of some currents of Valentinian Gnosis from the second to the fourth centuries); they were able to endure changes and to last for centuries, in renewed forms (some scholars include Manichaeeism and Mandaeism, as well as medieval dualisms, in this longue durée history of Gnosticism). In a famous comprehensive book, Birger Pearson has spoken of “The persistence of Gnosticism” even today, in the sense that “ideas put forward by ancient Gnostics still have a resonance” (Pearson 2007, 339, emphasis added; see also DeConick, The Gnostic New Age, 2016; Trompf, ed., 2019).
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248 The Elusive Reception History of the Gnostic Feminine in Origen of Alexandria

Lavinia Cerioni

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Abstract

Gnosticism is an “umbrella definition” that groups together various religious movements beginning from the 2nd century CE. In such a heterogeneous religious phenomenon, the feminine plays a unifying and defining role in the negotiation of a Gnostic identity, so much so that it becomes a distinctive feature of each Gnostic theology. Overall, ambiguity seems the distinctive feature of the Gnostic feminine: feminine metaphors and mythological characters are often used by Gnostics to represent the paradoxical aspects of the Godhead, as they symbolise revealing and soteriological aspects of God as well as his defectivity and pathological nature.

This crucial element of Gnostic theologies has permeated the so-called mainstream Christian literature from its very beginning: echoes of the Gnostic feminine are clearly visible in Origen of Alexandria, especially in his Commentary and Homilies on the Song of Songs and his Commentary on the Gospel of John. While Origen’s characterization of the Bride and Wisdom draws directly on Gnostic mythologoumena and theologoumena, he still needs to negotiate a new identity for the feminine in order to make it acceptable to the Church. By discussing a few textual instances, this paper aims at illustrating the complex interdependence and disguised reception history of the Gnostic feminine in a mainstream Christian theologian such as Origen of Alexandria.
298 The Coptic Act of Peter (P. Berol. 8502.4): A "Misplaced" Composition?
Francesco Berno
Sapienza University of Rome, Rome, Italy

Abstract

This paper aims at providing an original reading of the Coptic Act of Peter preserved in BG 8502.4, arguing in favour of its heresiological origin and suggesting the possibility that it could restore a privileged insight into 2nd-century Christian Rome. The relationships that the literary work maintains with the most relevant Greek and Latin witnesses of the Petrine Acts are also investigated, as well as the indirect attestations of narratives dedicated to the daughter of Peter.

188 The Pseudo-Clementines as Witnesses of “Gnostic-Jewish Christianity”? Assessing Polemics in Ancient Christian Gnoseology
Philippe Therrien
Université de Lausanne, Lausanne, Switzerland. Université Laval, Quebec City, Canada

Abstract

This contribution seeks to provide new perspectives on the nature and aims of the Pseudo-Clementines, through a more precise use of the term “gnostic” and by reframing theological debates within ancient Christian discourses on gnoseology.

The Pseudo-Clementine Homilies and Recognitions, Christian novels from the fourth century, present characteristics that have at times been considered as gnostic features: the importance of religious knowledge for salvation, the esoteric transmission of this knowledge, and a dualistic worldview. This has led some scholars to search for the origin of Pseudo-Clementine doctrines (i.e. the True Prophet, the false pericopes, the rule of syzygies) within Gnosticism. Others have used the Pseudo-Clementines as proof of the existence of a “gnostic Jewish-Christianity”. However, this raises several questions: what do we mean by “gnostic”? Do we seek to link the Pseudo-Clementines with, for instance, the Valentinian tractates, and somehow make the former heirs of the latter? Or are we simply trying, by using this word, to insist on the importance of religious knowledge - of gnosis - in these texts?

The Pseudo-Clementines and the gnostic writings share indeed numerous resemblances regarding their conception of knowledge, its content, and the modalities through which it can be attained, but they also disagree on important issues, such as the nature of God and the interpretation of Scripture. How, then, can we assess the points of contact as well as the points of divergence?

The first step is to bring more clarity to the use of the word “gnostic”. Following Michael A. Williams, Karen L. King, Jean-Daniel Dubois and Tuomas Rasimus’s works, this paper limits the word “gnostic” to a network of traditions (i.e. Valentinian, Basilidian, Sethite, Ophite and Barbeliote) attested especially in the Nag Hammadi writings. Within this theoretical frame, this paper will present an analysis grid that provides the grounds on which a comparison between gnostic writings and the Pseudo-Clementines can be made, as well as specific examples in the texts.
As a result, the existence of a “gnostic Jewish-Christianity” can hardly be supported by the Pseudo-Clementines. However, their comparison with gnostic writings reveals conflicts regarding gnosis in early Christianity: communities made different claims on the matter of religious knowledge (Who possesses it, and who does not? What is its content? How can it be attained?), claims that were supported by various kinds of authorities (divine revelation, direct knowledge of Jesus, faithfulness to apostolic tradition, interpretation of Scripture). This polemic context may help explain resemblances between gnostic treatises and the Pseudo-Clementines. Furthermore, philosophical and Jewish traditions can also give insights on this matter, since they provided the foundations for Christian gnoseology, in all its diversity.

It thus becomes apparent that the fight for gnosis is a central issue, not only in ancient Christianity, but also throughout the ancient world, since religious knowledge plays a crucial part in the definition of social and religious identities.

563 Gnostics in the World of the Roman Empire: Confrontation and Conformity

Aleksey Panteleev

St. Petersburg State University, St. Petersburg, Russian Federation

Abstract

Gnostic teachers played a major role in the development of Christianity in the first centuries of the Church’s history. Their activities influenced the social structure of the communities, attracting many educated and wealthy residents of Rome and the provinces. M. Weber noted that intellectuals, deprived of the opportunity to participate in state management, flee from this world to a better future life. H.G. Kippenberg transferred this idea to Gnostics, after seeing in their arguments about the Demiurge and archons a reflection of the relationship with the Roman government. P. Lampe corrected this opinion, pointing out that Gnostics could take part in political and social life, but do it as pagans, and not as Christians. In our report we will try to analyze the potential for confrontational and conformist behaviour that Gnostic teachings possessed.

The main social systems, that Gnostics came into contact with, were the rigid administrative system of the Roman Empire and the Christian community, headed by a bishop who sought to establish an equally rigid vertical hierarchy of power. We believe that Gnostics, who considered themselves pneumatics, many of whom were brought up in the culture of the Second Sophistry, were confident of their superiority over the Roman magistrates. That was the starting point of the formation of the idea of “Undominated Race”. Gnostics saw in the imperfect Demiurge and his angels the image of the Roman authorities, and the difference in the nature of the subject and object of power led them to the idea of freedom from subjection to imperfect creatures. But it was dangerous to show this superiority openly, these intellectuals did not want to declare themselves either revolutionaries or even Christians, and they obeyed all the demands of the Roman authorities even to the point of offering sacrifices (although there were individuals who preferred martyrdom).

It can be said that their relationship with the Empire was based on the principle: “Do what you need and say what you want”. Church authorities were also perceived by Gnostics as an image of the Demiurge. Within the community they tried to show themselves to be true Christians, just more educated than most believers.
This demonstration of loyalty to the teaching gave them a free hand to find new followers and spread their views. The principle of their life within the community of "psychic" Christians was "Say what is needed and do what you want". The combination of these two principles allowed the Gnostics to provide themselves with the most psychologically comfortable existence, based on a sense of superiority over the imperfect Roman and ecclesiastical authorities and most of their contemporaries.

At the turn of the 2nd and 3rd centuries the popularity of Gnostic teachings began to decline. This happened because of many reasons, the most important for us: 1) there began to be developed some mechanisms permitting preserving life during the persecution without apostasy, and, 2) an orthodox intellectual tradition emerged and became stronger that made possible self-expression without the risk of being accused of heresy.

209 Well Being in the Middle Ages
09:00 - 10:40 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021
Claudia Rapp

In many regions of Europe and the Middle East throughout the Middle Ages, religion was the most accessible framework in which resilience could be practiced, experienced and theorized. This panel focuses on the eastern Mediterranean in late antiquity and Byzantium, exploring different strategies available to people all across society to achieve and maintain mental, spiritual and physical well-being, beginning with magical texts preserved on papyrus (Dosoo). This includes practices that have parallels in modern psychology: self-examination and the sharing of thoughts with a spiritual guide as a monastic practice (Graiver) and prayers specially formulated for those times when one feels downcast (Schiffer). Physical healing, too, was sought through non-medical practices. These often blurred the boundaries between prayer and magic (Afentoulidou).

446 Emotional Crises and Supernatural Agents of Disease in the Coptic Magical Corpus
Markéta Preininger, Korshi Dosoo
Julius-Maximilians-Universität, Würzburg, Germany

Abstract

Christian magical texts written in Egypt in the Coptic language between the 4th and 12th century provide a rare glimpse into vernacular religion of that period. Many of these texts are amulets, or else recipes, which aim to protect, prevent or treat a range of diseases. While maladies like fever or bleeding seem relatively easy for modern readers to conceptualise, others present more of a challenge. In this talk we will focus on emotional and mental symptoms of disease, and those described as being caused by supernatural agents, such as demons, evil spirits, and the evil eye. We will focus on the one hand on an analysis of the conceptualization of such disease-causing agents, by analysing texts translated in the framework of the
Coptic Magical Papyri Project. On the other hand, we will examine the descriptions of symptoms caused by such agents, as well as the descriptions of psychological distress treated through iatro-magical procedures, such as “fear”, “mania” or “crying”. We will explore the ways in which these descriptions can be used to reconstruct personal and social crises in the lives of ancient individuals, and how the texts preserving them attest to the resilience of individuals in using ritual strategies to confront these crises.

566 Spiritual Combat with Sloth (acedia) in Medieval Byzantium

Elisabeth Schiffer

Austrian Academy of Sciences, Institute for Medieval Research, Division of Byzantine Research, Vienna, Austria

Abstract

Byzantine liturgical prayer books ( euchologia) also contain prayers that deal with situations of emotional distress. Among these there are a few still unpublished prayers that explicitly refer to acedia, a term well known since the period of early monasticism. Consequently, this notion has found its way into Byzantine monasticism and monastic literature. The appearance, however, of what is meant exactly by acedia, is not clearly defined and there is a wide range of possible interpretations. The details of physical weakness that are mentioned in the prayer texts, make the effects of what is described as acedia in Byzantine texts more apparent to us. Regarding the structure of the prayers, it is noteworthy that these are first person prayers which is a rather unusual type in this category of prayer books.

This paper will also deal with the context in which the prayers entitled “For acedia” are transmitted. In addition, other prayers that mention acedia in their prayer text among vices and defects will be discussed. Together, these samples of prayers cover a major part of the strategies of resilience against sloth as they emerge from the prayer texts in the Greek euchologion.

383 Monastic Practices of Self-Disclosure in Late Antiquity

Inbar Graiver

Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Israel

Abstract

The presentation focuses on the eastern monastic tradition of late antiquity, exploring one of the strategies that enabled Christian monks to achieve and maintain mental and spiritual well-being: a procedure which the Greek fathers called self-disclosure ( ἐξαγόρευσις), namely the sharing of thoughts with a spiritual guide. This confessional procedure, I will argue, played an important role in healing dysfunctional thinking patterns and promoting mental well-being.
Prayer, Amulets and Angels: Seeking Healing in Medieval Byzantium

Eirini Afentoulidou

Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna, Austria

Abstract

In this paper, I will concentrate on ritual texts Byzantine Christians used to cope with physical illness. Some of these texts were approved by the Byzantine church and formed part of its liturgical life. This is the case with prayers transmitted in the liturgical book Euchologion to be read by ordained priests. Other were condemned as false or magical; these were mostly, though not exclusively, written on objects used as amulets. The liturgical and the “magical” textual traditions had distinct features regarding the structure, the wording, and the powers invoked. In the course of Late Antiquity, when Christianity gradually obscured the previous “pagan religious traditions, the “magical” texts adopted several elements from Christian worship and the liturgical discourse of the church, notably related to the cult of angels. The Church, on the other hand, made efforts to exclude what might be associated with “magic”. Yet, from about the 13th century onwards the liturgical books of the Byzantine Church include texts with features that are mostly found in “magical” amulets. The blurring of boundaries between liturgy and magic in texts for healing strengthened the position of both the liturgical and the “magical” traditions: phrases and structural elements deemed as effective could further survive in a Christianised context, whereas the Church reinforced her presence in concerns such as childbirth, migraine, and protection of children.

697 The Resilience of Lived Islam in Egypt: Voices from the Margins of Empires ONLINE

09:00 - 10:40 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021

Hager El Hadidi

This workshop is based on interdisciplinary studies that focus on Egypt’s history of transition, tribulation, dissent, social movements and revolutions where politics and religion were intertwined. The voices of resilience in the face of continuous transitions and adjustments to transnational and global change span the history of Modern Egypt, a period that began in the nineteenth century and extends until today and during with the Egyptian state, caught between empires, underwent various iterations and changing forms. During this period Egypt transitioned from a semi-independent Ottoman Province (1805-1923) to a British colonial protectorate under a fading Ottoman international claim (1882-1922) to a post-colonial independent monarchy (1922-1953), to an Arab-Socialist then Neoliberal Republic characterized by the primacy of military (1953-present). These modern tensions between empires manifested themselves in discursive practices that affected the religious lived experiences of Egyptian people and left traces of their resilience in the historical record, material and expressive cultures in addition to oral and written narrative memories.

The stories of lived religious experiences we are presenting in this workshop capture the voices of assorted Egyptians -- women and men, Muslims and religious minorities, slaves and their descendants, educated professionals, illiterate urban dwellers and peasants-- who have all transitioned from being Egyptian
Ottoman, colonial and religious subjects to becoming citizens of a so-called Republic where Islam is the state religion.

This discussion emanating from the research papers presented in this workshop asks if every day lived reality and experiences tell stories of resilience of religion that may challenge some prevalent academic and colonial discourse. Among the questions that the papers in this workshop ask are: How did various Egyptian subjects on the margin of a world in continuous flux and transformation react, resist, absorb, and above all adapt to discursive religious practices and traditions. How do men and women live and experience the reality of various discursive traditions whether they be Islamic, colonial, economic, militaristic or scholarly within specific socio-economic religious fields in order to maintain their resilience?

In this workshop, Yasmin Amin (University of Exeter) will present her research on the lived reality of women in the Islamic civil courts in Egypt, Khaled Fahmy (University of Cambridge) discusses the relationship between Islam and modern medicine in nineteenth-century Egypt, Hager El Hadidi (California State University Bakersfield) focuses on resilience in the lived religious experiences of Egyptian Sufi communities, and Sigrid van Roode (Leiden University) focuses on a genre of Egyptian Khedive-amulets prevalent in zar spirit paraphernalia that captures the history of the transition from Ottoman subjectivity and resistance to British colonial occupation.

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697 A Hundred Years of Religious Resilience: Lived Devotional Experiences to Sidi Abul Qassim of Egypt

Hager El Hadidi

California State University (CSUB), Bakersfield, USA

Abstract

This paper examines aspects of the charisma of a Muslim Saint and the cultic practices surrounding his person over the span of the past hundred years as supported by my ongoing ethnographic work that started in the year 2000. Sidi Abul Qassim’s shrine complex is located in a small town in Northern Egypt. Abul Qassim is a saint of love, a protector of women and of those experiencing problems with the law. This saint advocates for seekers under duress. His miraculous power stems from his ability to literally “shield” people who follow him, particularly women lacking financial or emotional support, and men with legal infringements. Thus, the saint’s charisma empowers women and men to overcome their difficult circumstances. This charismatic appeal has been inscribed in the lived experiences of his devotees (darawish, trans. dervishes) and seekers of love as expressed in oral traditions, ritual practices and life history narratives. These commemorative practices are also found in legends, in trance dances such as dhikr (remembrance) and zar (spirit possession) devotional songs, public ritual events such visitations, pilgrimages and devotional practices. In order to capture the resilience of lived Sufi Islam, I will re-tell and trace stories, dating back to 1910 and associated with Abul Qassim’s transforming appeal, from different angles and through different voices contextualized within the socio-historical conditions in colonial and post-colonial Egypt.

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671 The Khedive-Amulets of the Egyptian Zār: Ritual Artefacts as Materiality of Dissent
Sigrid van Roode
Leiden University, Leiden, Netherlands

Abstract

The zār is a possession cult, practiced in several countries in the northeast of Africa and southwestern Asia. During a zār, women who are possessed by a spirit enter into communication with their spirit under the guidance of the šaykhā or ritual practitioner. In Egypt in particular, silver amulets with depictions of zār spirits have been used since the early 1900's. Some of these amulets reflect actual historic events such as the deposition of Khedive Abbas Hilmi II (r. 1892-1914), who appears on the amulets between 1914 and 1916. Using the Khedive-amulets, I will demonstrate the capacity of material culture of ritual as historical source expressing marginalized voices.

Khedive Abbas Hilmi II was viceroy of Egypt. Nominally, Egypt was a part of the Ottoman empire, but in reality Great Britain had been ruling the country from 1882 onwards. When the Ottoman empire sided with Germany in World War I, this caused a conflict of interest for the British, who subsequently deposed the Khedive and appointed his uncle, Hussein Kamel, instead. Egypt was declared a Sultanate under the protection of Great Britain. While nationalist movements had been stewing for a considerable time, the removal of the Khedive sparked new waves of indignation which ultimately led to the revolution of 1919.

I will argue that this buildup of resistance is eminently visible in the materiality of the zār. Examining the manifestation of the Khedive I will address the qualities of material culture used in the zār ritual both as performance of resistance and as autonomous, historical source left to us by women.

669 Religion and Science in Nineteenth-Century Egypt
Khaled Fahmy
University of Cambridge, Cambridge, United Kingdom

Abstract

This paper deals with the relationship between Islam and modern medicine in nineteenth century Egypt. It specifically studies the foundation in the late 1820s in a suburb of Cairo of a hospital that doubled as a medical school where medical education was firmly based on dissection. The founder of this pioneering medical establishment was a French doctor by the name of Antione Barthelemy Clot, and its first students were recruited from Egypt’s centuries-old Islamic university, Al-Azhar. In his voluminous French language publications, Dr. Clot depicted religious belief and Islamic dogma to constitute a serious obstacle to his efforts to institutionalize the practice of dissection in his school. For example, in his 1840 Aperçu général sur l’Égypte, which became an immediate bestseller, he describes a dramatic attempt at his life by one of his own students who was appalled to see a Christian doctor dissecting the body of a Muslim man.

However, the equally voluminous Arabic publications of the Medical School’s students exhibit no contradiction between modern medicine and Islamic belief. In publication after publication, these students, many of them ended up being professors in their own alma mater, stressed how opening the human body encouraged them to ponder the majesty of God’s creation.
This paper contrasts the writings of Dr. Clot and those of his European colleagues about dissection, smallpox vaccination and the plague with a handful of Arabic publications on the same topics which date from the 1830s to the 1860s and which were written by the Egyptian students of the Medical School. The aim is to investigate how different religious sensibilities informed medical understanding of the human body, its agency, and its ownership.

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**722 In Her own Right: Stories of Egyptian Women in Courts**

*Yasmin Amin*

*University of Exeter, Exeter, United Kingdom*

**Abstract**

This paper focuses on four cases from Egyptian court records in the nineteenth and twentieth century, examining the final verdicts issued by the judges. The chosen cases focus on the plight of women and children, either as plaintiffs, defendants, or subject matter. I will argue that women were regarded as legal entities, knew their rights, filed their own cases, and were held liable or acquitted. Women’s testimonies were accepted in court despite of the theoretical aspects outlined in Islamic Law regarding women’s testimonies. Opinions range from completely rejecting female testimony in certain legal areas, to conditionally accepting it or requiring a supporting male testimony, to accepting women’s testimonies. The cases confirm that court rulings often not only diverged from theories canonized in Islamic legal manuals, but also set precedents, demonstrating that legal theory was sometimes divorced from the lived reality and court practices, while at others was adjusted to fit the lived reality, showing that practical law and Islamic legal theory were not isolated, but in constant flux and interaction with the contexts of the times. The cases discussed in this paper offer new insights into the discrepancy between the formality and rigidity of the written theoretical legal manuals and the lived reality, contesting stereotypes about Muslim women as backward, oppressed, uneducated, and ignorant of their rights. These stories demonstrate the complex relationship between the judges’ role as the upholders of a body of theoretical jurisprudence and their role in shaping legal practice in the Egyptian society.

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**33-I Yes we Jain!**

*Heleen De Jonckheere, Tine Vekemans, Basile Leclère*

Throughout its long history, Jainism has endured as a relatively small religious movement in the intricate and often choppy currents of the South Asian cultural and religious ocean. Although Jainism has often been stereotyped as austere, unyielding, and difficult to practice, this panel proposes to see this endurance as indicative of Jainism’s ability to transform and adapt to changing circumstances while always guarding continuity within the tradition. It will therefore foreground the adaptive capacities which have enabled the Jain tradition to continue to thrive, and successfully support and engage with its followers, even in less than ideal circumstances.
Under the affirmative title 'Yes we Jain!', this multi-session open panel will accommodate - and seek to attract - contributions from scholars approaching Jainism from a broad range of perspectives and disciplines, focusing on moments of crisis or adversity in the history of the tradition and in the lives of its practitioners. We explicitly invite both textual and sociological case studies discussing instances of adaptation within a specific context, as well as theoretical approaches examining the DNA of Jain resilience more generally.

The panel will be organized in sessions focusing on different types of challenges Jainism and its followers have faced. Although this division in sessions is subject to change depending on the number and content of the papers submitted, we tentatively expect to present three sessions: the first session will focus on ways in which Jainism has dealt with and continues to deal with the fundamental issues of human existence. Contributions to this session may include discussions of specific transformations of Jain praxis prompted by changes in circumstances related to pandemics, famine, or migration, as well as more general examinations of Jain teachings on issues such as (re)birth, disease, and death. The second session will examine concrete moments of crisis located within the tradition itself, such as a sectarian split or the death of a preceptor, which present a potential threat to the continuity and unity of the Jain (sub)tradition that needs to be mitigated. The third session will look at challenges emerging from Jainism’s interactions with its religious others, be it in the form of religious and philosophical polemics with Hindu and Buddhist thinkers or in the form of political power brokerage under non-Jain rulers. Such interactions have prompted Jainism to redefine and profile itself within the given context.

Together, the papers included in this multi-session panel will present a diachronic and multimodal exploration of resilience in the Jain tradition; it will feed into discussions on the adaptive capacities of Jainism, the ways the tradition can inspire resilience in the face of adversity, and the dynamics of religion in times of crisis in general.

169 Internal Controversy and Literary Heritage: A Discussion of Two Śvetāmbara Dharmaparīkṣā Adaptations

Heleen De Jonckheere

University of Chicago, Chicago, USA. Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium

Abstract

Dialogue and debate lie at the core of Jain religion and philosophy. The other whose perspective Jains would consider and subsequently refute could belong to another tradition, to their own tradition but a different sect, or even to their own sect but a different subsect. This presentation wants to focus on the internal dialogue within Jainism around the 16th century from a Śvetāmbara perspective. It will do so by discussing two adaptations from different Śvetāmbara Tapā Gaccha subsects of a narrative called Dharmaparīkṣā ('Examination of Religion') as it was composed by the Digambara author Amitagati (11th c.). These texts are interesting because they pile up different layers of debate, namely towards Brahmins, towards Digambaras; and perhaps even towards the Śvetāmbara others. While the first adaptation by Saubhāgyasāgara is a sort of paraphrase of Amitagati’s text, the work by Padmasāgara stands out for being a near copy of that text. By contextualising both adaptations and by drawing on fragments of the texts, I will argue - similarly to Clines (2016) - that the act of adaptation itself can be seen as a manner of debate against the Digambara precedent. I will further argue that claiming the Dharmaparīkṣā within the Śvetāmbara corpus can be interpreted as a way to transfer its authority upon Śvetāmbara literary heritage. Furthermore,
the fact that two different subsects of the Śvetāmbara tradition claimed this narrative, might suggest the
influence of internal strife in the production of these adaptations. Taken together, my discussion of the two
Dharmaparīkṣās will illustrate how forming a corpus of literary heritage can help to overcome the crisis that
results from internal religious controversy.

390 Being a Kannaḍiga, Being a Jain: Sanskrit as a site of Contestation in a
14th-century Kannaḍa Text
Itamar Ramot
University of Chicago, Chicago, USA

Abstract

Something happened in the social and literary worlds of twelfth-century Karnataka that pushed the Jain
community of this region to reconsider its own place and identity vis-à-vis its neighboring communities.
Scholars have associated it with the rise of a new religious movement, the Vīraśaivas, which through a series
of events that are treated today as the “vacana movement” brought about an end to the “Jaina period” and
to Jain predominance over the Kannaḍa literary world. But the narrative and periodization of a “Jaina
period” followed by a “Śaiva period” conceal a more complex reality in which Kannaḍa Jain voices persisted
long after these events took place.

In this paper, I ask what can we learn by reading a Jain poet from the midst of this “Śaiva period”? By
examining Vṛttavilāsa’s Dharmaparīkṣa (c. 1360 CE), the first vernacular retelling of a Jain story that had
already been told in Prakrit, Apabhramśa, and Sanskrit, this paper illustrates the sorts of concerns that
occupied the Jains of that place and time. More specifically, I discuss how this Kannaḍa work negotiates a
complex relationship with Sanskrit, which serves as both the language of an imagined translocal Jain
community as well as the marker of non-Jain others.

226 Jainism in South India’s Middle Ages: Decline, Revival, Endurance
Dr. Tiziana Lorenzetti
International Institute of South Asian Studies, Rome, Italy

Abstract

Having been for several centuries one of the India’s dominant religions, Jainism, from the seventh century
onwards, started to decline, slowly, but inexorably. The peak of these times of crisis was reached,
particularly in the South, around the twelfth century.

Contrary to what’s been accepted so far, this progressive loss of power on the part of Jainism was not only
due to the success of the so-called ‘brahmanic revival’, or to the inter-religious struggles of the day, or, to an
even lesser degree, to Islamic invasions.
This paper will throw new light on lesser known reasons which, together with profound social and economic changes, in the span of a few centuries, may have had a considerable impact on the decline of Jainism. At the same time, the present paper intends to bring into focus how Jainism was able to face challenges and crisis after crisis during the Middle Ages, and overcome them all, being still alive both in India and abroad.

154 Histories of Shatrunjaya and Making of Jain Identity in South Asia

DShalin Jain

Department of History, University of Delhi, Delhi, India

Abstract

By discussing the example of Shatrunjaya a pilgrimage centre renowned for its historic Jain temples located next to the town of Palitana in Gujarat state of India, this paper aims to examine critically the largely unwritten aspects of the institutional, religious, philosophical and social histories of medieval and early modern Jainism in South Asia. Shatrunjaya was simultaneously invaded as well as patronized by the political forces having allegiance to other religions in this period. At the same time, Shatrunjaya a sacred site, was invented as a landscape which was apparently spiritually autonomous but functionally closely knitted with a temporal pragmatism where occasions of sectarian conflict and moments of contestation were concealed to project a homogenous community. Apparently, the tensions of patronage and occasions of larger conflicts generated such narratives whose meanings and immediacy were inseparable from the reality of political conflicts and sectarian competitions. Thus, on the one hand this pilgrimage centre symbolizes a crisis in the sacred landscape of Jainism and on the other hand it constantly provided the moments of assertion of Jain identity.

Such processes of identity formation can be traced, of course, not only in literary genres but also in material productions in and around Shatrunjaya. To understand the ground level operative relationship between religious structures and group identity in pre-modern India, a different sort of approach to the material and textual evidence i.e. the relationship between religious spaces and their narratives is required having different “orientations to power”. The ample availability of Jain travel cum pilgrimage narratives available in Sanskrit and Vernaculars sought to map a landscape through the details of pilgrimages undertaken to sacred sites in Shatrunjaya and to praise the individuals who made such efforts. The histories of Shatrunjaya unfold through Jinprabha Suri’s Vividhtirthkaipa, Jinal Upadhyaya and others’ Khartar Gaccha Brihad Gurvavali, Vivekdeheer Gani’s Shatrunjayatirthoddhara Prabandh, Shri Vallabh Gani’s, Sanghpati Rupji Vansh Prashasti or the inscriptional collections by Muni Jinvijay and G. Bühler. Similarly, there is no dearth of non-Jain sources ranging from Ali Mohammad Khan’s Mīr-i-Ahmad to the British memoirs by James Burgess, James Tod and Alexander Kinloch Forbes. The layers of narratives on Shatrunjaya expound the epistemology of Jain identity formation.

Through this study of Shatrunjaya, I also examine the practices of destruction, claims of renovation and the patterns of patronage as symbols of the social existence of religious communities with the premise that there has been a well-established conception of the relationship between the community identity formations, the sacred landscapes and political exigencies. In fact, organizing pilgrimages and going to the centres of pilgrims and the building and renovation of temples had an invariable link with the formation of the individual as part of the community. Public performance of religion as well as the notions of community in the public realm helped in teasing out implications of community formation. In this process, literary and
religious texts glorified the significance of the renovation of such sacred landscapes both within the local and larger communities.

34-I Resilience or Resistance: Repressive Regimes and the Blurring of Boundaries Between the Political and Religious
09:00 - 10:40 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021
James Kapalo, Roland Clark

Modern Europeans have long maintained a distinction between the religious and the political. From Britain’s Glorious Revolution to Germany’s Kulturkampf and the secularisation campaigns of the early Third Republic in France, this distinction was hard-fought for and uneasily maintained. Nonetheless, even in modern Europe, the idea that religion has the ability to separate itself from the concerns of the political has been repeatedly called into question. Just as modern states have shown themselves to be remarkably concerned with “ultimate concerns” (Tillich), religious groups have consistently found themselves making claims that call into question the legitimacy of the modern state.

This Open Workshop will explore the blurred boundary between ideas of religious resilience and political resistance in the context of state repression of religion. In the modern era, religious activities have frequently been interpreted as politically dangerous by regimes whilst religious communities have claimed that their pursuit of a religious life is free from political implications. Does practicing one’s religion illegally always constitute political resistance, and if not, where are the boundaries between the two? Scholarly perspectives have sometimes privileged the pursuit of faith over dissent or emphasize opposition and defiance over the maintenance of religious lifeworlds. With a particular focus on modern Eastern Europe and Russia, we invite papers that problematize the distinction between political acts of opposition and the pursuit of faith and meaning on the part of religious groups. We encourage papers that analyse interactions between state actors and religious groups, and that explore creative responses from religious groups and individuals such as visionaries, charismatic leaders, and underground communities in the context of repressive or authoritarian regimes.

21 Debating Atheism in Postwar USSR
Galina Egorova
Higher School of Economics, Moscow, Russian Federation

Abstract

It is well-known that Nikita Khrushchev initiated a large anti-religious campaign in the USSR. Alexander Osipov, a former priest, was one of the symbols of this campaign, he was called “the main atheist of the USSR”. Alexander Osipov devoted his life to active anti-religious propaganda: he spoke on radio and television, wrote books, articles and lectured. Luckily, unique sources have been preserved in the Russian National Library - letters from USSR believers to Alexander Osipov. In these letters, provincial believers
openly expressed their opinions, debated with Alexander Osipov on issues of faith and atheism. Due to these sources, we can learn about the inner world of believers who were deprived of the right to protest against the antireligious campaign in the USSR, as well as being able to study the so-called “religious revival” in the USSR in the post-war period.

100 What Are “the Obligations of Citizenship”?: Negotiating the Line between Law and Religion in 1920s Romania

Roland Clark
University of Liverpool, Liverpool, United Kingdom

Abstract

Romania’s 1923 Constitution stated that ‘freedom of conscience is absolute. The state guarantees this freedom and protection to all denominations so long as its exercise does not affect public order, good behaviour, and the laws of the state’. Nonetheless, state officials persecuted groups ranging from Inochentists and Old Calendarists to Protestant denominations such as Baptists, Nazarenes, Brethren, and Pentecostals throughout the interwar period. They closed churches, beat and sometimes killed members, and arrested preachers and colporteurs. Religious minorities objected that they met ‘the obligations of citizenship’ and that there was therefore no need to persecute them. Other groups, such as the YMCA, claimed to have a purely cultural program that ‘does not involve itself in religious matters’, despite holding prayer meetings and Bible studies. This paper explores the ways that these minorities negotiated the boundaries between the religious and the secular.

Juxtaposing sermons, pamphlets and petitions produced by religious minorities with police reports and official legislation, I ask what various groups believed the difference between religious freedoms and the obligations of citizenship was, showing that the problem lay in the different ways that churches and the state conceived of ecclesiology. Moving beyond written texts, I then study the actions of religious minorities to complicate the relationship between resilience under persecution and resistance against a repressive state. Whereas groups such as Old Calendarists occasionally turned to violence in the course of defending their religious freedom, others, such as the Nazarenes, stubbornly persisted in their illegal practices but proved willing to suffer violence and even death as a result. Where does resilience end and resistance begin, and is the difference fundamentally in the eye of the beholder?

230 The Catholic Church in Romania between its Apostolic Mission and the State’s Antisemitic Regulations (1940-1944)

Philippe Blasen
Institutul de Istorie „A.D. Xenopol”, Iasi, Romania

Abstract
In July 1940, in the final months of the personal regime of Carol II in Romania, baptisms of Jews were prohibited by ministerial order. In March 1941, under the dictatorship of General Ion Antonescu, Jews were legally banned from completing the administrative formalities requested prior to baptism. Some Church authorities complied with the new regulations, while the Catholic Bishops in Bucharest and Iași, as well as the Nuncio, resisted it. However, they had to face the mainly Orthodox Romanian authorities that were hostile to the Catholic Church and intended to deport all the people they regarded as Jews, regardless of their faith, to Transnistria. The Bishops and the Nuncio therefore insisted, on the one hand, on the abidance by the Concordat between the Holy See and Romania, as well as on the Church’s Apostolic mission, and, on the other hand, conceded that conversions and baptisms of Jews should not impinge on the rule of law. As a result, some Jews could be saved from deportation, while others were deported despite being Catholic converts or catechumens.

The paper intends to address the following questions: What were the arguments used by the Catholic Bishops and the Nuncio to convince the Romanian authorities to let them proceed with the baptism of the Jews? Where did they draw the line between the duties of the Catholics to the Church and to the State? To what extent did the Catholic Bishops and the Nuncio make this distinction in everyday Church practice? Was there a discrepancy between their pledges to the State and their day-to-day activity? Could one distinguish between two levels of resistance: open opposition, which consisted in publicly challenging the State’s rules, and clandestine resistance, which implied that the Church authorities broke the pledges made to the State?

ISC 23 Secularisation (Individual Short Communications)
09:00 - 10:40 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021

542 Cultural Memory and Sociodemographic Changes in the Process of Transformation of Religion.
David Václavík
Department for the Study of Religions, Masaryk university, Brno, Czech Republic

Abstract

The secularization phenomenon was traditionally associated primarily with significant socio-cultural changes caused by modernization (especially industrialization, urbanization, etc.). Their importance was perceived mainly for a fundamental shift in an ideological context, which led to a gradual erosion of religion in society. This erosion was primarily associated with a weakening of the explanation or political role of religion in society. The Paper will also focus on analyzing other aspects of the secularization process, which is mainly related to the change in socialization mechanisms and cultural memory changes in creating modern collective identities.

502 Secularised Muslims and Secularised Christians: How Religious Background Shape Secular Identities
David Thurfjell¹, Erika W Willander²

¹Södertörn university, Stockholm, Sweden. ²Uppsala university, Uppsala, Sweden

Abstract

In an essay from 2008, Peter L. Berger relates a joke from Northern Ireland in which a gunman holds a gun to a man’s head asking “Are you Catholic or Protestant?” “Actually,” the man responds, “I’m an atheist.” “Ah, yes,” replies the gunman, “but are you a Catholic or a Protestant atheist?” Drawing on analyses of Swedish survey data, this paper presents to what extent Swedish people with Christian and Muslim family background identify as secular. It discusses what it means to uphold such an identity in contemporary Sweden, and discusses how self-reported individual secularity may differ depending on religious family background as well as on the associations that are pinned to various religious traditions in public discourse. The paper also presents figures on the variables that effect to what extent people are inclined to self-define as secular and concludes that education and, in the case of immigrants, time spent in Sweden, has less impact than has previously been suggested.

54 Institutional Religion in an Age of COVID-19: What the Church of England’s Adaptation to the Pandemic Reveals About Its Relationship with Science

Alex Fry

Durham University, Durham, United Kingdom

Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has meant that religious institutions have needed to quickly adapt to the temporary challenges facing societies across the world at present. This has included the need for them to quickly establish how best to cope with the ongoing crisis at national and international levels. In this context, the Church of England has concentrated its efforts on developing public policies aimed at curtailing the spread of Coronavirus amongst the English population that could result from participation in communal religious activities. This paper reports findings from a thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews with the Church of England’s national public policy advisors responsible for guiding the denomination’s engagement with COVID-19. It argues that participants’ rationale for the Church’s response to the pandemic evinces that, for them, science has a telos rooted in a set of values about the dignity of the human person. It also argues that participants’ use of science as a telos during the pandemic has been shaped by values found within the wider Christian tradition in addition to being shaped by the institutional context of the Church of England, which has formalised processes for engaging in national affairs in its capacity as an established church. In doing so, this paper will also reflect on how religious values can impact the way that religious institutions react to difficult circumstances.

614 Demarcating the Nordic Public Religion: The Permitted Contexts of Religion in the Finnish Parliament

Tuomas Äystö, Titus Hjelm
Abstract

Via examination of the language use in the Finnish parliament between 2010 and 2020, we trace the religion-secular boundary in a Nordic context. We use a combination of automated text analysis and qualitative case studies in order to see the contexts where the Finnish political institution considers religion related language as appropriate, and where (if anywhere) it functions effectively. We hypothesize that religion is referred to mainly in discussions dealing with “soft” or “cultural” topics - those related to values and identities - rather than the “hard” topics of politics such as economy and foreign policy. In addition, we investigate whether the party position (governmental or not) affects religion related language use, as well as the general impact of such language in the parliament floor.

7-I Surveying Ritual Creativity in Contemporary Paganism and New Age Prior to and During the COVID-19 Pandemic
09:00 - 10:40 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021
Nicolas Boissière, Yael Dansac

Over the last three decades, numerous scholars have investigated the various religious, spiritual and magical traditions that fall under the umbrella term of ‘contemporary Paganism’, be it Wicca, Druidry, Heathenry, Goddess Spirituality, ‘Native Faith’ movements, shamanism, eco-spirituality and many more (e.g. Luhrmann, 1989; Hardman & Harvey, 1995; Hutton, 1999, 2009; Strimska, 2005; Rountree, 2015; Doyle White, 2016; Harvey, 2019). Simultaneously, other—but sometimes the same—scholars have also examined New Age, pointing out its diverse spiritual, therapeutic and political dimensions as well as the difficulty in defining it (e.g. Albanese, 1991; York, 1995; Hanegraaff, 1996; Pearson, 2002; Sutcliffe, 2003; Pike, 2004; Kemp & Lewis, 2007; De la Torre et al., 2016). Their studies, rooted in different geographic contexts such as Europe, North and Latin America or Oceania, highlight that, despite the numerous characteristic beliefs, worldviews, practices, groups and networks contemporary Paganism and New Age encompass, individuals engaged in such phenomena tend to think of their rituals as being at the core of their religious, spiritual, magical and therapeutic experiences (e.g. Berger, 1999; Pike, 2001; Salomonsen, 2002; Magliocco, 2004; Rountree, 2004; Fedele, 2013). Shaped through creative processes, contemporary Pagan and New Age rituals are indeed crucial for them to: celebrate calendar festivals; establish relationships with ‘Nature’, ‘the Universe’, landscapes and other-than-human beings; mark births, marriages, deaths and important individual or collective events; increase corporal, emotional and psychological healing and empowerment; develop a sense of community belonging; and, among many other purposes, express identities, especially as regards gender, sexualities, and ethnicity.

In the continuity of these studies, this panel seeks to deepen the understanding of contemporary Pagan and New Age ritual creativity, defined here following anthropologist Sabina Magliocco (2014: 1) as “the self-conscious crafting of new rituals, or the reinterpretation of existing ones, with the expressly subversive purpose of bringing about cultural change”. In order to survey such ritualization processes, we would particularly like to bring together several scholars who have conducted ethnographic research in contemporary Pagan or New Age milieus on the basis of these general questions: how does contemporary Pagan and New Age ritual creativity occur, both offline and online, especially during the world-wide COVID-19 pandemic? How do practitioners of contemporary Paganism and New Age engage themselves
emotionally, bodily and intellectually in their creative rituals and other forms of ritualization in these challenging times? Papers dealing with specific case studies, comparative investigations as well as theoretical and methodological challenges underlying the examination of contemporary Pagan and New Age rituals are also welcomed.

This paper aims to offer an introduction to our session intitled “Surveying Ritual Creativity in Contemporary Paganism and New Age Prior to and During the COVID-19 Pandemic”. In this regard, we will first propose a general review of the main aspects that characterize Contemporary Pagan and New Age ritual creativity as well as its scholarly study over the last three decades. Drawing on our respective fieldworks, we will then present the two ethnographic case studies that constituted the starting point of our jointed reflection on Contemporary Pagan and New Age creative rituals: Druidry as it is practiced in the Canadian province of Quebec, and contemporary spiritual interactions with the megaliths of Carnac in France. Finally, we will outline both the various themes addresses by the 11 papers gathered in our session and the different issues that we would like to discuss regarding the survey of Contemporary Pagan and New Age ritual creativity, especially during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

09:00 - 09:20

7 Ritual Creativity in Contemporary Paganism and New Age: An Introduction

Yael Dansac¹, Nicolas Boissière²

¹School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences EHESS, Paris, France. ²University of Quebec in Montreal, Montreal, Canada

Abstract

This paper aims to offer an introduction to our session intitled “Surveying Ritual Creativity in Contemporary Paganism and New Age Prior to and During the COVID-19 Pandemic”. In this regard, we will first propose a general review of the main aspects that characterize Contemporary Pagan and New Age ritual creativity as well as its scholarly study over the last three decades. Drawing on our respective fieldworks, we will then present the two ethnographic case studies that constituted the starting point of our jointed reflection on Contemporary Pagan and New Age creative rituals: Druidry as it is practiced in the Canadian province of Quebec, and contemporary spiritual interactions with the megaliths of Carnac in France. Finally, we will outline both the various themes addresses by the 11 papers gathered in our session and the different issues that we would like to discuss regarding the survey of Contemporary Pagan and New Age ritual creativity, especially during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

321 The Role of the Imagination in Connecting Sacred Space with Sacred Places in Pagans’ Online Rituals during the Covid-19 Pandemic

Kathryn Rountree

Massey University, Auckland, New Zealand

Abstract
At its heart, contemporary Paganism is about the human connection with the natural world, with the other-than-human beings who share it, with the elements (earth, fire, water, air) and with special, sacred places beloved by ancestors. In 2020, because of the global pandemic, Pagans, like everyone else, were tethered to their homes and opportunities to gather and perform rituals that embodied this connection to the natural world and sacred sites were severely curtailed. Despite being physically cut off from one another and from opportunities to gather in nature, Pagans continued to meet in groups by moving their rituals online. The imagination has always played a vital role in magical consciousness. Performing rituals via Zoom exercised and expanded Pagans’ ability to craft sacred space; to imagine, visualise and find creative new ways to honour their connection with the earth; and to engender intimate, visceral experiences during ritual. Through a discussion of Pagans’ and modern western shamans’ online rituals held during 2020, this paper explores the role of the imagination in connecting sacred space online with sacred places in the “real” world and the interweaving of physical and imagined places in sacred consciousness.

09:40 - 10:00


Michal Puchovský

Department for Study of Religions, Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic

Abstract

COVID-19 restrictions prohibited many public activities, including music concerts in the Czech Republic. Music in general and concerts in particular can be important instruments in the process of strengthening and shaping religious identities. During my MA and on-going PhD research I was able to confirm this observation in Slovak and Czech contexts. Concerts are ideal places to meet old friends from the community, to get to know new colleagues in faith and strengthen religious identity among modern Pagans from very scattered communities.

The pandemic surely changed the dynamics of public religious life. But the question is – what changed in the case of Czech modern Pagans? Did they start to attend the online concerts to simulate the experience of physical meetings? Or did they limit their meetings to only the most important ritual celebrations in nature? Will COVID-19 decrease the popularity of concerts because of fear and increase the importance of small private gatherings? The paper will investigate new trends in the process of shaping religious identities and will be based on data collected on concerts between 2016-2019 and in online inquiries regarding Czech Pagans.

10:00 - 10:20

181 “Connect and celebrate the Great Mother online”: The Ritual Creativity of Contemporary Pagans in Portugal and the United Kingdom during the Covid-19 Pandemic
Abstract

Contemporary Paganism is an “umbrella term” used to designate several religious and spiritual polytheistic traditions, which has as its main beliefs nature as sacred, polytheism and pantheism, and gender equality. The celebration of the natural world, as well as the call for healing and empowerment, are central dimensions for their religious, spiritual and magical lives. Through ritual, they creatively provide meaning and make sense of individual and collective life processes.

During the Covid-19 Pandemic, online space became fundamental on their delineation and connection as a community. The need for isolation and the impossibility to celebrate and ritualize several individual and collective events on-site due to the pandemic called for alternatives. Online space and digital tools provided the means through which Contemporary Pagans cared and offered emotional and spiritual support to each other during these challenging times.

This presentation, based on preliminary findings from my PhD research in Anthropology on Contemporary Paganism and Witchcraft in Portugal and the United Kingdom, will use specific Ethnographic data to expose how these groups and individuals creatively adapted their ritual practices during the Covid-19 Pandemic, both online and offline. And how they emotionally, bodily and politically engaged themselves and embraced these forms of ritualization.

During the lockdown, the groups and individuals I work with created private and public groups in social networks; live-streamed rituals; adapted conferences and ceremonies to the online space and created offline rituals to be done simultaneously by the practitioners. Through these strategies, they worked on their individual and collective healing, celebrated important seasonal Pagan festivals, and expressed their political participation and activism. Notwithstanding the lack of bodily and sensorial stimuli, fundamental in rituals, and the uncertainty of the situation, they engaged themselves by these online and digital tools, bonding and providing meaning to these experiences.

With these Ethnographic examples is possible to analyze both the challenges that online ritualization raises for practitioners and, the theoretical and methodological ones raised during the study of these contemporary pagan’s rituals in these challenging and uncertain times.

48-I Embodiment in Religious Resilience
09:00 - 10:40 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021

Sergio Botta, Tessa Canella

The panel aims to explore Religious Resilience from the perspective of Embodiment, starting from the latest theories about the influence of embodied knowledge and practices on religions. This approach aims to consider religious processes through their entire physical context, including not just bodily states, but also environmental, social, ritual and daily experiences connected with a religious framework. In this perspective,
the body is considered not only as a symbolic field that reflects or re-produces prevailing values and ideas; it is also a site of resistance to, and transformation of, imposed meanings. Indeed, if different forms of religious beliefs and practices represent a powerful tool for coping with critical situations, embodied religious processes appear to be a productive field of investigation as they allow us to address the issue of Resilience from the perspective of ritual behavior, physical habits, environmental conditions. Religious Resilience is also significant during periods of crisis or turning points of religious history: with their extreme “doctrinal sensitivity” and the involvement of the social actors in religious conflicts and confrontations, they appear as specific and productive frameworks to investigate through the lens of Embodiment. As a consequence, this panel will take into account socio-cultural changes which represent a peculiar context of expression for different forms of religious experiences in transformation, reaction and resistance processes.

Among the lines of enquiry that might be undertaken are the following:

The sensory involvement of cult leaders and/or environments;

The importance of memory practice of religious education;

The physical actions related to ritual practices;

The bodily perception and representation of conversion;

The persistence of prohibited or dissident ritual or physical habits in the contexts of religious uniformity;

The bodily stigmatization of religious dissent;

The competition and coexistence regarding sacred places;

The practical implication of religious repressions;

The use of metaphors in embodied knowledge to convey religious ideas and doctrinal elaborations.

316 The Resistance of Bodies in Myth and Polytheistic Religion

Silvia Romani

Università degli Studi di Milano, Milan, Italy

Abstract

Nicole Loraux, in her seminal Les Expériences de Tirésias of the early 1990s, put forward the provocative and revolutionary hypothesis that under the heavy armour Athena's body simply does not exist.

Her possible invisibility is a strategy of resilience: a way of evading being seen and, at the same time, enhancing the symbolic and sacred function of the body.

From Athena onwards, and perhaps even before, the body is the medium through which female figures in myth and polytheistic religion defend their identity and protect their vulnerability from any enemy, external or internal.
Psychotropy and Embodiment. The Montanist Prophetess and the Textualization of a Visionary Experience According to Tertullian (De Anima 9.4)

Luca Arcari
Università Federico II, Naples, Italy

Abstract

Religious practices from the Roman Imperial world provide a clear example from the history of religions of the employment of psychotropic practices. Based on the surviving material and literary evidence, many scholars have concluded that cults and practices of the Roman Empire were specifically constructed to alter the body chemistry of people (cf. Smail 2008; Martin 2014). Affiliation with early Christian groups, for example, included collective rituals and initiatory practices that made use of symbolic elements through which the lives of the adepts were deeply modified. Another element frequently associated with such an in-group dimension was the awareness characterized by the density of associations. Forms of public or private reading or meditation of authoritative scriptures and traditions have favoured concentration, including experiences reinterpreted as direct contact with the other world. Such experiences had significant cognitive effects and were at least in part responsible for the tendency of some individuals to think they were seeing ‘higher’ realities in an unmediated way.

A clear example of the connections between psychotropic (i.e. ritual) ‘inputs’ and visionary ‘outputs’ (i.e., first-person descriptions of the other-world) is found in an account concerning a Montanist ‘sister’ as it is reported in Tertullian’s De Anima (9.4). Tertullian’s account casts light on the different levels called into question by first-person experiences of contact with the other world and their subsequent written forms in early Christianity. Psychotropic ‘inputs’ occur in the context of public and/or semi-public rituals and the prophetess’s reaction emerges as a response to a very psychotropic (i.e. ritual) ‘input.’ After the experience, which is available to both the ‘sister’ and her audience only as it has been filtered through her memory, people are able to access her religious experience only through a chain of textual transmission, i.e. a visionary account according to which she declares to have directly seen the ‘higher’ realities.

According to Tertullian’s account, a well-defined individual—the Montanist ‘sister’—claims to have a direct access to a different, ‘higher,’ reality. After having lived some psychotropic experiences, she triggers a writing-process, offering to her audience a psychotropic platform for other processes of inner chemical mutations. This process thereby explains the re-appropriation by Tertullian (and by his audience) of psychotropic elements in order to fabricate a competitive psychotropic ‘market.’ One of the most important features of psychotropic mechanisms is that they induce or incorporate changes to behaviour. This is the essence of power, whether it is the conventional understanding of it (one individual or group exerting control over another) or the more complex idea of ‘bio-power,’ whereby individuals, in effect, unconsciously discipline their own manners or behaviors through the internalization of norms and rules.

The Performing Word as a Weapon of Religious Resilience

Tessa Canella
Abstract

Late antiquity (3rd-6th century), as a period of crisis and a turning point in Ancient history, with its high degree of “doctrinal sensitivity” and involvement of the masses in religious conflicts and confrontations, appears as a particularly fruitful context of investigation from the point of view of Embodied Religious Resilience.

The religious competition takes place on a doctrinal and intellectual level, but this aspect is never detached from the need by the agencies involved to intervene in collective identities, real or imaginary, in a concrete way through the management of spaces, the strategies of communication and sharing experiences, also through the use of memory, repetition, public readings in a pedagogical key.

In this perspective, the power of the word pronounced in certain contexts, especially rituals, assumes a particular cathartic and performative function, and the mouth becomes a physical and symbolic place, generator and guardian of error or truth. The poetic word, the sung prayer, the hymns, strengthening the performative and pedagogical power of the word through the sensory involvement of rhythm and musicality, become weapons of resilience, assimilated, depending on the point of view, to bewitching corybantic rituals or “harps” of the spirit.

544 The Ascetic Body in The Life and Conduct of the Blessed and Holy Matrona

Maria Dell’Isola

University of Southern Denmark (Centre for Medieval Literature), Odense, Denmark

Abstract

The life and conduct of the blessed and holy Matrona (VMatr BHG 1221, mid 6th century) narrates the story of a woman attaining holiness through the rejection of husband and family and an extreme asceticism. Being the body the primary instrument of asceticism, the investigation of ascetic practices necessarily entails a detailed analysis of bodily experiences.

More specifically, in the Life of Matrona the ascetic body of the female saint is entirely shaped as a site of religious resistance. Asceticism allows Matrona to escape contemporary social life and all the institutions shaping its normative structure. Matrona rejects family ties and her role of wife and mother. More importantly, motherhood is repeatedly perceived and described as an obstacle to a complete devotion to ascetic life. At the same time, new family ties are established within the restricted monastic context: in this sense, family as a social institution is not rejected but rather reshaped exclusively on a religious level. Furthermore, Matrona openly wore a male monastic habit in order to enter a male monastery. These series of episodes are representative case studies of a bodily resistance to culturally constructed social constraints. In this sense, resistance tends to remove the female body from the time of worldly, everyday life.
On the other hand, in the *Life of Matrona* the body of the female saint is meticulously described as commonly subjected to a series of ascetic exercises constantly repeated through time in order to become more effective and strengthen a physical resistance. Such performances aim to reintegrate the body itself into the flow of time. This attests that sainthood has to be achieved via the acceptance of the incessantly consuming effect of the ordinary passing of time on human bodies. In this sense, a bodily/ascetic perception of time contrasts with the time of normative social structures.

The present paper attempts to discuss the centrality of the body in Byzantine hagiography by taking the *Life of Matrona* as a representative case study in this regard. By looking at the body as a key factor in shaping female religious agency in Byzantine hagiographical narratives, I aim to identify a set of key features that may describe how the body itself is used as a powerful instrument to subvert normativity in terms of reaction to predefined space, time and social institutions.

195 Discovering Resilience through Religiousness: Experiences of Power in Migration
09:00 - 10:40 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021

Amy Casteel

As people challenge borders of separation -- in gender, in geography, in age -- they often challenge the perceived borders of religious practice. When these challenges are unexpected, they may result in a negotiation between the individual, religious practice, and religion in a broader sense. Such negotiations highlight resilience both in religion itself and in individuals. This panel of researchers bring forward resilience in dynamics of power experienced in immigration. A combination of empirical and theoretical theological research reveals aspects of religion that become negotiable when confronted with crisis.

Since the research is taken from distinctly different perspectives (migrants in community, returning migrant missionaries, circular migrants, mothers, and adolescent migrants), resilience rooted in religion holds these perspectives together. The combination of personal, individual strategies found through religious practice and in religion itself offer insights into ways religion interacts with crisis to amplify resilience.

161 Resilience Seen from a New Everyday Life and Faith, Transformed by the Migratory Experience

*Jorge E. Castillo Guerra*

*Radboud University, Nijmegen, Netherlands*

**Abstract**

Migration can be understood as a transformative journey. The trip to a new territory, the stressful situations that arise along the way, access to the country of destination, the loss of everyday life references, the familiarity and physical contact with loved ones, provoke deep existential re-formulations (Castillo Guerra). Identity, culture and comprehension of faith, equally experience deep processes of transformation...
that relate to strategies developed for the migratory process and the new way of relating to the place of origin. How are these transformations and efforts perceived in the countries of destination?

It is possible to detect three points of view concerning our perception of migrants. The first is based on a populist ideology not cognizant of the transformative processes of migrants, which regards them as a group that comes to take advantage of welfare and social aid. A second view, makes a distinction between ideas and well-intentioned practices that treat migrants as guests that need assistance. The relationship between guest and host is conceived as static and without the knowledge that for migrants to “build” their own home, necessary steps are often omitted. Another view, has to do with researchers that limit the field of perception of migrants, to the context of the country of destination. Because migrants are not studied in their relationships with their societies of origin, academics are not privy to the scope of the transformations in their identities, religions and cultures. It is necessary to ask, therefore, how can we understand the transformations experienced by migrants? How do resilient communities of migrants respond to the new transnational everyday life?

In my presentation I will take the opportunity that the workshop Discovering Resilience Through Religiousness: Experiences of Power in Migration offers, to answer these questions. I will base my responses on contributions from intercultural philosophy, (Panikkar, Fornet-Betancourt), transnational studies (Glick-Schiller, Guarnizo, Wimmer, Amelina), and decolonial studies (De Sousa Santos).

First, I will analyze theoretical and practical problems in the monocultural realm that limit the perception of the migrants to a situation of vulnerability and that does not take into account their capabilities to overcome adversity. Second, I analyze the relationship between the transformations of identity, culture, and religion of the migrant groups and the effect that these have on their resilience. Based on field research in the Netherlands I explain how migrants expand the sense of social aid and religious concepts in their churches, through an emphasis on the generation of social capital (Putnam) and intercultural capital (Bourdieu, Fornet-Betancourt).

In my conclusions I clarify the reach of the intercultural, transnational and decolonial understanding of resilience in migration from a Christian perspective. In this way I contribute to a better understanding of the relationship between religion and migration in societies characterized by secularization and deprivatization of religion (Casanova, Kippenberg) and the places where there is a prognosis of the disappearance of Christianity.

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203 Courageous Hope in God’s Providence: The Resilience of Migrant Women in the Face of Manifold Adversities

Patricia H. Santos

Jnana Deepa. Institute of Philosophy and Religion, Pune, India

Abstract

Migrant women transitioning between urban and rural spaces in India experience violence, discrimination and oppression. Yet, as confirmed by my theological action research results, most of these women exhibit
much trust, courage, resilience and perseverance despite their pain and suffering. This comes from their lived faith experiences and bonds of solidarity that they try to establish with each other. More than institutional religion it is lived religion through popular devotions and spiritual practices that play a major role in the lives of simple migrant women.

398 Adapting Together: Religion and Resilience in the Experience of Transnational Mothers and Migrant Advocates
Ma. Adeinev Reyes-Espiritu
KU Leuven, Leuven, Belgium

Abstract

Philippine migrant workers whose children are left in the Philippines endure challenges from factors in the receiving country as well as the country of origin. Amidst the difficult situation of transnational mothers, many of them display a capacity to cope with adversity. Contributory to their experience of survival is the presence of migrant advocate organizations that extend help to them. Through analysis of semi-structured interviews with Philippine transnational mothers and migrant advocates in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Italy, and Kuwait, this paper discusses, on the one hand, how Christian spirituality, beliefs, and practices contribute to transnational mothers’ ability to be resilient. On the other hand, it explores the development of religion in receiving countries as it manifests itself (i) in the spirituality of migrant mothers, (ii) in the programmes and services of migrant advocate organizations, and (iii) in the spirituality of migrant advocates. As this discussion points to the significance of religion for people who strive to adapt to significant changes that are mostly marked by difficulties, it also seeks to understand how religion itself adapts as it is lived out by believers.

43 Keeping the Faith: Stories of Missionary Resilience and Transformation From the “Zusters van de Jacht”
Jane McBride
Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Leuven, Belgium

Abstract

The Flemish religious order of the Zusters van de Jacht, today mainly a retired community with no new Belgian vocations, is one of the oldest female missionary congregations in Belgium. This paper discusses some of the issues arising from my doctoral research, a feminist, empirical study, which uses semi-structured interviews to gather the Sisters’ recollections of their time in the mission field, the stories they want to tell, and their emotions as they reflect on their lives today.

Resilience and transformation are two of the themes that emerge from the interviews. The Sisters were mainly involved with the poorest groups in the communities in which they found themselves, in Congo before and after its time as a Belgian colony, and also elsewhere in Africa, in India, the Philippines, and
North and South America. The work was physically and mentally demanding and they often deliberately chose to place themselves in situations of physical danger to protect those in their care.

The Sisters worked with many different groups including prostitutes, prisoners, child soldiers, and the elderly, bringing their prior training (as lawyers, teachers, nurses), and expertise to bear in very practical ways. They were taken seriously by, for instance, judges and tribal chiefs in Africa, and community leaders in Taiwan, and were able to lobby for better human rights’ legislation and the release of prisoners, and help with the rehabilitation of prostitutes. As white women, and members of a religious order, they were offered roles of leadership and influence abroad giving them opportunities for self-realisation and agency which transcended the gender stereotyping they might have experienced back home.

The themes of resilience and transformation are made clear through the ways in which the Sisters’ practical and spiritual help was able to impact and improve the lives of those with whom they spent many years in the mission field. Their gender and status as religious women offered them protection and gave them credibility, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of their work. In addition all the Sisters in their interviews pay tribute to those they encountered in the mission field whose resilience inspired their own. They also mention the extent to which they were themselves transformed by their encounters abroad with those among whom they served. They describe these encounters in terms of life-enhancing gifts for which they are grateful, and which led to mutual flourishing of helpers and helped, crossing and recrossing the lines between sacred and secular, spiritual and practical.

196 Developing Faithful Resilience during Migration: Adolescents’ Lived Religion as a Negotiation Process

Amy Casteel

Catholic University of Leuven, Leuven, Belgium

Abstract

For adolescents migrating to Europe differing concepts of religious faith are confronted not only in society but also within their groups. In Europe, some recent waves of migration have been termed a crisis, not for the circumstances that motivated the migration but for the perceived impact of religious others on historically Christian Europe. Adolescents interact with this attitude and the process of integration while, at the same interpreting these interactions through their own spiritual development.

Adolescent migrants describe the interaction of religion with their migration and integration experiences in semi-structured interviews in Greece (2019), Spain (2020), and Belgium (2021). An interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) of these interviews reveals strategies of resilience by adolescents as they negotiate their religious identities as well as ways in which religion shows itself as resilient in the face of changes due to migration.

Theories of spirituality and hospitality will be applied to migration of adolescents. The combination of personal, individual strategies found through religious practice and in religion itself offer insights into ways religion interacts with crisis to amplify resilience.
In the last few years “resilience” has become a topic that has received particular attention. Different disciplines, from Physics to Engineering to Psychology and the Humanities, have defined this topic and identified its subject matter in relation to their field of studies. Religions - actually, “religious communities” - are a peculiar object of study, which can also be analysed by taking into account the role of “resilience”. In their life cycle, religious communities have faced a variety of unexpected changes. Environmental disasters, health emergencies, armed and non-armed conflicts, socio-economic and technological transformations, colonization and decolonization processes, political and/or ideological divisions and reunifications, and migrations are just some of the events with which religious communities have had to cope across time and space. The way in which such communities have handled unforeseen occurrences, which have happened inside and outside of them, have influenced their development i.e. their survival or disappearance and characterized their profile.

Starting from the assumption that every religious community can be examined by considering three key aspects that are identity, needs, and relations (Bernardo 2020), this panel intends to explore: 1. how religious communities reshaped their identities during their life cycle, 2. how and if their needs changed i.e. what needs have stayed the same and what needs were replaced by the new ones after a critical period, and 3. how their relations were reconstructed after a transition and/or an unexpected event. Specific attention must be paid to the following areas: a. the dynamics and rhetorical strategies that religious communities have applied to suit critical times, b. the discourses and the narratives they have produced for surviving, and c. the topics they have chosen to support such discourses and narratives with reference to a precise turning point.

To this end and without chronological restrictions or limits in the fields of study, the submission of proposals aimed at analyzing one of the three key aspects which characterized religious communities (identity, needs, and relations) in relation to the areas indicated above is encouraged. The proposals have to focus on case studies.

Topics of interest are: identity and belonging, memories, traditions, replacing of institutional structures, places of worships, ‘sacred’ spaces, relations between State and religious communities, intra-religious and inter-religious dialogue, ecumenism, etc.

This panel is part of the activities of the EU-funded project ‘NEGOTIA’ – “Negotiating Religion: Coptic Orthodox diaspora communities. Shifting identities, needs, and relations from Egypt to Europe and back”. This project has received funding from the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No 896918. It is hosted by Sapienza University of Rome and managed by Dr. Angela Bernardo.
327 Resilient Religious Communities: Changing Identities, Needs, and Relations across Time and Space. Syncretism as a Way of Creating New Identities for Resilient Communities

Jaco Beyers

University of Pretoria, Pretoria, South Africa

Abstract

When religions meet, several possibilities exist as to what the outcome may be: (i.) one religion may be dominated and forced to disappear - replaced by another religion; (ii.) both religions co-exist peacefully and autonomous alongside one another, (iii.) or both religions exist peacefully and gradually integrate to form a third new religion. In two of these cases religion proves to be resilient, with the loss or the retention of identity. Two examples are discussed here in order to illustrate the diversity of ways in which religions prove to be resilient. The first relates to the letter by Pope Gregory the Great (590-604) to the abbot Mellitus in England. In the letter the pope instructs the abbot to authorise the missionary, Augustine, to adopt a proper missionary method in accommodating pagan customs and turn them into Christian habits. The second case relates to the missionary Boniface (680-754) who planned to convert barbarous people. Boniface’s method was to destroy local pagan sanctuaries. By doing this he engaged in confrontation with the pagan god. Local communities believed that anybody doing harm to their sanctuaries will encounter the wrath of their gods. Boniface destroyed the sanctuaries and nothing happened to him. The local people accepted the stronger god as superior and exchanged their local deities for the new god. The two examples illustrate how religion can be resilient through aggressive or peaceful means. The aggressive means result in the retention of one identity. The peaceful co-existence may result in a gradual exchange of elements changing the identity of one or both religions. The latter process is what may be referred to as syncretism. The development and use of the concept of syncretism has had a long history. Still today the pejorative meaning of syncretism cannot be denied. Syncretism can however also refer to a natural and gradual process of peaceful coexistence of religious communities, resulting through a symbiotic coexistence the creation of new identities resulting in the perpetuation of identity in a different form. Syncretism can be a forced event (as is illustrated in the case of Boniface) or a peaceful event (as is the case with Augustine). This research investigates the relations between religious communities and how the identities change due to interaction, resulting in the creation of a new identity through the process of syncretisation.
The Zoroastrian Quest for Religious Authenticity in 19th-Century India

Mariano Errichiello
SOAS, London, United Kingdom

Abstract

Between the 8th and 10th centuries C.E., groups of Zoroastrians fled to the northwest of India to escape persecution in Iran and established what is known as the Parsi community. Across the centuries, Parsis maintained close ties with the remaining Zoroastrians in Iran and were able to preserve their religion, making it the stronghold of an Indo-Persian identity. During the 19th century, their participation in the Persianate transregional networks and the access to texts granted by the printing press made Parsis a natural recipient of elements of the Iranian nationalist discourse. Furthermore, having become a preferred trade partner of the British, Parsis’ proximity to the colonial power increased their permeability to the Western culture and forms of knowledge. Nevertheless, the attacks of Christian missionaries exposed the lack of a canonisation of the Zoroastrian scriptures and the absence of a normative theology. Although written scriptures legitimised the resilience of Parsis, the need to define what authentic Zoroastrianism was emerged. The response of the Parsis was weak and fragmented, triggering a debate about the veracity and the interpretation of scriptures. By taking into account primary and secondary sources, this paper will illustrate how Parsis articulated the emerging need for religious authenticity, giving rise to competing hermeneutical strategies that favoured the transition of the community from an Indo-Persian identity to the reconstruction of a pre-Islamic Iranian identity.

Grid of Identity: The example of the Ahmadiyya and Ibadid Community in Islamic Communities

Elo Süld
University of Tartu, Tartu, Estonia

Abstract

Islamic minority communities are living in the midst of change, these changes are due to the results of the Arab Revolution, civil war situations and migration crises. The Arab Revolution has created a situation in which, in addition to international conflicts and civil wars, various conflicts within Islamic communities have been established. The situation has been exacerbated by ISIS’s stronger influence in 2013-2018, the Syrian-Yemeni civil war, the escalation of the Palestinian conflict and the pan-epidemic last year.

Small communities within Islam have emerged, become increasingly visible and are demanding their position. They have become more vocal and have also been the victims of persecution.
Conservative groups within Islam have also risen up against them, wanting to defend one whole idea of Islam and seeing that presenting the inner diversity of Islam divides and weakens Islam.

In recent years, much literature has also been published and isolated research has been conducted on these communities: “Pluralism in Islamic Contexts - Ethics, Politics and Modern Challenges” Hashas, Mohammed (Ed.), Springer 2021; “Minority Religions in Europe and the Middle East. Mapping and Monitoring”, George D. Chryssides (Ed.), Routledge 2020.

The presentation focuses on two small groups – Ahmadiyya and Ibadi branches of Islam, who may seem different at first sight. The paper aims to present the similarities of the seemingly different minority groups by answering the following questions - how is the spiritual authority organized in these communities and how is religious knowledge passed on? What are the bases of the identity of the communities and how and where do changes enter the communities? What has influenced the self-interpretation of these different intra-Islamic communities?

The Ibadi are an old local community associated with Oman’s ethnic identity. The Ahmadiyya community, on the other hand, represents a modern revival movement within Islam. These communities are very different, on the one hand, but if we look at the mechanisms used to preserve their identities, they are similar.

They are communities inside Islam and understand themselves as Muslim communities and also call themselves Muslims. At the same time, they have different views on what it means to be a Muslim.

Another big question for such comparisons is which method to use for comparison and which kind of theoretical framework to use in this comparison. One option could be the theoretical framework conflict theory. Considering the fact that these Islamic minority communities are, by their identities, placed in a conflict situation with the Islamic majority. And conflict theory is a perspective of sociological research that is based on the premise that society is a complex system characterized by inequality and conflict that cause social change. This is an idea to be raised in the presentation and discussed with other researchers.

10:00 - 10:20

750 Enchanted or Disenchanted World? How Young Muslims Answer Today’s Problems for Resilience?
Mustafa Cabir Altintas
Sirnak University, Sirnak, Turkey

Abstract

Everybody is brought up within a view of the world built on certain beliefs. It may be a world without a god, with a distant god, or with a god who matters in everyday life. It may be a world where death is seen as the end of life, the beginning of life, or the transformation into a different kind of life. It may be a world where the highest value is self-realization, money, or unselfish love. It may be a world with universal, objective ethical norms, with relative, inter-subjective norms, or with subjective norms. Youths take over these beliefs and form habits consistent with them. Hence, modern people have cut themselves off from the sacred and imaginative realities and live in secular and measurable time. They live in a world described by Max Weber in terms of “disenchantment”. In Muslim society, many Muslims are not detached from reality; rather, they
live in an enchanted world, a world of spirits and forces, which can be described in terms of ‘embodied spirituality’ that requires ethical and aesthetic attitudes to the world that is also central to self-nurturance. Thus, this paper explores how young Turkish people construct, negotiate and experience changes in their lives between Western culture and Islamic culture via resilience. It presents youth’s worldview and their life-courses with a special focus on their attitudes to religion and social changes in the context of Western secular and Muslim collective identity. The data focus is how they make meaning of their life-world and how they might interpret experiences of Islam and engagement with Western culture and its social changes. It also considers changes in the attitudes, reflections, and social and religious practices of these youths regarding Islamic and Western culture/religion.

10:20 - 10:40

539 Digital Devotion: Exploring Hare Krishna Resilience in COVID-Times
Sonya Tillman
Lund University, Lund, Sweden

Abstract

Can a person become immersed in a religious life purely through digital mediums? This research centers on religious resilience through contemporary conversion via online methods for religious groups that rely on the physical temple for an embodied spirituality. Remarked through their ecstatic public chanting and dancing, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) serves as a case study to investigate the COVID-19 induced shift to online prophetization through its religious function, format, and viability. By addressing the gap in ISKCON literature through an added emphasis on “religions online”, this research investigates the sustainability and function of this transfer of religious prophetization using a qualitative approach directed at two Swedish ISKCON temples. This is done to account for the group’s digital presence alongside Sweden’s shifting COVID regulations. Beyond a local level, digital mediums allow ISKCON’s international properties to flourish by eliminating the physical boundaries of the temple and engaging with the fluidity of the sacred via cyberspace.

This research aids a discussion that can extend to other fundamental groups categorized as “religions online” by investigating new means of legitimacy, practice, and religious identity or belonging in this time of digital necessity. Situated within the realm of sociology, media studies, and religion, my proposed presentation will discuss these digital mediums’ varied religious functions using an ethnographic-inspired approach. This includes data from remote observations, content analysis, and semi-structured interviews from two ISKCON temples in Sweden and their subsequent websites, Facebook pages, and YouTube channels. From which, the themes of “sacralizing the secular”, “secularizing the sacred”, and acting upon collective ritual memory emerged to understand the contemporary role and format of online prophetization within religious resilience.

On a basic level, this digital presence allows for increased means of communication, attempts at legitimacy, and inventive ways to act on a collective ritual memory. On a deeper level, these functions are amassed in greater shifts of online digital presence, amounting to an overlap between the secular and the sacred. This overlap challenges the held dualistic mind-view between the two. A blending which is then displayed in the meshing of the imagined boundaries between the secular and the sacred through “sacralizing the secular” and “secularizing the sacred”, necessitating new means of legitimacy as the threshold for belonging is lowered, and religious narratives are shifted. Through these narrative shifts, COVID-19 becomes interwoven
in ISKCON’s collective message, cultivating a greater purpose and need for their message as a tool for resilience, which is then replicated through ramped-up humanitarian efforts. On a more intimate level, the interconnected themes of legitimacy, collective ritual memory, and virtual pilgrimage demonstrate the religious functions of the digital entertained by ISKCON in this new era of digital devotion. The abilities of such to sustain one’s religious belonging and promote newcomers appear promising alongside ISKCON’s commitment to religious practice via digital mediums beyond this COVID-era.

269-I A View to Nowhere
09:00 - 10:40 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021
Andrea Rota

In this panel, we discuss the relevance of research on utopian imaginaries, narratives, and projects for a global religious history of the 19th and 20th centuries and for theoretical reflections on religion. The conceptual ambiguity of the term utopia as both a “good place” and as “nowhere” underpins projections of the ideal society onto a specific place or an undefined elsewhere. Utopian imaginations point toward a world that does not exist (yet), but that serves as a reference for radical social, economic, and religious improvement. Therefore, utopian ideas and religious discourses share an inherent normative tension between the world “as it is” and the world “as it ought to be.” This tension invites us to reflect on how utopian ideas constitute instruments of resilience and resistance against the dominant social structures by providing an imaginary alternative reality that allows individuals and groups to endure their living conditions. At the same time, utopias may unlock a strong potential for change by inspiring revolutionary projects and constituting powerful calls to action to subvert the status quo.

To actors and to researchers, utopian ideals and practice reveal how different aspects of life are interwoven. Thus, they invite us to connect intellectual and everyday accounts of lived or imagined experiences in our efforts to uncover new facets in the history of religion and to push forward our theoretical and systematic reflections on the social and historical consequences of religious beliefs and practices. In this panel, we welcome case studies on literary, scientific, and lived utopias of the 19th and 20th centuries that include methodological considerations on the relevance of the research on utopias for the study of religion.

794 Another Kind of Future/Past: Decolonial and Asiafuturist Utopias of Religion in the Philippines from the 19th Century to the Contemporary Tabletop Role-Playing Games of #rpgsea
Adrian Hermann
University of Bonn, Bonn, Germany

Abstract

In the last few years, independent tabletop role-playing game designers and players in Southeast Asia have rallied around the hashtag #rpgsea on Twitter and other social networks. This has highlighted games that
develop unique original approaches, engage with larger trends in the indie design space, but also always negotiate questions of how to (or not) incorporate cultural elements of different Southeast Asian contexts into the settings and game mechanics. While many of the #rpgsea games do not understand themselves as specifically “Southeast Asian”, a number of them do contain such direct references. In particular, some of the games explicitly draw on e.g. Filipino religion, folklore, myth, and legend to develop innovative contributions to the often limited mythological repertoire of many Western tabletop role-playing games.

This talk explores decolonial and asiafuturist utopias and their visions of religion at two points in time: 1) the anti-colonial speculative and utopian writing of Filipino ilustrado elites of the late 19th century (like Pedro Paterno and Isabelo de los Reyes) (cf. Mojares 2006). 2) In tabletop role-playing games recently published by the #rpgsea community in regard to their ‘playful’ exploration of decolonial and Asiafuturist pasts/futures. I want to look at these late 19th century and early 21st century visions of utopian and dystopian futures, as well as the versions of the (pre-)colonial past espoused by these texts and games as contributions to a decolonization of speculative and utopian fiction (Moynagh/Cornum 2020). How do these new games envision “migrant futures” (Bahng 2017) and develop “BIPOC futurisms” that, as discussed by Mitchell/Chaudhury (2020), present “plural subjectivities”, “plural temporalities”, “plural mobilities”, as well as “hybrid geographies”?

273 Back to the Future? An Islamic Utopia at the Turn of the Twentieth Century

Laurent Mignon
University of Oxford, Oxford, United Kingdom

Abstract

In 1895, İsmail Gasprinski (1851-1914), a Crimean Tatar intellectual well connected to both the Russian and Ottoman intelligentsia, published a short novel with the title The Muslims of the Land of Serenity [Darürrahat Müslümanları], one of the earliest examples of a utopian text in a Turkic language. Originally conceived as a chapter of a larger imaginary travelogue, the author reworked the material and published it as a separate book. The plot is focused on the discovery of a secret land beyond the Sierra Nevada in Andalusia, where a handful of Muslims had managed to flee after the fall of Grenada in 1492 and had, over the centuries, set up the ideal Muslim state that was preserving the memory of Islamic Andalusia.

When republished in Ottoman Turkey in 1906, the text fed into two distinct literary trends that had marked the turn of the century: On the one hand, a literary fascination with Islamic Spain that had led a myriad of authors to write works with Andalusian themes, and, on the other, the emergence of utopian writing. Consciously or not, Gasprinski had brought together these two trends that were characteristic of a refusal by progressive Muslim intellectuals to accept the world as it is, either by taking refuge in an idealized Islamic past, or by imagining various utopian societies.

In the late nineteenth, early twentieth century, the history of Islamic Spain came to symbolize and legitimate the views or Muslim reformists on the compatibility between religion and science and the inherently progressive nature of Islam. Writing this travelogue provided Gasprinski with the opportunity to explore his own vision of Islam, based on the pursuit of science, of woman’s education and of egalitarianism. Thus he presented his readers with a world that, according to him, had existed in the past, existed now in the literary text, and yet could also exist in the future in the real world. In my paper, I will discuss whether his
discourse can be interpreted as representative of a “back to the future” approach, arguably, characteristic for Islamic utopianism.

Anne Beutter
University of Lucerne, Lucerne, Switzerland

Abstract

A common strategy of European missionary societies in the 19th century was to establish purely Christian settlements. In these settlements, the converted and their descendants were supposed to form an ideal Christian community in a ‘replacement culture’ that was supposed to be completely detached from the local religious and cultural context. Such a strategy, which can be described as a religious social utopia, was also pursued by the Basel Mission, today Presbyterian Church of Ghana, in what was then the Gold Coast. However, there these so-called “Christian towns” failed to succeed as a major missionary strategy in the long run. Nevertheless, the motif is persistent in self-designs of the present-day church (Presbyterian Church of Ghana).

The paper asks to what extent the utopia topos is suitable for the analysis of this phenomenon. It explores not only references to Christian utopian ideas but also to local Ghanaian worldviews, especially the idea of comprehensive well-being, prosperity and harmony as a fundamental human condition. Lastly, by drawing on empirical historical data from a specific congregation, it shows how implications such as these interlink in practice and thereby create the lived normativities that the motif of the “Christian town” stands for.

09:20 - 09:40

551 Versions of a Better World: Utopia, Emigration, and 19th-Century Discourse on Religion
Anja Kirsch
NTNU, Trondheim, Norway

Abstract

In 19th-century Europe, industrialization and modern capitalism as much as the enduring conflicts and feared atheism in the aftermath of the French Revolution triggered debate on alternative forms of living. The era was one of transition, and in this “society in motion”, movement became one of the defining features of perceptions of time. New forms of living were imagined and soon became manifest in the geographical movement of people migrating from Europe to the US in search of peace, prosperity, and
happiness. The emigrant groups differed significantly in their goals: Some aimed at establishing a “Christianopolis” while waiting for the imminent millennium, others were up to build a worldly paradise without religion. What they shared, however, was the firm belief in and implementation of ultimate betterment. If we understand utopia as a conceptual framework to denote “dreams of a better world” (Davis 1981: 12) that aim at the “radical improvement” (Segal 2015: 561) of the human condition including religion, then we may understand these emigrant settlements as social utopias experimenting, in one way or another, with the community of goods.

Proceeding from typical examples of emigrant settlements in the US, the talk portrays the role of utopia in historical processes of migration in the light of the “discursive triangle” of 19th-century debate on religion, utopia, and migration. Relating to recent approaches to imagination in migration studies (e.g., Chambers 2018; Petersen/Schramm 2017; Alpes 2014), the paper also discusses utopia as an analytical term to further theorize the "pull" factors of migration from a study of religion perspective.

287-VIII The Resilience of the Science of Religion(s) between Hermeneutics and History
09:00 - 10:40 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021
Giovanni Sorge

420 The Sources of Hermeneutics in the Work of Mircea Eliade and its Relations with the Phenomenological Direction in the History of Religions
Gabriel Badea
“G. Călinescu” Institute of Literary History and Theory, Romanian Academy, Bucharest, Romania

Abstract

In his formative period, but also in the most fertile of his activity, after the Second World War, Eliade and the Italian scholars (Raffaele Pettazzoni, Vittorio Macchioro, Giuseppe Tucci) had extensive discussions on the methodology of the history of religions as a scientific discipline. The young researcher recognized Pettazzoni’s merit in having delimited an autonomous domain for the religious phenomenona, having its own meaning, irreducible to the causality and determinism of the other fields of human consciousness. The religious fact must not be understood in the view of the intellectual dimension, Pettazzoni insisting on its emotional value, distinct from the sphere of rationality and aesthetics. The meaning of religious experience derives from its existential roots, which cannot find their fulfillment and solution in the other spheres. On the other hand, Eliade acknowledged Schleiermacher and Kierkegaard’s merit of dissociating the religious plan from that of metaphysics, namely religious experience as a type of subjective experience, which reaches the roots of subjectivity through religious feeling (Gefühl). Italian scholars have often criticized M. Eliade’s anti-historicism, namely his obvious orientation towards the phenomenological direction in the study of religion. Later, as a reaction to these criticisms, Eliade adopted a more nuanced position, integrating for example hierophanies or symbols in a process of historical becoming, recognizing for example their decline in the context of secularized modernity. However, Eliade reacted and attributed to the history of religions the role of a creative hermeneutics, or saving discipline, which can reverse the meaning of this process of secularization. Important thinkers, such as Jürgen Habermas, have observed that contemporary societies are
moving towards a post-secular era, a revival of traditional religions as well as new-age religious movements. Consequently, it remains to be seen what the status and role of the history of religions will be in this new context.

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**892** Sacri Brividi. A Quarant’Anni da “Religione e Accrescimento del Potere”
di I.P. Culianu

*Horia Corneliu Cicortas*

*Università, Dip. Lettere e Filosofia, Trento, Italy*

**Abstract**


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**876** The Power of Imagination. Giordano Bruno, Ioan Petru Culianu and the Resilience of Religion

*Arianna Migliorini*

*Università degli Studi di Salerno, Salerno, Italy*

**Abstract**

Despite the well-known allegations of atheism and his tragic death at the stake, Giordano Bruno let religion play a paramount role in the philosophical system that he developed. Arguing heatedly that Judaism and Christianity were nothing more than deceptive superstitions, he felt the urge to identify the re-establishment of a correct relationship between men, nature and God as the first and most important step to fulfill the challenging and yet, essential, plan of renovatio mundi. As he points out in his Spaccio, unsurpassed models of such “good” religions were the “religione civile” of ancient Romans and the “religione naturale” of ancient Egyptians, the former being geared toward the social celebration of glorious
achievements, the latter to the nourishment of constant communication between men, nature and God, attainable by means of laws and magic.

Once again, in his magic booklet De vinculis in genere, Bruno offers an interesting account of religion by putting devotion in close relation to imagination: most of the time, he says, imaginary beings are much more likely to bind (vincire) people than real beings are. Bruno’s view on devotion becomes pivotal in Ioan Petru Culianu’s fascinating investigation of Renaissance magic – seen as a science of the imagination – leading the Romanian historian to the conclusion that “ogni religione è una forma di manipolazione delle masse” (Eros e magia, Torino, 2006², p. 150).

By the analysis of Bruno’s magical theories as prototypes of modern political propaganda, Culianu’s reading of Bruno’s passage on devotion shows an intriguing connection not just between Culianu’s work on Renaissance philosophy and his work on the history of religions, but also between two different methodological approaches: the historical-comparative one, inherited from his Italian mentor Ugo Bianchi, and the seeds of the “cognitive approach”, aimed at understanding the psychic operations that lay beyond the phenomenon of religion – further developed in the latest stage of his career.

The purpose of my talk is then to explore such a methodological connection focusing on Culianu’s captivating thesis of the silent survival, in the modern world, of the “spiritual” or “psychic” operations described by Bruno, which can be seen as an original expression of the resilience of religion throughout the centuries.

683 Beyond Hermeneutics, After History, Out of this World: Ioan Petru Culianu's Mind Games

Sorin Antohi

Orbis Tertius Association, Bucharest, Romania

Abstract

This paper is a succinct analysis of Ioan Petru Culianu’s final and most ambitious publications and projects, including some from his Nachlass. They include short essays, full-length scholarly papers and book chapters, book proposals, journal programmes, introductions, etc. They were originally written in English, French, Italian, and Romanian. I have co-edited and discussed them in depth (see Ioan Petru Culianu, Jocurile minții. Istoria ideilor, teoria culturii, epistemologie, Iași: Polirom, 2002, 2019), as I have edited two major collective works on their author’s life and oeuvre. The paper focuses on Culianu’s quest for a new paradigm in the humanities, for a new transdisciplinary, universal science, and for their associated new Weltanschauung. As a disciple of (first and foremost) Ugo Bianchi and Mircea Eliade, and also as someone open to evolution in all disciplines, from philology and history of religions to philosophy of science, from ethnography and anthropology to literary theory and social sciences, from theoretical physics, mathematics, and cognitive sciences to magic and the Kabbalah (and so on), Culianu (sometimes spelled Couliano or Coulianu) considered them all, and was aiming at their elusive synthesis. Frequently, he was going into uncharted territories, and was formulating or merely suggesting new ideas, questions, hypotheses, and theories. Thirty years after his untimely and tragic death (May 21, 1991), his quest is still relevant and intriguing, while his suggestions deserve a wider discussion.
A Hermeneutics with Suspicion: The Reception of Henry Corbin in the Roman School

Roberto Revello

Università degli Studi "Insubria", Varese, Italy

Abstract

The effervescent Roman School of History of Religions, which was headed by the prestigious figure of Raffaele Pettazzoni (1883-1959), showed a lot of lukewarmness, some suspicions and qualms towards the first reception, from the 1950s onwards, of Henry Corbin’s work on Zoroastrian and Muslim Persia. These suspicions were shared by three generations of scholars within the Italian Society of the History of Religions: Raffaele Pettazzoni himself, the Islamologists Alessandro Bausani (1921-1988) and Gianroberto Scarica (1933-2018), very young at that time.

What were the reasons for these suspicions? Some were more ideological: Corbin’s insistence on the continuity and specificity of the Iranian religious genius, capable of producing “its own” Islam, could suggest a veiled anti-Semitic position. Corbin was definitely not anti-Semitic, but this kind of concerns were understandable after decades of pseudo-scientific racism applied to all fields, also considering the high civil value that distinguished the Pettazzoni’s Roman School. In some of his articles within “Studi e materiali di storia delle religioni”, Scarica wondered whether Corbin’s passion for Shi’ite spirituals and initiates was not also an expression of elitism full of antipathy for the Islamic Sunni majority. Another reason was a resurgence of the question of “monotheism”, a theme re-discussed by Corbin in a slightly different and dangerously non-historical way compared to Pettazzoni, an able critic of Wilhelm Schmidt’s “primordial monotheism” thesis. Last but not least, beyond the ideological suspicions and besides the nuances of important categories, Corbin’s phenomenological hermeneutics, as the real method of understanding religious facts, placed him firmly on the side of Mircea Eliade, with whom Raffaele Pettazzoni debated in defence of a rigorous, mature historicism and a complexity able to dialogue with a phenomenological perspective in a productive way. As witnessed and told by Scarica himself, his doubts about Corbin’s work, dropped later on, were connected to the issues of the time. However, bringing back to light this historical case can give us some indications to face the uncertain present of the Sciences of Religion(s). The first indication is that there are always ideological elements in methodological debates. This is not bad in itself (it would be worse to propagate miraculous “neutral” methodologies), but we have to deal with it with openness, as the Roman School did, and we have to do it with the time needed to exchange views, or to clash. Moreover, we can see that it is no mere coincidence that one of the most beautiful turning points of the Roman School is precisely this great debate on methodologies. So, perhaps this is exactly one of the main tasks of the Science of Religion(s): not to adopt the method of the moment, following a trend, but being a constant critique in defence of the complexity of religious facts and resisting conformism.

Coffee Break
10:40 - 11:00 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021
931 May the God(s) Save Us: Concepts and Narratives of Salvation in Antiquity

Miguel Herrero de Jáuregui

Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Madrid, Spain

Abstract

Salvation is a term that, in most modern European languages, is frequently linked to the religious sphere, and most often associated with the afterlife. Such meanings were firmly established in Late Antiquity with the triumph of two all-encompassing narratives, the Imperial “Salus ideology” and Christian soteriology, and lasted intact for many centuries. However, in Greek and Roman antiquity there were many different ways of envisaging salvation of both individuals and social groups, and it raised various theoretical and practical issues: for example, whether it depended on the gods (and on which gods) or on men; or whether it was a particular saving act from a specific threat or it could point to a permanent salvation. This lecture will review the various concepts and narratives of salvation in Antiquity in order to revive the complex richness of ancient texts referring to it. Literary and epigraphical evidence shows nuanced and variegated values of “saving” and “salvation” in religious contexts, and point to possible ways of reconsidering the range of meanings of these concepts, which are fundamental in any inquiry about resilient religion.

Keynote Lectures (Illman)
11:00 - 11:50 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021

Alessandro Polsi

933 Varieties of Vernacular Jewishness. Ethnographic Research in Nordic Contexts

Ruth Illman

Donner Institute for Research in Religion and Culture, Åbo/Turku, Finland

Abstract

In recent years, several analytical approaches to the study of religion in everyday life have developed with the shared aim to capture religion as a complex, contextual, and changing component of life. This study of tangible human beings with emotions, bodies, thoughts, and mundane worries is also increasingly related
to the larger social, historical, and institutional structures that set the conditions for and shape personal religious trajectories, paying attention to power relations and the physical milieu. This keynote seeks to contribute to this ongoing conceptual conversation by tapping into one of its strands: vernacular religion, which offers one way to account for ethnographies of everyday life. What is the unique contribution of vernacular religion to the study of religions? Is it distinguished from other similar analytical approaches, such as lived religion? Do they offer complementary or contrasting epistemologies?

The vernacular framework has attracted growing interest in recent years, e.g. in research on Indigenous and Pagan groups, alternative spiritualities, Muslim, and Christian communities, but it has not been applied to Jewish contexts to any greater extent, especially not outside of the dominating geographic contexts North America and Israel. Nordic Jews exist in the periphery of the Jewish Diaspora: a numerically small group, whose vernacular experiences represent an understudied area. To fill this lacuna in current scholarship, the lecture discusses several ongoing research projects seeking to map and understand Jewish life in the Nordic countries today; societies that are highly secular yet bear strong imprints of the historical and cultural domination of Lutheran Christianity and that today develop towards a steadily increasing cultural and religious diversity.

This ethnographic landscape is far from monolithic: it is colourful and changing, formed by an abundance of trivial and monumental choices relating to everyday life, dependent not solely on religious or ethical judgement but also economic and social circumstances, habits and chance. The ethnographies illustrate how differently the dynamics of vernacular Jewishness play out in different life narratives, formed by varying relationships between self-motivated modes of religiosity and institutional structures, influences from secular sources, various cultures and worldviews. The lecture concludes with a discussion of how the interlinking of these datasets can offer new openings for comparative research and how vernacular religion can be applied as a framework for structuring and elucidating contemporary ethnographies in general, mirroring a world of rapid cultural and religious change.

Keynote Lectures (Wunn)
11:00 - 11:50 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021

Anna Anguissola

928 From the Selfish Gene through Rituals to Systems. Why and How Religion Emerged

Ina Wunn

Universitaet Hannover, Hannover, Germany

Abstract

Scientists agree that the ability to cooperate is one, if not the decisive developmental step toward intelligent humans, toward Homo faber.
However, this ability to cooperate has so far been postulated rather than actually derived by the humanities, because Richard Dawkins’ specification of evolutionary theory by his thesis of the selfish gene would at least have to prevent any form of togetherness that goes beyond contact with the mating partner or genetically closely related individuals.

It would have to be - if there were not on the biological side the process of ritualization, which makes togetherness possible and from which finally regular rituals emerged. The reference to ultimate values, which is produced again and again in the ritual, only makes it possible that an individual, according to Dawkins the survival machine of selfish genes, puts aside his egoisms in favor of the common good.

However, rituals have a special property: they give groups a structure including necessary hierarchies with a controlling function. This, however, is nothing else than a third-order system in the sense of system theory. A state is of course such a system, but so is the church. In order for such a system to function, the ultimate values shared by all individuals must again and again be realized in ritual, and this at the same time explains the importance of great state-supporting rituals such as coronations and national holidays, but above all of the ritualized cultus in religious communities.

174-II Religion as Resource of Resilience – Diachronic and Interdisciplinary Perspectives
11:50 - 13:20 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021

Anna Katharina Rieger

488 Events as Sources of Spiritual Resilience
Sára Eszter Heidl
University of Erfurt, Max Weber Kolleg, Erfurt, Germany

Abstract

Religions provide believers with different coping strategies, whether it is a personal or group crisis. But what kind of religious, spiritual resilient strategy can be found by those who do not belong to traditional religious institutions, who do not have an established, customary ritual, whose spiritual recharge is not represented by the strategies of historical religions?

The sites of my research are events, festivals where people gather who do not have an institutionalized religious identity but are receptive to religiosity and spirituality. The aim of this paper is to show how an event can provide people with resilience, where, breaking away from everyday life, participants can achieve a kind of rapid recovery or temporary healing, reassurance. This can be achieved by practices regarding mental health, body-soul balance, and spiritual recharge.
A specific event where research was made, called the Everness Festival (Alsóörs, Hungary), is a spirituality-oriented occasion where participants can attend psychological, physical, or spiritual practices and programmes. This kind of event can help to cope with everyday problems, losses, or personal crises, and the activities can also play a role in psychological healing and help to achieve spiritual harmony. The temporary community and experiences gained during the event show an alternative way to resilience or religiosity. Interpreting an event with this approach can help in explaining modern ways of faith, belief, and spiritual harmony.

436 Resilience, Agency, and the Funeral Ritual in the Roman World

Rafael A. Barroso Romero

Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Madrid, Spain. Max-Weber-Kolleg, Universität Erfurt, Erfurt, Germany

Abstract

Rituals are dynamics socio-religious practices. They can be understood as self-regulatory strategies and at the same time as dynamic or conflictual resources. Whether they act as stabilisers of the social structure or as revitilisers, they become a tool for resilience. A paradigmatic example for the exploration of these arguments is the funeral ritual. In Ancient Rome, death did not mean the end of human agency, but its transformation into divine agency in order to cope with a social crisis that, through ritual, was redefined as an ontological readjustment. The aim of my proposal is to argue, on the basis of a number of archaeological evidences from Italia and Hispania, that the shock produced in society and in the family by the death of a beloved one was faced through the reintegration of the individual in the family with a status that allowed him to continue to relate to the living while still retaining part of his/her identity. M. Eramo (2012, p. xii) deals with this idea by the “paradox of the dead as undead”, which is to say that the deceased were considered as undead. However, I will argue, on the contrary, and in a much more nuanced way, that the dead were neither understood as undead nor treated as such, but that the deceased and death had specificities in their strategies of conceptualisation and relationship that configured original entities worthy of study, with which they were related in a similar way to the rest of the gods, but at the same time different.

In this lengthy process of transformation, we can also speak of ritual and religious innovation using space and material culture to perpetuate elements that prolong individual identity after death. This will shed light on the question of individual and collective religious strategies for resilience and their development by the actors involved.

Bibliography


Abstract

In the period of Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages, most communities in the northern Adriatic region experienced an urban and demographic decline caused by the military and political crisis that, starting from the late 3rd at least to the 8th century, spread across the whole of Europe. The municipality of Tarsatica (today Rijeka, Croatia) was an atypical example of a city of that time. Between the 3rd and 4th centuries, it was the starting point and main supply port of the Claustra Alpium Iuliarum defence system. Although the historiography proposed the destruction of the city at the time of the Visigoth invasion and the dissolution of Claustra (early 5th century), recent archaeological research proved otherwise. The remains of a three-nave basilica built in the city centre together with at least two extra urban early Christian complexes confirm the continuity of urban development of Tarsatica in which the Christian religion become the key factor. The size and the decoration of the three-nave basilica indicate the existence of a numerous and wealthy Christian community that, despite possible dangers, did not withdraw from the city, at least for the entire 5th century. Other than the religious, economic and urbanistic impact on the city, the importance of this community can be demonstrated by the continuity of their cult places. During the Middle Ages on the foundations of the basilica another church was built whose Romanesque and Gothic phases are preserved in the architecture of today’s Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. On the foundations of both extra urban complexes there were churches that remained in use at least until the beginning of the 20th century.

180-II Coping with the Krisis. Phenomena of Religious Acculturation and Enculturation: Patterns and Policies of Resilience from the Hellenistic-Roman Period and Late Antiquity
11:50 - 13:20 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021

Alice Bencivenni, Giuseppina Paola Viscardi, Beatrice Girotti

582 The Sacred Books of the Last Pagan Generations as a Form of Religious Resilience

Lech Trzcionkowski

Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland

Abstract
The paper aims to examine the religious function of pseudo-Orpheus’ poems in late antiquity as a part of the process of resistance of elite groups in the new cultural context. The comparative analysis of various forms of the reception of Orphic hexameters shows an extreme variety of their reception. My research concerns a complex process of incorporating the Orphic text into the new readers’ text. The history of reception should take into consideration the characteristics of reading communities that interpreted the meaning of the poems, beginning from the first mentions of Orpheus’ poems in the second half of the 5th century BC to the writings of the last generation of Platonic philosophers in the 6th century C.E. I suggest that in Neoplatonic schools of late Antiquity the Orphic poems became a tool of religious resilience. Considering this perspective, I would like to examine the function of these sacred books (hieroi logos) in philosophical libraries of late Antiquity as the cultural adaptation of the last pagan generations in the new religious context. By collecting, editing, creating and re-interpreting Orphic poems, philosophers responded to the crisis caused by the new Christian environment. In consequence, a comparative analysis of the reception of Orphic poems could contribute to the rectification of basic categories for the study of religion: canon / canonical writings, the authority of the sacred text and “sacred books” (hieroi logos).

807 Strategies for Individual and Collective Resilience through Apostasy in the Light of 4th and 5th Century Homiletics

Giovanni Alberto Cecconi

Università di Firenze, Firenze, Italy

Abstract

The paper will discuss returns to paganism and non-Christian religious practices, by individuals and communities, as a choice of resilience and an adaptation to times of calamities, wars, pestilence, Germanic migrations, social and economic crisis (decades between the 4th and 5th centuries).

943 Concluding Considerations

Miguel Herrero de Jáuregui

Universidad Complutense, Madrid, Spain

Abstract

Concluding Considerations

62-II Resilient Gnosis

11:50 - 13:20 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021

Francesco Berno, Andrea Annese
"I did not cease seeking a place" (Zostrianos, 3.20-21): Ascent to Heavens as Rituals of Resilience in Platonizing Sethian Treatises

Eduard Iricinschi
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Abstract

The paper explores textual references to ritual baptism associated with narratives of ascent in the Nag Hammadi Sethian treatises. It first investigates the literary topos of the anxiety, abandonment, and reluctance of being engaged in higher forms of knowledge in the Apocryphon of John and Zostrianos. In order to cast light on this literary motif, the paper proceeds to an analysis of the various rituals of baptism in the Sethian texts. This paper follows in the steps of John D. Turner’s analysis of Zostrianos, the Three Steles of Seth, Allogenes, and Marsanes as Sethian narratives of visionary ascent. At the same time, it adopts Jean-Marie Sevrin’s work on Sethian baptismal dossier and proposes to regard these ascent baptisms as rituals of resilience and habituation. Borrowing from current interdisciplinary empirical findings on grit and resilience (Angela Duckworth’s research in the field of psychology) this paper argues that the series of baptisms in the narratives of visionary ascent played the role of increasing the chances of survival and cultural endurance of the ancient Sethian groups. It thus advances that Platonizing Sethian treatises counterbalance the opening literary motif of resistance to initiation with ritualized habituation into engagement with advanced forms of religious knowledge, through iterative baptisms. As a result, the readers of Platonizing Sethian treatises acquire not only new forms of gnosis but also learn how to overcome adversity and disruption and to promote renewal.

Perseverance and Patience, Resilience and Quietude: Differences between Plotinus and the Gnostics in the Path to the One

Luciana Gabriela Soares Santoprete
CNRS - LEM (UMR 8584), Paris, France

Abstract

The presence of Gnostic elements in the thought of the philosopher Plotinus, the precursor of Neoplatonism, is increasingly highlighted in the research of recent decades. If Plotinus’ debate with the Gnostics is explicit and has been widely studied in his Treatise 33 (Ennead II, 9), it is rather implicit and much less studied in his other treatises. My paper is related to the theme of the colloquium and the panel because it aims, on the one hand, to highlight the integration of Gnostic views in the development of Plotinus’ thought and, on the other hand, to address a theme, that of the encounter with God, which involves perseverance and patience, resilience and resignation. In Treatise 32 (Enn. V, 5), 8, Plotinus criticizes the approach of the Gnostics for whom, according to him, it is enough to follow his precepts to know God by his grace. Plotinus maintains, on the contrary, that it is necessary to be active by carrying out spiritual exercises to reach the One-Good, but also, on the other hand, to know how to wait patiently for the manifestation of the latter, which will take place not by the grace of God but according to the endurance acquired and the quietude in which it would have settled. Similarly, Plotinus shows that if his teachings prepare to reach God by oneself and in oneself, they do not guarantee that this encounter will take place.
There is no doubt that the theological texts presenting Valentinian ideas were still being copied and circulated in Egypt in the 4th c. AD. There is, however, much more debate, as to whether followers of Valentinus and his teaching, understood as a distinct group, still existed at that time. The only explicit source reference confirming such a presence is a short passage in Epiphanius’s *Panarion* (XXXI 7,1) mapping distributions of Valentinians in the third or fourth decade of the 4th c. Although *Panarion* is widely acknowledged to be replete with misleading information, the proposed paper compares the Valentinian passage with another map of heresy, the one referring to Basilidians (*Panarion* XXXIV 1), and with Epiphanius’s monastic itinerary as preserved in the *Life of Epiphanius*. In the light of these sources, the nomes of the Western Delta (Prosopitis, Athribitis), and environs of Alexandria (but not the city itself) appear a safe haven for the resilient groups of Valentinians well into the fourth century. All three sources provide a coherent geographical horizon and prove Epiphanius’s first-hand knowledge of Egypt and the diversity of its local Christian population.

623 Una Lunga Resilienza. Diocesi e Istituzioni Diocesane nel Pieno e nel Basso Medioevo (secc. XII-XV)
11:50 - 13:20 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021

Alberto Cotza

La Chiesa ha rappresentato una delle istituzioni più resilienti della storia d’Europa. Per quanto riguarda il pieno e il basso medioevo (secoli XII-XV), gli studi hanno valorizzato soprattutto la costruzione della monarchia papale e l’affermarsi della curia romana come il centro della cristianità, in una prima fase; le istanze scaturite dal IV Concilio lateranense (1215) e il consolidarsi della supremazia papale con Bonifacio VIII, in una seconda; poi, da ultimo, la crisi del Papato, lo scisma e la successiva ricomposizione fra la fine del XIV secolo e l’inizio del successivo.

Tuttavia, a fronte del folto numero di studi incentrati sul Papato, ci sembra che sia mancata un’attenzione di pari livello nei confronti della cellula minima della *societas christiana* medievale, cioè la diocesi: non solo i vescovi, ma anche i capitoli delle cattedrali e le chiese attive a un livello locale. Si tratta di una caratura senz’altro più minuta e localizzata di quella romana e curiale, ma non per questo meno importante e significativa. La resilienza di lungo periodo richiamata sopra non si espletava unicamente al vertice dell’istituzione ecclesiastica, ma anche nelle sue diramazioni locali.
Lo scopo del nostro intervento è quello d’interrogarci sulle dinamiche di questa lunga resilienza in ambito locale. Analizzeremo quattro casi di strategie resilienti dei vescovi in quattro differenti aree geografiche dell’Italia medievale: la rielaborazione della leggenda agiografica di Giusto e Clemente nella Volterra del XII secolo come risultato delle tensioni sociali e politiche locali (Cotza), le frizioni tra i vescovi latini e le comunità ebraiche nella Puglia del XIII e del XIV secolo (Antonetti), l’elaborazione di innovativi strumenti fiscali per far fronte alla crescente pressione esercitata sul piano economico dal Papato nel Due-Trecentesco (Pagnoni), la visita pastorale del vescovo volterrano Stefano da Prato (1413-1414) come lente per indagare la resilienza del potere vescovile in una fase di crisi generale (Paganelli).

Il carattere eterogeneo dei contributi incentrati sulla Chiesa locale consente di disporre di una casistica piuttosto ampia, sia nel tempo (dal XII al XV secolo) sia nello spazio (dalla Lombardia alla Puglia), e di mettere in luce, così come la resilienza dei poteri vescovili e delle comunità che vi si riunivano attorno sia una prospettiva privilegiata per studiare le società del pieno e del basso medioevo italiano.
Abstract

Southern Italy was a central zone of contact and coexistence for many different cultures and ethnicities. As such it provides a promising case for studying the coping, adaptation and transformation of its society in front of different challenges. In this respect, the religious structures offer an interesting viewpoint to investigate how the formal structuration of the religious leadership impacted the minority, with special reference to the most widespread and numerically significant, that is the Jews one. On this occasion, I intend to provide an overview of this process with particular attention to the peculiar position of the Jews communities within the episcopal cities, where they lived twice-subjected to the episcopal authority as religious minority and servants of the bishops. The reciprocal claims and the frequent fights about the bishops’ rights as religious Christian vertex and lordship left a long series of sources, whose analysis still misses. The paper aims to overcome part of this gap and shed some light on the strategies adopted by both the actors to impose or defend their own juridical or economical claims, with a constant reference to the wider context of southern Italy before and after the Vespers’ crisis.

Far fronte alle tasse. Forme di organizzazione fiscale del clero nell'Italia tardo medievale

Fabrizio Pagnoni

Università degli Studi, Milano, Italy

Abstract

Nel basso medioevo, le istituzioni ecclesiastiche di tutta la cristianità dovettero fare i conti con una crescente pressione fiscale. Se sono piuttosto note le tappe attraverso cui, a partire dal Duecento, i poteri laici e la Sede apostolica estesero il proprio potere impositivo sulle istituzioni ecclesiastiche di base, ancora tutte da indagare sono le ricadute locali di questo fenomeno.

In questo contributo proverò attraverso una prospettiva ‘dal basso’ a illustrare come il clero locale seppe fare fronte a questa importante trasformazione, mettendo in atto strategie e politiche diversificate. Da un lato, nacquero nuovi organismi collegiali deputati alla ripartizione e perequazione dei carichi fiscali; dall’altro si mantenne vivo un acceso e articolato dibattito in merito all’immunità ecclesiastica e al potere di concedere esenzioni.

The Bishop and His Saints. The Miracula Iusti et Clementis (12th century)

Jacopo Paganelli¹, Alberto Cotza¹, Fabrizio Pagnoni², Antonio Antonetti³

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Abstract
The *Miracula Iusti et Clementis* are a hagiographical text written in Volterra in 30s of the 12th century. The worship of Iustus and Clemens is documented in Volterra since the Langobardic age but spread significantly in the city from the 11th century onward, due to the foundation of a monastery dedicated to this pair of saints by the bishop Gunfredus. The *Miracula* are a sort of the text that must have circulated attached to the biography of the saints. Though being a localised cult, the miracles referred in the *Miracula* have a regional, even Mediterranean dimension, staging the power of the saints in a wide context and showing their influence in promoting social and political fortune of their faithful followers. This paper highlights the significance of hagiographical texts in constructing bonds of reciprocity in the society and highlights the role of its promoters, the bishops of Volterra, in being resilient to political changes through the building of spiritual ties.

ISC 24 Islam (Individual Short Communications)
11:50 - 13:20 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021

549 The Power of Steppes: Abay and Islam
Orhan Söylemez, Ali Rafet Özkan
Kastamonu University, Kastamonu, Turkey

Abstract

Islamization of the Turks is a process that concerns both Turkish history and world history to a significant extent. Many studies have been conducted on the Islamization process of the Turks. In these studies, some started the relations between Turks and Arabs from the early periods by referring to the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad Mustafa (S.A.V) and some researchers emphasized that it started during the Umayyad period. The conversion of the Turks to Islam is interpreted as affecting the history of the world as much as it concerns Turkish and Islamic history.

In the studies about the acceptance of Islam by the Turks, the use of the concepts of Islamization and being Islamized in expressing this process (Ocak, 1998: 13) with the rapid conquest movements during the Omar and Osman period, the Islamic State began to dominate the Iranian geography. With the Battle of Kasidiye in 636, Celula in 637 and the Battle of Nihavend in 642, the Islamic State captured the Iranian region. Following these developments, the Muslim Arabs who reached the Maveraünnehir (Transoxiana) region, confronted the Turks. Political relations have continued since the middle of the 7th century, when the two sides faced each other. The Umayyad period, which started in 661, is known as the period of struggle in Turkish-Arab relations despite the hadith of the Prophet advising Muslim Arabs to get along with Turks. In this period, we see that some Turkish administrators at the head of the regional administrators or cities and a small number of Turkish groups accepted Islam.

It is common among historians to think that the Turks accepted Islam very easily and immediately en masse. The concept of Islamization is used to express this. However, the Turks accepted neither easily nor en masse, as it was thought. On the contrary, they fought, showed strength and resisted the Arabs for three centuries.
Of course, some of the Turkish communities living in a very wide geography converted to Islam. However, this does not change the historical reality.

Not a single society immediately breaks its ties with its past and beliefs. This is contrary to the sociological structure. Turkic communities that resisted Muslim Arabs for three centuries accepted Islam in the end. For this, the concept of Islamization is used. Our opinion is also supported by Naşşahsi’s text named *Tarih-i Buhari* (An-Naşşahsi, 2013: 74-75). Turks, whose process of accepting Islam was long and difficult, integrated the culture and power of the steppe with Islam, and the brightest pages and stages of the history of Islam were handled by the Turks. Especially in the Transoxiana region, Bukhara as a centre, Turkestan geography has made great contributions to the history of world science by raising very bright personalities in the history of Islamic sciences. Ibni Sina, Farabi, Biruni, Harezmi, Abay etc. are some of them.

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618 Resilience of Religious Schools (Imam Hatip Schools) in Turkey

*Fadime Yilmaz*

Szeged University, Szeged, Hungary

**Abstract**

As a Muslim country which has made secular ideology clear in its constitution, Turkey defined the major objectives of education to raise individuals who are aware of their duties towards the democratic and secular Turkish Republic. In line with this aim, the new Republic abolished the existing duality between secular and religious education and centralized the whole system on 3 March, 1924. However, the need for religious prayer leaders continued, and to educate imams (prayer leaders) religious schools (Imam Hatip Schools-IHL) were opened under the control of the Ministry of Education. Their curriculum was a slightly reduced form of regular schools and a very marked vocational programme and the goal was stated as to teach the true version of Islam. They are the state schools, however, throughout their history, their conditions fluctuated because of the strong impact of the political environment on the educational system. They were banned or supported, remained as an issue of serious debates in the country since their establishment. This paper will briefly present the milestones in the history of the IHLs to show how they managed to survive in the era of strict secularism, the support of religious people who wanted their children to receive religious education. Then, the main focus will be on how they have proliferated in the last decade and carried the “religious” people from the periphery to the centre of the society. This study aims to understand how the resilience of religious people sustained the IHLs and how these schools have become one of the main symbols of the vertical social mobilization of religious people.

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279 As a Sign of Resilience: The Seal of Solomon in Anatolian Architecture and Islamic Religious Objects

*Mehmet Kalkan*

Marmara University, Istanbul, Turkey

**Abstract**
From the walls of caves and gravestones of ancient times to today's countries' flags we can see the Star of David or the seal of Solomon in many different places. This paper will focus on finding the spiritual and symbolic meaning of the five/six-pointed star in Islamic and Jewish traditions with the examples in the pre-modern period. There were very old examples ranging from the Synagogues to the Mosques such as the Sacred Synagogue in Prag and the Capernaum Synagogue in Jerusalem to the Grand Mosque of Bursa (AC. 1399) and Suleymaniye Mosque (AC. 1557) in Istanbul. A few studies had been carried out about the importance of the Star of David in Islamic Studies and also in Jewish Studies. On the ground there are many examples just in Anatolian territory we have seen the Star of David on the walls, gates and interior crafts of Mosques. Muslims believe that the Star of David or Seal of Solomon has an eternal spirit. Because of that they have been using it in various architectural places, book covers, flags, cloths and etc. throughout Islamic history. The spiritual background of the six-pointed star and decorative schemes of the various Synagogues and Mosques point to a common cultural heritage and cultural exchange in both directions. Such examination additionally highlights both Jews' and Muslims' historic interest in geometry on a sacred as well as scientific level, particularly through the use of the six-pointed star as a symbol of eternity, the square as a symbol of earth, and the octagon as a link between the two. Their decorative schemes reinforce that the six-pointed star presented visual metaphors for the eternity of God and communion between human and divine realms that the architectural spaces were themselves intended to encourage. The six-pointed stars therefore testify not only to Jews' and Muslims' shared cultural history, but to their common spiritual goal. I will present this long history and modern examples of this religious symbol in terms of spiritual power or a popular cultural object in modern Turkey.

231 The du'a (Supplication) as Refreshment for the Believer
Davide S. Amore
I.C. “G. D’Annunzio”, Motta Sant’Anastasia, Italy

Abstract

In Islam, invocation (duʿa ) (Arabic: الدعاء, plural: ʿadʿiyah) is a prayer of supplication or request. Muslims regard this as a profound act of worship. There is a special emphasis on duʿa in Muslim spirituality and early Muslims took great care to record the supplications of Muhammad and his family and transmit them to subsequent generations. However, Duʿa literature is not restricted to prophetic supplications; many later Muslim scholars and sages composed their own supplications, often in elaborate rhyming prose that would be recited by their disciples. And even nowadays, especially due to the pandemic crisis, duʿas are still composed and encouraged to be recited by Muslim scholars and common worshippers.

Unlike other notions of prayer that are often reduced to mere incantations or wish lists, duʿa is much more profound. In fact, many of the most powerful duʿas in the Quran do not even contain a request to God. Instead, they are humbling expressions of truth in response to trial and tribulation. In the Islamic tradition, duʿas represent a medium for individuals to strive against the chaos they find in life, recognizing the truths behind it that bring order. It is a method by which believers find meaning which strengthens their underlying belief structures as a means of coping with the events unfolding in their lives, a way to encourage positive beliefs and behaviours while altering negative ones.
Brahminhood as a classification of social-religious identity posed an obstacle for the construction and legitimization of Jainism because Brahmins occupied a significant position in South Asian society from 5th century C.E. onwards. As speakers of Brahmanism whose authority derives from a birthright and as political advisors who held sway in many South Asian royal courts, Brahmins were a threat to Jaina commitments and society: How could Jains thrive in a society where Brahmins held religious, social, and political authority? Previous scholarship suggests that Jains did not take Brahminhood seriously as a social-religious category and that this was their strategy for subverting Brahmanical authority: Jaina suttas merely gloss Brahminhood as a marker of Jaina ethical conduct without further engagement, while Medieval Jaina philosophers reject Brahminhood as a marker of social-religious authority. Resistance, however, is not the primary means Jains used to ensure their existence. My paper showcases several Jaina narrative texts composed between the 5th and 12th centuries C.E. that retell the tale of Bharata's creation of Brahmins. Each retelling of this tale presents distinct constructions of Brahminhood. I argue that these retellings capture the diversity of ways in which Jains took Brahminhood seriously and that this engagement served as a strategy for ensuring the continued existence of Jaina communities alongside the Brahmanical Brahmins. Beyond this, my paper suggests that narratives offered Medieval Jainas a far more fluid medium for thinking through the threat that rival religious communities posed to their existence than systematic or doctrinal compendia allow.

Abstract

Naked Ideals Dressed up: The Resilience of Practice in the Early Modern Digambara Jaina Tradition

Tillo Detige

CERES, Ruhr Universität Bochum, Bochum, Germany

Abstract
As enshrined in its very name (\textit{digambara} = “clothed in air”), Digambara Jainism’s emblematic and paramount ideal is that of ascetic nudity. The ideal renouncer is the naked, itinerant, and quasi possession-less, fully-initiated, male \textit{muni}. Today, a few hundred of these figures populate the Digambara landscape, deeply venerated and closely followed by their lay devotees, widely depicted and much mediatised. According to a prevalent but unchecked historiography, the Sultanate (1206-1526 CE) and Mughal (1526-1857 CE) periods on the other hand constituted a distinct phase of Digambara history, when under the “Muslim rule” of India and its accompanying Islamic mores, naked renouncers were persecuted and disappeared, and the mendicant lineages were instead headed by the typically clothed and more sedentary \textit{bhaṭṭāraka}s. Recent research however has shown deep continuities in Digambara asceticism across the early modern period (1400-1800 CE), in ascetics’ practices as well as in laypeople’s attitudes towards them and in their devotional and ritual practice. Even in the absence of naked ascetics, ascetic nudity retained its resilience at the heart of Digambara praxis. This paper argues that from a practice theoretical approach this need not detain us much, as the core Jain practice of “praise of asceticism” (in this case devotion to naked ascetics), is able to carry a salvific function regardless of historical circumstances, and indeed continued to be practiced as such throughout the early modern period. A purely “factual” study of Digambara ascetic history, then, oversees the deeper continuity which remained crucial in early modern Digambara practice, so obvious when looking through the lens of practice.

392 The One Death and Many Lives of King Kumārapāla. Biography and Resilience in Jainism

\textit{Basile Leclère}

Univ ersité Lyon 3, Lyon, France

\textbf{Abstract}

When in 1160 the Caulukya king Kumārapāla (r. 1142-1172) officially took the twelve vows of a Jain layman under the guidance of his spiritual teacher the Śvetāmbara monk Hemacandra, Jainism enjoyed an unprecedented royal patronage for about twelve years, that manifested itself in many ways such as the building of a thousand Jain temples or the promulgation of the \textit{amāri} or prohibition of killing living beings throughout the Caulukya kingdom as well as its vassal principalities.

However, the successive deaths of Hemacandra and Kumārapāla within a span of six months not only plunged the Jain community into a deep mourning, but they also heralded a severe setback, as Kumārapāla’s successor Ajayapāla (r. 1172-1176) is said to have given back royal favour to Brahmins and persecuted Jains in many ways.

At the same time, however, Jain writers started to commemorate Kumārapāla’s spectacular conversion and exemplary rule through various literary media, such as theatre (Yaśaḥpāla’s \textit{Mōharājaparājaya}, written and performed during Ajayapāla’s reign) or historical anecdotes inserted in the Prabandha collections: for instance, the fourth part of Merutūṅga’s \textit{Prabhandhacintāmaṇi} (1305) deals to a large extent with that king’s life. Several authors also wrote independent biographies of Kumārapāla, sometimes concurrently as instanced by Jayasimha’s \textit{Kumārabhūpālamahākāvya} (1365) and Somatilaka’s \textit{Kumārapālacarita} (1367), wherein they retold the king’s life and death and often included his previous and future lives as well.

What I will argue in this paper is that all these biographical texts were intended to alleviate and even compensate the dramatic loss of this ideal Jain king by continuously recalling his pious reign and recasting it within the broader frame of a spiritual journey over many lives.
34-II Resilience or Resistance: Repressive Regimes and the Blurring of Boundaries Between the Political and Religious
11:50 - 13:20 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021

James Kapalo, Roland Clark

299 Legitimizing Space and Imposed Identities: Evangelicals in Greater Romania
Iemima Ploscariu
Dublin City University, Dublin, Ireland

Abstract

The increase in nonconformist religious groups after World War I troubled Romanian authorities and the dominant Romanian Orthodox Church. The Evangelicals, also called neo-Protestants or Repenters, composed mostly of Baptists, Brethren, Pentecostals, and Seventh-Day Adventists, attempted to create space for themselves in Romanian society for their beliefs and traditions. These denominations were relatively new to the country, especially among the ethnic majority. They were considered foreign both in their origin and through the way they challenged the Orthodox Church’s customs and theology. While these groups argued that they simply sought to practice their faith, the Romanian state and Orthodox church authorities imposed a dangerous political identity upon them. At the local level they experienced harassment in various forms that led them at times to practice in secret. At the level of the state, policies in regards to religion were constantly changing, making their communities vulnerable to closures and imprisonment.

Sometimes their attempts to legitimize their presence and create space, through publications, petitions to the government, religious services, and musical events, were interpreted as anti-national, bolshevik, or deceptive. They resisted such labels through those same methods, mostly without a political agenda. However, there were also cases where evangelical peasant lay members or urban leaders spoke out publicly against the repressive measures of the government. In interwar Romania where politics and religion were intimately linked, the boundary between resilience and resistance is difficult to identify. Using police reports and denominational newsletters from national archives in Romania and the Republic of Moldova, these Evangelicals reveal how both resilience and resistance exist simultaneously.

349 Veneration of "Living Saints" in the 1930s in the Soviet Russia
Marianna Shakhnovich
State Saint-Petersburg University, Saint-Petersburg, Russian Federation

Abstract

Despite the repressive anti-religious policy pursued by the Soviet state in the first half of the 1930s, the veneration of elders, holy fools, “God’s people” became widespread in rural areas. They were revered as “living saints”. According to believers they could give important life advice, heal diseases, predict the future, and sometimes create miracles. The surviving archival materials of that time received during the ethnographic expeditions in the North-West of the country show that during the period of anti-religious campaigns, non-church religious practices continued to play an important role in the peasants’ every-day life.

550 The Study of Religious Vestiges in Soviet Russia: The Case Study of the Central Anti-Religious Museum in Moscow in the 1930s

Ekaterina Teryukova

The State Museum of the History of Religion, Saint-Petersburg, Russian Federation. Saint-Petersburg State University, Saint-Petersburg, Russian Federation

Abstract

This paper deals with the research activities of the Central Anti-Religious Museum established in Moscow in 1926. The Museum was inspired and run by religious historian B. Kandidov. Although commitment to “anti-religious struggle and promotion of atheism” was seen as the core part of the museum’s mission, much of its functions centred around research and acquisition. To achieve this goal, the new museum had to create its own archive and library, build a collection (“amass valuable materials”) and recruit qualified staff. According to Kandidov, a combination of these factors would enable the CAM to develop into “a major research institution working comprehensively towards spiritual emancipation of the labourers; a place for lively creative activity”.

The Central Anti-Religious Museum opened its doors on 10 June 1929 in the former Monastery of Christ’s Passions in Moscow. The event was held in celebration of the 2nd National Congress of the League of Militant Atheists, the museum’s patron institution. The CAM became the first-ever anti-religious museum in the USSR and the only facility of this type in the world.

In 1934 the CAM was recognized as a Research Institution of National Importance by the Council of People’s Commissars (Sovnarkom). The museum was expected “to organize research work which will inform acquisition and museumification as well as translate into profound research publications by the CAM”. In autumn 1934, the Museum formed a research Group specializing in religious practices of the ethnicities populating the USSR.

The research group functioned like the Moscow branch of the Leningrad Section for Investigation of Religious Practices of the Peoples of the USSR headed by ethnographer N.M. Matorin. Over several years the Section compiled religious membership maps of different areas; it also conducted research into religious syncretism jointly with both established and aspiring religious historians, ethnographers, archaeologists and specialists in folklore, resulting in an extensive network of research correspondents in national republics and regions. From February 1934 onwards, the Section operated under the auspices of the Museum of the History of Religion (USSR Academy of Sciences). The Section focused on the study of
“vestigial religious cults”, which had “originated in clan-based and feudal societies”, as well as studied the “waning of such religious cults with the eradication of economic multistructurality in the USSR, owing to socialist construction and cultural revolution” (the concept of vestige was very popular in Soviet scholarship and was widely used to define a broad spectrum of social and cultural phenomena, including religious beliefs, that the Socialist society inherited from the past, but that were supposed to disappear as Socialism progressed).

A series of expeditions researching religious vestiges and the efficiency of anti-religious propaganda was organized by members of the Museum’s Group in the 1930s. The reports on their field work for many decades were unpublished. This paper presents the results of its investigation and is illustrative for the theme of the resilience of religion under repressive regimes.

2 Christianity and Sex
11:50 - 13:20 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021

Igor Mikeshin

The topic of sex has always been of special importance in Christianity. In the Bible, one can find narratives of procreation, abstinence, chastity, virginity, sexual desire and pleasure, sexual immorality, regulations on, and even detailed description of sexual acts. The interpretations of biblical teachings, when it comes to sex, have represented all kinds of sexual moralities throughout the ages of Christianity. The most sacred of Christian symbols, including the body of Christ, Holy Mary, and the Holy Ghost, have been experienced within a sexual context by highly revered saints and some monastic orders. By contrast, Christian asceticism has been primarily associated with chastity and celibacy.

Sexual immorality is at the focus of the ethical teachings of the Old Testament, the Gospels, and the Apostle Paul. The issues of homosexuality, incest, sex outside of marriage, and “unnatural” practices are discussed, along with the pious practices of childbearing, chastity, spousal sex, and celibacy. Likewise, modern Christians hold very active political and cultural positions on sex, especially when it comes to same-sex relations, abortion, pornography, pre-marital sex, and promiscuity. The narratives of post-secularity regard sex as one of the major themes of resilient religion in the modern world.

Sex is thus always a potentiality in ethical, cultural, political, and theological debates within the context of Christianity. Sex is one of the central themes in hamartiology – the study of sin. Most adult converts report sexual immorality as one of the foremost examples of their old sinful ways, be it promiscuity, an obsession with pornography, or inappropriate relations with the opposite sex. The issue of gender itself is often put in the context of sex in Christian ethical discourses.

The existing research on sex and Christianity is largely represented by studies of gender and ethics (Mahmood 2005; Gallagher 2003; Erzen 2006; Fedele and Knibbe 2013; Gemzöe et al. 2016; Kupari and Vuola 2019), historical critique (Martin 1995; 2006), and confessional theologies. Methodologically, the most recent studies of sex and gender in Christianity are situated in the context of “lived religion” – focusing on everyday Christian practices (Orsi 1985).
We invite paper submissions that connect Christianity and sex, both broadly understood. How do Christians practice sex? How do they interpret their sexualities, chastity and virginity, marriage and sexual immorality? How do they negotiate their gender order, family values, and raising children in the context of sex? What are the ethical and theological implications of sexual life? How do sexual practices distinguish Christian life from worldly living? How does sex play the role of a tool for resilient religion?

Theological, sociological, philosophical, anthropological, historical, and especially cross-disciplinary approaches are welcome, as well as the studies of all kinds of communities, old and new, historical and contemporary, local and global, (self-)identified as Christian.

129 "Sex is like a brick wall": Moderate Conservatism of Russian Baptists

Igor Mikeshin

University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland

Abstract

My paper addresses the gender order, family values, and sex within the Russian Baptist community. In terms of sexual relations, Russian Baptists are a moderately conservative community, which means they view sex as only permissible between spouses, but not solely for procreation. I put their understanding of sex in the theoretical context of “lived religion” (Orsi 1985) and regard sex as an “ethical affordance” (Keane 2016). By doing so I argue that for Russian Baptists, the issues of gender, family, and sex are ethical affordances — potentialities that ethics create and moralities implement through individual actions. Ultimately, these issues create an ethical framework, a basis for a “Christian life”, a performative aspect of their Christian faith that differentiates it from worldly living.

First, I will give a brief account of the Russian Baptist morality in the context of their history in Russia. Second, I will address the gender order of Russian Baptists and situate it within contemporary Evangelical theology. Third, I will discuss sex as an ethical affordance. Last, I will talk about the challenges of talking about sex with conservative Christians.

References:


733 Looking for a Godly Husband: Catholic Marital Matching in Contemporary Poland

Agata Rejowska
This paper is based on data gathered in 2019-2020 within the research project “Resistance and Subordination. Religious Agency of Roman Catholic Women in Poland”, which comprised 48 in-depth interviews with Catholic women educated to university level, living in large Polish cities, and involved in various religious groups. The paper aims to show some of the patterns of marital matching among highly religious Catholic women. It mainly focuses on three aspects: striving towards homogeneity, the active/passive character of a search, and the role of chastity.

Research participants very often perceived religious homogeneity as a factor that increases the chances of creating a successful relationship. The interviewed women sought to find not only a man who declares himself to be Catholic, but who is also similarly religiously engaged. It was often quite ‘natural’ that they were looking for a husband in their own religious community. However, women often adopted the opposite strategy. They trusted that everything is God’s plan, and therefore they focused on self-development rather than on actively searching for a man. Focusing on religious development as the overarching goal often contributed to the fact that women had become more selective and independent in making their matrimonial choices. Therefore, paradoxically, religion may have an impact on the increasing number of single women and the increase in the age of marriage too. Along with religious homogeneity, sexual abstinence before marriage was another important factor that the interviewed women took into account. Chastity was a tool in the selection of a proper man, but also for gaining some control over the relationship. Also, contrary to the secular narrative, not having sexual relations before marriage was proof that the relationship is deep, valid, and intimate.

Homosexuality, Same-sex Marriage, and the Clergy of the Finnish Lutheran Church

Laura Kallatsa

University of Eastern Finland, Joensuu, Finland

Abstract

Same-sex marriage in Finland has been legal since 2017. Finland was the last Nordic country to introduce same-sex marriage. Religious communities have played quite a prominent role in the debate of same-sex marriage. Especially the main governing bodies, religious leaders, and members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (ELCF) have lively discussed marriage. The ELCF is one of the national churches and the largest church in Finland. In 2020, 67% of Finns belonged to the ELCF. Although the number of members has been declining in recent decades, the ELCF has a significant role as a social debater.
The public support for same-sex marriage has grown gradually in Finland during last decades. Many surveys in Finland and elsewhere have shown that the attitudes of the clergy and other religious leaders have changed too (Kallatsa & Kiiski 2019, Tervo-Niemelä 2018, Kirby et al. 2017, Cragun & Sumerau & Williams 2015, Niemelä 2014, Whitehead 2013, Adler 2012, Cadge & Girouard & Olson 2012, Niemelä 2010, Niemelä & Palmu 2006). My doctoral thesis (Kallatsa 2020) has shown that Finnish Lutheran clergy has manifold attitudes towards homosexuality and same-sex marriage.

In this presentation, I will clarify the notions of the Finnish clergy for marrying same-sex couples. The justifications by the clergy have been divided into the following four categories: 1) theological justifications, 2) human rights and other juridical justifications, 3) justifications related to the essence and concept of marriage and 4) justifications related to the duties of priests and decisions of the church. In total, 51% of the clergy supported same-sex church wedding, while 40% opposed it (Kallatsa 2020).

7-II Surveying Ritual Creativity in Contemporary Paganism and New Age Prior to and During the COVID-19 Pandemic
11:50 - 13:20 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021

Nicolas Boissière, Yael Dansac

11:50 - 12:10

522 Practising and Researching New Age during the COVID-19 Pandemic: (Spi)Ritual Creativity, Auto-Ethnography, and the Re-Invention of Sacred Space
Eugenia Roussou
Centro em Rede de Investigação em Antropologia (CRIA, ISCTE-IUL), Lisbon, Portugal

Abstract

The pandemic has greatly influenced the ways in which New Age spirituality is practised, especially in relation to the ritual healing performances that are directly linked to it. New Age practices and their ritualized actions have always been primarily based on the creation of sacred spaces through the articulation of personal interaction, affection, bodily engagement and emotional exchange. In the new COVID-19 pandemic context, however, such (spi)ritual intimacy needs to be renegotiated. New Age practitioners have suddenly faced the need to become (spi)ritually creative in different ways and establish new forms of sacred spaces to accommodate their ritual performances. At the same time, studying New Age practices during the pandemic has become equally challenging, and, especially for those researchers who adopt an auto-ethnographic approach to fieldwork, the metaphoric sacred space between ethnographic embodiment and research knowledge needs to be re-adapted to the new circumstances. Drawing on long-term fieldwork on the theme of New Age spirituality in Southern Europe, and more particularly in Portugal and Greece, this paper will offer a comparative approach of how New Age (spi)ritual creativity is being re-adapted because of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Portuguese and Greek capital cities of Lisbon and Athens comparatively. It will explore how sacred spaces are created virtually, and how New Age
practitioners adapt their ritualism and therapeutic performances creatively. Moreover, the methodological subject of studying (s)piritual creativity in an auto-ethnographic way will be touched on, discussing how ethnographers also need to re-configure their research now that their own ethnographically-ritualistic spaces are also being compromised.

12:10 - 12:30

708 Songs for Loving Spirits: New Age Singing Circles in Finland
Tero Heinonen
Åbo Akademi, Turku, Finland

Abstract

New Age and new religious singing circles gather thousands together in Finland annually both offline and online. Singing circles incorporate elements from traditional Finnish rune singing, call-and-response singing of Sanskrit mantras, medicine song circles in neoshamanic rituals, eco-spiritual “Rainbow” gatherings, and belief in the aid obtained from benevolent plant spirits and occult non-human powers residing within vocalized syllables. Finnish singing circles have been rooted in Hindu devotional music but have diversified over the past decade. South American cacao ingested ceremonially has been introduced, while the popularity of ceremonially ingesting Ayahuasca and other psychoactive plants in medicine song circles has increased. Qualitative data consists of one hundred interviews of Finnish singing circle practitioners. Participants report experiencing empathy; the sacred in sound; relationships with benevolent non-human beings; sense of community belonging; gendered ritual empowerment; therapeutic processing of emotions; finding support in coping with crises such as climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic; and increased emotional and psychological wellbeing. Spiritual singing circles enable the therapeutic processing of emotions within collectively created musical spaces. Singing circles creatively combine musical, emotional, and embodied rituals in seeking solutions to personal problems, creating counter-cultural meanings, and establishing relationships with sacred perceived as inherent in Nature and oneself.

12:30 - 12:50

229 Creative Ritualization and Alternative Organizational Models: European Rainbow Gatherings as Countercultural Events
Katri Ratia
Fribourg University, Fribourg, Switzerland

Abstract

Rainbow Gatherings are a forerunner of contemporary “transformational festivals”, with a soon 50-years old tradition of inclusive, non-commercial meetings organized as weeks-long camps in natural settings. The Gathering events involve a crafted tradition based on ritualized organizational models that drive radically alternative political, economic, and religious practices.
This presentation will describe Rainbow’s main organizational models and their social and cultural impact for this event-culture, making a detailed example of the ritualized “Talking Circles” as model for participatory consensual democracy. The organizational models are presented within the Rainbow as rituals formed by tribal, Indigenous cultures. This feature is shown to symbolically reflect an underlying countercultural orientation involving a critical perspective towards the dominant mainstream culture, as well as a global environmental ethic expressed through transcendental ideas centred around notions of sacramalized nature.

The presentation draws from a doctoral research of Rainbow Gathering events in Europe, based on five years of fieldwork in various Rainbow events, and informed by classic participant observation and semi-structured interviews. The paper ends with a final note regarding recent changes in Rainbow Gatherings due to the COVID-19 pandemic and related restrictions.

12:50 - 13:10

202 Rituals Offline, Rituals Online or No Rituals at All: Strategies of Adopting to the COVID-19 Pandemic among Different Pagan Groups in Kraków, Poland

Joanna Malita-Króli

Institute for the Study of Religions, Jagiellonian University, Kraków, Poland

Abstract

Most of religious milieus were forced to rearrange their rituals practices in the face of the world-wide COVID-19 pandemic. In the Polish context, as in many others, it meant establishing certain limits of the believers present at the ceremony along with social distance and obligatory masks for everyone except for the person conducting the ceremony.

These restrictions affected both officially registered religious associations and those more informal ones. Most Pagan groups in Poland fall in the latter category and that includes all the groups I am currently researching. Namely, these are groups following different Pagan paths in the city of Kraków – among them Reformed Druids of Gaia Poland, Native Polish Church (Pol. “Rodzimy Kościół Polski”) and other Native Faith groups, such as group Mir (“Gromada Mir”) and Free Native Faith Followers of Kraków (“Wolni Rodzimowiercy Krakowa”).

In this paper, I will present three strategies of adopting the rituals to new pandemic circumstances: firstly, adjusting to the restrictions in offline, actual rituals; secondly, relocating rituals to online sphere, using Zoom or similar platforms and thirdly, refraining from rituals at all, with suggestions to celebrate privately at home instead. I will also discuss the reasons for choosing a particular strategy in case of every group. My analysis is based on my ongoing field research (participant observation during rituals combined with semi-structured interviews with participants) among Pagans of Kraków. The proposed paper is also a part of an ongoing ethnographic research which explores the ritual places of contemporary Pagan rituals in Poland.
48-II Embodiment in Religious Resilience  
11:50 - 13:20 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021

Sergio Botta, Tessa Canella

747 Al-Ghazali’s Spiritual Corporeality: Inwardness as a Response to Crisis  
Mariette Frieda Anita Minnemann  
CTR Lund University, Berlin, Germany

Abstract

Viewing himself as a mujaddid, re-newer, of the 11th century, the Islamic thinker al-Ghazali (1056 - 1111/447-504) propagates an inward-oriented theology in his opus magnum Ihya ulum ad-din, the Renaissance of the Knowledge of Din. Al-Ghazali, who under his patron Nizam al-Mulk has worked at the renown Nizammiyah school in Bagdad under newly established Saljuq rule as Sunni scholar, had declared that the adoption of Sufi teachings in his later work was the result of a personal “spiritual crisis”. Since the shift in his teachings coincides with a time of turmoil and instability, his inward-oriented theological position was a response to the outer socio-political circumstances. His work gives practical guidance to male believers and answers to questions of exigency: the “proper conduct” was of eschatological relevance for the medieval believers. Al-Ghazali approached the believers as embodied beings. Therefore, his work discusses a plethora of everyday-life practices, such as eating, prayer, purification or sex. To transform their relation to the Divine and ultimately to overcome their distance to Allah, the believers are asked to follow a specific conduct, which I described with the concept of spiritual corporeality. i.e. a complex of bodily practices and actions, which entails a process of spiritual maturation and follows a soteriological purpose. Central for al-Ghazali’s spiritual corporeality is the element of ascetism, which in his understanding follows an Aristotelian notion of balance.

636 Alevi Dede’s as the Embodiments of Divine Knowledge and Resilience  
Helen Haas  
Tartu University, Tartu, Estonia

Abstract

The Alevi Dede’s are the largest religious group outside Sunni Islam in Turkey - a community that makes up an estimated 15-25% of the population. In Turkey, Alevi have been historically settled mostly in the Central and Eastern Anatolian rural areas, but due to the increased migration process in the past few decades, they are found in great numbers in urban areas and in European states.

The Alevi in Turkey represent a religious community that is characterized by common religious practices and a belief system distinct from the Sunni Muslims. One of the main characteristics of Alevism is the institution of ocağ’s (hearth), which is based on the holy lineages believed to descend from the Prophet Muhammad through his son in law ‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭalib. Members of the ocağ families, the dede’s, are on the top of the religious and social hierarchy within the community.
The dedes are believed to possess religious knowledge and abilities to transmit the religious knowledge to the larger community members (talip). The presence of a dede enables the community to organize in the common cem gatherings that are an important means for gaining religious knowledge, solving arguments, and participating in various rituals. Dede as a representative of the holy bloodline embodies divine knowledge and presence.

The paper is based on fieldwork conducted in Izmir (Turkey) in 2019. As the Alevis have come through a rapid change in their social and religious organizations due to the urbanization process, the ocaık institution and the dede’s have also been facing challenges of survival and continuation. Nevertheless, this vital institution for the Alevi resilience has been able to meet the challenges thanks to a degree of flexibility. The need for the traditional role of the dede’s on the one hand and the challenges of the educational and social improvement, on the other hand, are taken into consideration and discussion.

628 Localized Embodiments as Forms of Ritual Resilience: The Aztecs and the Lake in Mexico-Tenochtitlan
Sergio Botta
Sapienza University of Rome, Rome, Italy

Abstract

In Aztec rituals, one of the most significant and characteristic phenomena is the agency of social actors of different natures (human, divine, animal, mineral, etc.) indicated as teixiptlahuan, “localized embodiments.” Whatever their external manifestation, these ritual actors possessed animacy and perform a key function as momentary representations of the relentless transformations of the environment. In this perspective, teixiptlahuan are transitory moments of culmination through which Aztec culture intended - domesticating their agency and manufacturing a network of social relations - to exercise control over the processes of transformation, to convert “otherness” into something less powerful. In this perspective, Aztec rituals are configured as complex devices capable of producing, by means of controlled and localized embodiment, a resilient relationship with the natural environment. To investigate these rituals, the aim of this paper will be to describe some ritual “impersonators” engaged in the construction of a net of relationship between the social group and the waters in the urban context of Mexico-Tenochtitlan, during the period of its greatest growth (1325-1521).

630 Resilient Immanence in Candomblé. Afro-Brazilian Strategies of Ritual Safeguarding
Rune Hjarnø Rasmussen
own company, Copenhagen, Denmark

Abstract
This paper describes the key node of a considerable feat of religious resilience, the way that enslaved Africans have renewed their traditional culture in the Americas. Working from Yoruba notions of traditional knowledge *imọ jinlè*, Afro-Brazilians developed ritual safeguarding to uphold their orixá temples as *Ile Axé*, spaces of immanence. The immanent ontology is the precondition of two main technologies of Candomblé:

1) Creating the *igbá or assentamento*, other-than-humans embodied in objects.

2) Creating space for possession, other-than-humans embodied in humans.

Both these religious technologies of embodiment affronts modern epistemology, what Graham Harvey sees as the modern separatist agenda of deanimating matter and disembodying minds (Harvey, 2018, pp. 36, 41, 49). Historically this mode of religious embodiment has therefore been radically othered as madness and fetishism, the primitive and ironically false defining Other of rationalist enlightenment. This paper will take possession as an example of how Afro-Brazilians use trickster hermeneutics in interpretive practices of resistance, thereby creating a ritual space where immanent ritual technology is still possible, even in Western contexts heavily defined by the modernity.

ISC 25 Latin America Throughout the Ages (Individual Short Communications)
11:50 - 13:20 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021

734 Yucatec Maya Spirituality and Ritual Practice – Resistance, Resilience and Change in Religious (Con-)Texts seen through the Books of Chilam Balam and Modern Fieldwork

Bodil Liljefors Persson
Malmö University, Malmö, Sweden

Abstract

This study focuses on Maya religious discourse based on the Early Colonial Yucatec Maya Books of Chilam Balam, written in Mayathan, the Yucatec Maya language, and argues their legacy conveying Yucatec Maya religion and traditions into present times, documented in ethnographical sources as well. There will be an emphasis on (con-)texts where rebellious prophets and shamans are key actors and where resistance, resilience and religious change are at stake. Yucatec Maya spirituality and certain ritual practices can be traced back in a long-term perspective and a close reading of the sources suggest that some of these ritual practices have had a lasting impact among the Yucatec Maya.

The aim is to advance the understanding of Yucatec Maya Religion and the Books of Chilam Balam as well as to explore their connections to certain places that still today are spiritual centres within the Post-Colonial syncretistic and vivid religiosity of the Cruzoob Maya in the eastern parts of the Yucatan peninsula in Mexico. The result is based on an in-depth perusal of the various Books of Chilam Balam and other ethnohistorical sources, as well as on archival research and contemporary fieldwork undertaken between 2015-2019 in
some of the major towns and villages throughout the Cruzoob area in the states of Yucatan, Campeche and Quintana Roo in Mexico.

79 Convivencia as a Surviving Myth of Spanish National Historiography?
Tadeáš Vala
University of Pardubice, Pardubice, Czech Republic

Abstract

Disputes about the uniqueness of Spanish history and the related alleged unique coexistence of Muslims, Christians and Jews on the Iberian Peninsula in the Middle Ages - Convivencia - initiated by the Spanish exiles of Franco’s regime Américo Castro (1885-1972) and Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz (1893-1984) in the mid-20th century, survives to this day. On the one hand, many academic writers and lay people use Castro’s term convivencia to refer to the history of unusually tolerant religious coexistence in medieval Spain, without these authors successfully defining and clarifying the very concept of tolerance. On the other hand, the authors still follow the idea of Sánchez-Albornoz that Islam made little or no significant contribution to the positive development of Spain’s unique history. The contribution will be devoted to the phenomenon of convivencia and its persistent presence in professional and non-academic discussions.

Javier Recio Huetos
Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Madrid, Spain. Asociación de Jóvenes Investigadores en Ciencias de las Religiones (AJICR), Madrid, Spain

Abstract

Liberation Theology implies the need to rethink relations between the left (both revolutionary and reformist) and religion. Moving away from the misunderstood phrase of the opium of the people. This theology is a transformative theology, endorses Marx’s XI thesis on Feuerbach and propose the transformation of the world through revolution, trying to bring the Kingdom closer and end all kinds of injustices. It is an inclusive and plural theology, which wants to return religion to public sphere dominance by fostering interreligious and intercultural debate.

It is a response to the failed theories of secularization that sought to privatize religion, restricting it to the private sphere. But despite what these theories say, religion never leaves the public sphere, as it began to construct collective identities. Religion returns to the public space mediated by being held in the private sphere. Religiousness is privatized but returned to the public sphere through such privatization. Individuals in their religiosity interact publicly with society.
Secular societies liberate the public sphere from religion. For public debate, religious arguments are not valid. There is, then, the paradox that these societies, which ensure the right of religious freedom of their individuals, do not allow the free use of it in the public sphere. Identities that have been made up of religiosity are denied. Religious identities can be led down the path of fundamentalism, intolerance and hatred. They propose the restitution of religion in a privileged place by imposing their own values, ending the secularity and plurality of the state.

Liberation Theology parts from a popular experience of religion. It is a Christian experience which parts from people’s reality, trying to give a collective response to injustices. Liberation Theology departs from the individual eschatology, typical of Modernity and understands that salvation can only come from the liberation of humanity from all forms of injustice. The Christian transformation of the world is proposed. They intend to build the Kingdom of God on Earth.

Liberation Theology is on the side of the oppressed, of the marginalized of the Earth, for that is where the truth of the world lies. It is a theology that gives voice to the voiceless, which does not align itself with power but with the counterpower, with those who suffer in their flesh all injustices.

Following the post-secular ideas and theories (Taylor, Habermas, Butler), as well as the post-Marxism of Laclau and Mouffe in their discursive turn, I will try to establish the democratic-popular genealogy of this theology and how it constitutes a new religious discourse far from liberal privatization and proposing the transformation of the world.

24-II Resilient Religious Communities: Changing Identities, Needs, and Relations across Time and Space
11:50 - 13:20 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021
Angela Bernardo

11:50 - 12:10

52 Visiting the Flock. The Dynamics of the Tridentine Reform in 15th-17th Century Šibenik
Maja Peric
University of Zagreb, Zagreb, Croatia

Abstract

The Catholic Church experienced some big personal attacks during the premodern period. Not only did it have to face internal institutional problems, but also the external factor of the presence of other believers in border areas set pressure on the Church. How did it deal with the dynamics of the Counter Reformation and how did it deal with neighbours of a different faith?
In my Master's thesis “Visiting the Flock. The dynamics of the Tridentine reform in 15th-17th century Šibenik”, I focused on the importance of the decisions and decrees made in Trent for the case of Šibenik (a maritime city located in Dalmatia, present-day Croatia). During the premodern period, this Venetian city was of considerable economic, religious, and strategic importance and was located in a border area with the Ottoman Empire.

By comparing visitation records of the fifteenth and the early seventeenth centuries, I found answers to questions such as; how innovative was Trent? Did the ideas, decrees and new practices of Trent find their way to Šibenik? Do there exist indications that it did not only consist of a top-down process? Attention has been paid to potential changes in infrastructure, priest-believers behaviour and the influence of the fraternities and monasteries.

Another part of this thesis consisted of finding out the ways the visitors saw the Ottoman neighbours and how they paid attention to them. Even though there were only a few mentions in these sources, interesting conclusions emerged...

This recently completed research fits in well with the theme of resilience or acceleration of religious changes by religious communities. Ideas, beliefs, images of others or additional emotions and dynamics characterized the complex process of religious reformation within the Catholic Church for this particular Dalmatian-Venetian premodern diocese. The priests and other ecclesiastical dignitaries made use of “religion as a resilient tool or as a tool for resilience” to strengthen the Catholic faith in a religious community which was put under pressure by religious changes and dynamics both internally and externally.

12:10 - 12:30

574 The Power of Myths: Institutional Myths Re-evaluated to Provide Religious Identity and Organizational Continuity – A case of the Croatian Catholic Parishes in Germany and Switzerland

Rebekka Rieser
University of Lucerne, Lucerne, Switzerland

Abstract

Throughout history, the Roman Catholic Church contributed significantly to political, social, and religious developments in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. The church played an important role in forming political sovereignty, demarcating boundaries to other ethnic identities within the Balkans, or setting moral norms within society. In the long run, it led to a church-loyal and conservative religiosity and religious identity among Croats. It emerged a lively culture of remembrance, narratives, and myths, which are significant for the church. Meanwhile, there exist prosperous Croatian diasporas in Switzerland and Germany. Contrary to the Croatian community’s strong religious affinity, both those residential societies reveal signs of increasing secularization, liberalization, and pluralization, which eventually leads to a decrease in the legitimacy of the church and religious identities. In conclusion, those developments could lead to challenging the resilience of Croatian catholic organizations and their members.
However, is this true? Moreover, if it is not true, what could be the reasons for the Croatian communities' resilience in the diaspora? The answers could lie in the power of institutional myths.

With its theoretical origins in the Stanford School neo-institutionalists Meyer & Rowan 1977, institutional myths are considered an efficient means for organizations to maintain legitimacy and continuity within an increasingly differentiated organizational field. They influence organizations in their structures, offerings, norms, and eventually in their identity. Analogously, they ensure resilience when changes emerge in the internal or external environment. Nevertheless, organizations influence collective patterns of interpretation and value attitudes of individuals as well their collective identity. Therefore, this presentation argues with a neo-institutional and organizational sociological approach to explain how religious communities keep their resistance and resilience in front of social changes and challenges. Besides, it opens the possibility of showing how individual and collective changing patterns of interpretation have not led to disappearance, irrelevance, or existential crisis.

In these terms, this presentation focuses on an interesting example of a resilient, religious community in secular and pluralistic countries like Switzerland and Germany.
Religious Resilience Through Ethnicity and Ethnic Resilience Through Religion: The Case of Traditional Church Music in the Moluccas

Jip Lensink
Utrecht University, Utrecht, Netherlands

Abstract

The Moluccan Protestant church (GPM) in Indonesia currently is in the process of coming to terms with its colonial history. For a long time, the Dutch Calvinist church influenced the GPM regarding doctrine, organization, and liturgy. The effort of decolonizing the church takes place through the development of contextual theology, based on the living cultural context of Moluccan Christians. Through this theological reorientation, the GPM also is one of the partners in the broader societal and political aim for a Moluccan ethnic revival, by appreciating local life in church liturgy. Colonial legacies, globalization, and digitalization are felt to threaten facets of Moluccan culture, which is why theologians, politicians, artists, and others are trying to stimulate a regeneration of interest for Moluccan ethnicity. On the one hand, religion therefore functions as a tool to revitalize Moluccan culture in entanglement with contemporary contexts, while on the other hand Moluccan culture is addressed to better connect Christian religion with the life-worlds of congregants. One specific case in this multi-directional religion/resilience intersection is traditional church music. On the basis of three months of anthropological fieldwork, this paper asks how traditional music as framed within contextual/decolonial Moluccan theology is interrelated with lived religion. It presents how the transposition of Moluccan traditional music to church is implicated in both theological and heritagization discourses. The concept of ‘the Moluccan traditional’ is introduced to disclose the resonances and dissonances between contextual ideas, ethnic and religious resilience, and practices and attitudes among theologians, pastors, congregants, and musicians.

269-II A View to Nowhere
11:50 - 13:20 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021
Andrea Rota

Acid Utopias and Sober Self Empowerment. Vision of Society and the Self in the American Counterculture of the 1960s and 1970s

Andrea Rota
University of Bern, Bern, Switzerland

Abstract
This paper discusses the entanglement between academic and religious narratives in the American counterculture. In particular, it focuses on the social visions developed in relation to the research on psychedelic substances between the 1960s and the 1980s. It argues that the narratives of the early 1960s were characterized by a utopian impulse geared toward a radical social change through the skillful combination of psychological knowledge and psychoactive drugs. In this context, the language of religion served as a key to interpret and direct the psychedelic experience and shape the newfound “technologies of transcendence” into social technologies. However, a reversal of this narrative emerged in the 1970s, when the realization of the utopian ideals appeared increasingly out of reach. A religious semantic was deployed to draw the path toward an individualized form of self-fulfillment, while the psychological arguments of the previous decade assumed an increasingly metaphoric role and served as a foil to highlight the limits of scientific-technological means to foster social and personal change.


Nele Dresen

University of Tartu, Tartu, Estonia

Abstract

The end of the 1980s was a chaotic period in Soviet Estonia. The liberation process of the Soviet Union, initiated by Mikhail Gorbachev in 1987 brought a feeling of freedom and the possibility to finally have a say in the future of Estonia. This suddenly arrived feeling that all the roads are open, formed a basis of various utopian imaginaries and narratives in different social spheres in Estonia. Religion was one of them. Many of the new religions that arrived or arose in Estonia around these remarkable times had their own ideas about the future of Estonia and its people. Some of these ideas also carried different utopian perspectives which were visible in debates, articles and events concerning the future of Estonia. Although new religious movements took actively part in the revolutionary processes, their role in these processes has not been thoroughly researched. The aim of this presentation is to show how new religious movements and religious ideas had a part to play in the revolutionary process which led to the restoration of the independence of Estonia. In my presentation I will analyze how new religious movements interpreted these chaotic times, what was their role in revolutionary processes and what kind of utopian imaginations and narratives about Estonia and its people fueled their beliefs and actions.

451 Utopias in Japanese New Religions – Promises or Delusions?

Michael Pye

Marburg University, Marburg, Germany

Abstract

A number of Japanese new religions, though not all, offer visions of a new society or a new world which may fairly be referred to as utopian. Somehow none of these has so far produced a completely different
world for humanity in general, in real time, and yet they do seem to provide an incipient alternative reality for the believers. The believers are therefore, to use an English idiom, “happy in themselves”, sometimes very happy! While considering examples I will try to indicate a simple typology of mechanisms by means of which utopian visions are so circumscribed that they can be correlated with the real, less happy world. One might expect this typology to include a certain amount of cognitive dissonance for some cases, but it seems there is a wider spectrum of such mechanisms, some with less negative connotations. Twentieth century religious foundations such as Ōmoto, Sekai Kyūseikyō (World Messianity), Byakkō Shinkōkai (White Light Association) and Tenshō Kōtajingukyō will be adduced in the hope of expanding the comparative perspective on this subject. The author’s approach is based on fieldwork as well as written sources.

297 How to Write the History of the Future: The Singularity Idea in Posthumanism

Oliver Krueger

Fribourg University, Fribourg, Switzerland

Abstract

Since the Enlightenment, secular and religious utopias of the future have emerged. Since the 19th century, social utopias were combined with evolutionary prospects for the future of the entire human race. In the late 20th century, posthumanism proclaimed the overcoming of humankind by robots and artificial intelligences. Authors such as Hans Moravec, Frank Tipler and Ray Kurzweil assume that in a few years – at the moment of the so-called singularity – the emergence of a “transcendental superintelligence” marks the beginning of a new era in the cosmic history of life. The singularity is said to solve all of humanity’s problems such as aging and diseases - humans will then be given even the opportunity for immortality. This is to be realized by a brain upload into the memory of a computer. In this virtual paradise humans are supposed to enjoy their new omnipotence, omniscience and sexual pleasures.

Using the example of posthumanism, the paper explores approaches of hermeneutics and the history of reception. This way it is possible to analyze individual ideas, argumentations and motives in this extremely heterogeneous and dynamic field. The social and cultural contextualization also allows to show persistences of certain ideas and power structures.

287-IX The Resilience of the Science of Religion(s) between Hermeneutics and History

11:50 - 13:20 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021

Roberto Revello

Catholic Heterodoxy in Italy. The Case of Towianism
Giulio Dalla Grana

University of Turin, Turin, Italy

Abstract

The aim of my presentation is to show the diffusion and reception in Italy of the thought of the Polish mystic Andrzej Towiański (1799-1878). Towiański, during a speech in Notre-Dame in 1841, proclaimed himself a prophet come to accomplish the Cause of God, and announced the forthcoming arrival of the Higher Christian Epoch.

Towiański’s doctrine is mainly represented by the esoteric writings Biesiada (The Banquet) and Wielki Periód (The Great Epoch). He developed a complex religious doctrine imbued with Jewish and Catholic elements, alongside Romantic and post-Enlightenment political and philosophical concepts. The cornerstones of his thought can be briefly identified in: metempsychosis, the cult of Napoleon, the spirit of Israel, the conversion of Protestants and Jews to Catholicism, and Pan-Slavism.

Towiański’s disciples tried on several occasions to convert the Pope, the Tsar, the King of Italy, and other political institutions to the Cause of God, in order to pursue the redemption of their souls and of their citizens.

In 1848, the teachings of the Polish mystic Andrzej Towiański arrived in Italy. The first Towianist Circle was formed in Turin, gathering acolytes among clergymen and Piedmontese intellectuals such as: the librarian of the Chamber of Deputies, Giovanni Battista Scovazzi, Senator Tancredi Canonico, spiritist physician Giacinto Forni, the theologian Francesco Barone.

In 1854 the Catholic newspaper L’Armonia publicly denounced the existence of a “new sect”. According to L’Armonia, the Towianists were a new sect spreading a religious doctrine menacing Catholic dogma and operating occult practices. Between 1855 and 1857 the first ecclesiastical inquests happened in Piedmont. In 1858, two Towianist writings were put in the list of Forbidden Books Index by the Sanctum Officium.

Towianist doctrine was jealously kept secret by Towiański and it was transmitted only to his closest adepts. The Church’s institutions tried to understand the new doctrine through two inquests. Being unable to reveal it, the Church’s institutions saw it as a promoter of XIX century’s occult practices and a new sect threatening the Roman Catholic Church’s theological and political domains.

Between the XIX and the XX century, the reactionary party of the Roman Curia identified in Towianism a precursor of Catholic Modernism. Towianism was associated with several eminent personalities, such as Cardinal Luigi Puecher-Passavalli, Bishop Geremia Bonomelli, and the writer Antonio Fogazzaro, who were criticizing the Roman Church’s policies.

Through the study of the Church’s archival documents and the analysis of Towianist writings and religious publications, this contribution shows how the Church’s institutions perceived and persecuted a heterodox Catholic doctrine connected to different esoteric traditions and related to the rise of XIX century occultism.
Oltreché insigne giurista, Johann Jakob Bachofen può essere considerato una figura fondamentale per aver avviato, nell’ambito di studi concernenti il mito e il simbolo in rapporto alle civiltà antiche, una metodologia ermeneutica totalmente nuova. In radicale antitesi rispetto ad ogni razionalismo disgregatore e in netta polemica con la filologia ufficiale del tempo, Bachofen elaborò un metodo basato sulla comprensione diretta ed empatica dei mondi antichi, rifiutandosi, in nome del principio aristotelico secondo cui “il simile comprende il simile”, di adottare una prospettiva ‘neutra’, la quale solo in virtù di un equivoco, secondo questo autore, avrebbe potuto dirsi critica e scientifica. Osteggiato e ostracizzato dai suoi contemporanei, Bachofen poté godere di una riscoperta in grande stile solo più tardi, fra gli anni ’20 e ’30 del ’900, allorché si destò una “Bachofen-Renaissance’. In tale congiuntura, un movimento composito di autori legati alla cosiddetta Konservative Revolution, i quali si impegnarono in una profonda riabilitazione del pensiero del giurista svizzero, specialmente là dove esso, a loro giudizio, si mostrava atto alla enucleazione di una Weltanschauung rivoluzionaria, e di un corrispondente mito animatore, in grado di lumeggiare una via d’uscita dalla decadenza incarnata dal mondo weimariano, ormai in via di definitiva dissoluzione.
Religion both by Durkheim and Mauss. Lévi-Strauss’ concept of Reciprocity was long used against the previous relevance assigned to the Sacred. On the other hand, the return of this latter problem from past years is characterized by a dispute concerning the historical and/or theoretical priority to assign to the Gift or, by contrast, to the Sacrifice. For his idea of Gift as a “Loss”, Bataille approaches the two concepts in a different way and can offer a valid and original contribution to the current debate.

Lunch
13:20 - 14:40 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021

426 Resilience Shaping Identity
14:40 - 16:20 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021

Elisabeth Begemann

Identities shape everyday life. They are not a fixed thing, but adapt according to situation and circumstance. Multiple factors contribute to the facets of an identity: religiosity, music, nature, sports, carnival, literature, etc. are parts of and shape this identity. In appealing to certain aspects, sub-identities are activated and items which could or should be consider rationally are emotionalized in appealing not to reason, but to that part of a subject’s identity, thus posing (in the worst case) a threat to that very identity; see for example the question of man-made climate change and the highly charged and emotionalized debate, as well as religious practices to which the subject feels a strong adherence. These identities are established by resonant self-world relations, i.e. relations that shape and support the individual, that offer spaces or relations that can be relied upon to counteract alienation with the environment. The more resonant these spaces or relations, the more resilient they are to threats that may question their content or form. One person may find that resonance in long hikes through the mountains, in cooking parties with friends, in listening to Mozart and woodcraft; another finds it in painting, in attending Sunday mass, in spending their holidays in a certain place; a third in soccer games, in their work, in meditation practices - all these aspects shape the individual’s identity and create networks, as these resonant relations are not only related to the individual, but must, in that individual, be negotiated with one another.

What happens, however, if these sub-identities come into conflict with one another? If, for example, the practice of established rituals, of culturally determined and long-established religious practices come into conflict with acute political questions in a politically engaged person? Can second-order resonance, i.e. culturally determined relations or spaces, produce the same kind of resonance and possibility for resilience as resonance that is constituted by peak moments? How do power relations influence and contribute to resonant self-world relations and their resilience in a changing, accelerating or shifting environment?

Our papers address these questions from various disciplines and cultures, considering ancient and modern phenomena in a diachronic perspective.
Mitra and Varuṇa across the Zagros

Elena Malagoli

Max-Weber-Kolleg, University of Erfurt, Erfurt, Germany

Abstract

Mitra and Varuṇa are two very ancient gods of the Vedic pantheon, often named together and often protagonists of the same lore. We know about them from a series of hymns of the Veda and we know that they probably belong to an early pantheon. We also know them from the Avestic Iranian context, where Mithra maintains a godly status and most of his aspects, while the Vedic Varuṇa seems to disappear, and later being incorporated into other deities and traditions. These gods, though, also traveled across the Zagros mountains, and landed in the Khabur valley, in the heart of Mesopotamian territory. Specifically, it was the Mittani territory, a polity that left us many clues and many questions. Mitra and Varuṇa appear in an ancient near eastern peace treaty, CTH 51, stipulated between Ḫatti and Mittani. In the list of divine witnesses, there are two names whose linguistic origin is not Akkadian nor Hurrian nor Hittite: These names are mitraššil and uruššil. There is little linguistic doubt about the connection among all these gods – the Vedic Mitra and Varuṇa, the Avestic Mithra and possibly Apāṃ Nāpāt and Vṛṣṭraghna, and the Mittanian mitraššil and uruššil - but the question about their “identity” is still pressing. The simple fact that we can find them in such a large geographical area and in different time periods is enough to raise important questions about who they were and how they were perceived. Are they the very same two gods, which traveled far and wide across Central Asia? If they are local outcome of the same ancient gods, is there a mythological core to them? What core is it? How much their traits differs and how many similarities they maintained?

This paper aims to investigate the resilience of these two specific gods and the characteristics that share in different religious contexts such as the Mittanian one. This paper is not trying to argue that these gods are the same ones which traveled far and wide: the main argumentation is that specific ideas, typically associated with these godly figures, were widespread and the gods that carried them were declined and reinvented by societies to fit their specific environments, thus showing the resilience of these religious ideas. The paper will thus investigate these three environments – the Vedic one, the Avestic one, and the Mittanian one - to show how these religious characteristics were employed and were linked to one another.

In this context, the oath is a key element to understand the agency of these gods, and this is the reason why we look at CTH 51, which is a fine example of how societies engaged with godly figures that came from a common basin of ideas.

Resilience as a Relational Reaction. Deconversion and Religious Turn in the Establishment of Resonant Self-World Relations

Ramón Soneira Martínez

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Abstract
One of the most relevant facets of identity is defined by religious beliefs. Subjects label themselves depending on the sets of religious ideas they support. However, religiosity, like identity, is a changing phenomenon. Recent proposals in Religious Studies have defined religion as a “lived” human activity in which individuals decide which religious belief or practise is more in line with their worldview. This religious appropriation has a contrary effect: the rejection of certain religious aspects. Two different but related phenomena that explain the “liveliness” of religious transformations are “deconversion” (crisis of faith) and “religious turn” (crisis of doubt). The first one had obtained more attention in the last years within the so-called “non-religion” studies to answer how subjects lose faith or belief in specific religious ideas even modifying religious identities (“I am not a Christian/Muslim/Hindu…anymore”). Religious turn, on the other hand, has been defined as the process in which individuals who were considered themselves as nonreligious or atheists develop a specific religiosity or spirituality (“I am not an atheist/agnostic/ unbeliever…anymore”). The reasons for the development of both phenomena are manifold, not only rational or philosophical but also emotional. This study proposes to observe deconversion and religious turn from the theoretical background of the Resonanztheorie (Rosa, 2016). Is it possible to define both phenomena as two intrinsic processes of identity transformations that shape the search for resonant relations to the world? In order to answer the question, the study analyses two different examples for each phenomenon as resilient respondents, one historical and one fictional. Concerning deconversion, two examples will be discussed: the loss of faith of the ethnologist Daniel Everett (born 1951) and Eliezer, the narrator of La Nuit written by Elie Wiesel in 1958. Religious turn will be exemplified with the figure of Annie Besant (1847-1933) and Lázaro, one of the characters of Unamuno’s novel San Manuel Bueno, mártir (1931).

798 Resonance with Nature, Resilience against Social Inertia: A philosophical Analysis of “laudato si”

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Abstract

In 2015, the United Nations declared the “sustainable development goals” - an important step in order to fight climate change globally. In the same year, Pope Francis published “laudato si”, an encyclical that addresses ecological concerns in a surprisingly radical manner. It is particularly interesting how various “axes of resonance” are re-balanced in this document in order to bring about social change; and how the document manages to stay in “resonance” with Catholic tradition spiritually while changing its political approach dramatically. In Catholicism, believers are in some tension between various axes of resonance: with God, with the Church, with “the world” of society and politics, and with non-human “nature” (as well as human nature, sometimes pictured as a realm of contestation). While Catholicism has been comparatively “liberal” in compromising its social and political otherworldliness (“my kingdom is not of this world”, Joh 18,36), only small fractions within the Church were open to what some might call “nature mysticism” (for fear of going astray into the heresy of pantheism); among them were liberation theologians like Leonardo Boff or Ernesto Cardenal, both of which were in tension with the Church. By taking up the Franciscan legacy, the encyclical, however, takes a new stance towards nature. By way of stressing the “creation”, resonance with both “transcendences” are possible: with God, who transcends (but also inhibits) “the world”, and with “nature” (which transcends, yet pervades “society” and every individual). In my socio-philosophical analysis of this text, I aim to show how it creates or enforces resilience against social forces (e.g., powerful global economic actors and political institutions) by allowing for a “vertical” axe of resonance than runs from “top” to “bottom”, incorporating both nature and religion; thus shielding against hostilities from a social cosmos that is still run by empires of carbon. This is particularly interesting when this approach is situated in the history of “ecological theologies”.
Abstract

In recent years, Trauma as a concept has migrated from Psychoanalysis and made its way in social and cultural studies. Jeffrey Alexander for example, coined the concept by stating that: “Cultural trauma occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, making their memories forever and changing their future identities in fundamental and irrevocable way”. On the other hand, many theorists favoured the term Social Trauma; for it transcends the psychiatric diagnosis to be located within the inter-personal communication of social groups. In the study of migration, the term is sceptically implied, for it tends to perpetuate dominant representations of migrants and refugees as speechless, traumatized and consigned to a mute and faceless physical mass in Europe, denying them the possibility of presenting narratives that might disrupt this hegemonic view. Shahram Khosravi and Orkideh Behrouzan, suggested alternative concepts such as Precarious and Rupture, to capture the experience of life and memory on the move. In this paper, I intend to argue that although this criticism is legitimate and needed, this double-edged concept is necessary for the working through of this lived experiences, which gets integrated in the self without being completely achieved.

Furthermore, thinking the foundations of a collective identity as exposed to reformulation; due to the experience of cultural, social, or individual trauma, I will show that the experience of exile, war, and dictatorship alters the refugee’s being in the world, and her understanding of the self as a nucleus made of constant national and cultural landmarks. Investigating hence, if exile is per se a social trauma, and whether the implications which result from this experience lead consequently to the formation of multiple identities, asking hence, which subjectivities are produced by trauma? How do refugees experience, share and deal with different kinds of Ruptures and Trauma? and how much space and understanding are given or produced by their surroundings in the new society? Does the procedure of asylum and integration/assimilation play a role in repressing it? if so, what could affect and stimulate second order resonances? For without the working through, and the transformation of negative experiences through axes of Resonance, the sense of a minimal belonging to the new society could get lost, which fosters alienation and a feeling of being de-entrenched, resulting in a defensive attachment to national, cultural or/and religious identities.

257-I Underground Religious Spaces as Resources for Community Resilience

14:40 - 16:20 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021

Giuseppe Pace, Renata Salvarani
Underground spaces mark deep transformations experienced by a community. Grottoes and caves become places of worship for marginal or persecuted groups, they allow minority religious groups to survive after great social and cultural changes; cavities and abandoned environments are used as homes by minorities, refugee groups, marginalized, homeless; tunnels and galleries are used as shelters during wars and invasions; hypogeal burial areas have been utilized continuously across the ages; under the ground are accumulated waste, deposits of the past, traces of events in the distant past.

They are not only places of memory (Halbwachs 1925, 1941; Assmann 1992; Ricoeur 2000), but also dynamic elements able to interact semantically with the society that created them, continuing to keep them as a reference.

They connote themselves in a religious sense and remain in use for long and very long durations, changing function, assuming different semantic values. They play a specific role in the urban fabric becoming a sort of mine providing inputs for resilience processes (memories, links to events, a memory of pain, a memory of trauma).

Inside underground spaces there can be a salvific search, featured also in a religious sense, which then produces effects of resilience in the life of the city on the surface.

The focus of the session is on the analysis of the socio-religious dynamics connected with underground spaces, as well as on the anthropological, symbolic, and mythological values of the acts of descending and ascending, bringing to light, hiding underground, being born in a cave, discovering springs and groundwater, finding and re-finding holy bodies, relics and signs.

The connections of the topic with valorization programmes throughout Europe and the Mediterranean area are objects of the session as well. The introduction of case studies is welcome as well.

388 Religious Underground Spaces along Pilgrimage Roads: From History to Valorisation

Renata Salvarani

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Abstract

In religious traditions, hypogeal spaces assume a marked symbolic value and often retain the continuity of ancient rites and devotions, contributing in a special way to characterizing the semantic processes of space. They can be identified as: places of the birth of gods; spaces where immortal beings hide; dwellings of oracles; openings and passages to the underworld; points of origin of hidden water sources (sacred wells); initiatory environments.

In Christianity, the grotto, the cave, the antros are not only associated with the birth of Jesus but also assume importance as places of rediscovery and of miraculous finding (identification of the very Sepulchre of Christ in the underground of Aelia Capitolina by the architects of Constantine, the discovery of the relic of the Holy Cross in a cavity of Jerusalem, inventiones of holy bodies, the finding of the Holy Lance in Antioch; identification of martyr places, etc.).
When these sites are located along pilgrimage routes, the dynamics of the building of meaning overlap different narratives, blending cults and memories with the themes of the pilgrimage and creating devotional forms of long duration. Some of them result strongly rooted in the life of local communities and last until today.

Medieval routes of the *peregrinationes maiores* are dotted with hypogean places that become real *stationes* that precede the final destination, but not only: marginal territories also give life to local experiences of pilgrimage in which the underground spaces act as an element of aggregation both for settlements and local road networks.

This paper analyzes some cases of such underground sites. Their continuous religious function connects local communities and devotional pathways networks, to the point of making them important elements of valorization for the whole territory (Catacomb of Generosa at Rome, Acquapendente, Aubeterre-sur-Dronne, San Salvatore di Sinis-Cabras).

From each of them, we can draw general lines for the valorization of territories that have defined themselves across the centuries as "street areas".

References


647 The Relics of St. James and their Role in the Urban Fabrics of Santiago de Compostela (Spain)

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**Abstract**

Apart from being the first forms of movements, pilgrimages allow the relics of saints and their disciples to be venerated, thus giving birth to a network of holy places that has reinforced a Christian community. Indeed, pilgrimages have worked as axes that united East and West within Western Christendom. Thus, religion turned into a sign of collective identity and numerous local and individual phenomena were absorbed in the major routes. The sanctuaries of all Europe lost their autonomy to be integrated in the major pilgrimages: Santiago, Rome and Jerusalem.

The case study refers to one of them: Camino de Santiago, one of the most important European pilgrimage routes. Its origin goes back to the 8th century and follows the discovery of the remains of the body of the Apostle St James, an event known as the *inventio*, and their official recognition in the 12th century. The story
that explains the existence of St James’s relics in Galicia is that this close disciple of Jesus Christ had been preaching in the Western lands, situated at the end of the world, and when he died, his followers transferred his relics from Jerusalem to these lands, in the North-Western Iberian Peninsula. After a time of oblivion, in 1884 there was the (re)discovery of the remains of the Apostle, which had been missing since the 16th century. The Catholic Church immediately confirmed the authenticity of the Apostle’s remains, calling the event the second inventio. Since the relics are kept in a cave of the Cathedral, and have been assisting the functional urban transformation, whose climax can be appreciated nowadays, when Santiago de Compostela is one of the most important destinations of urban, cultural, and religious tourism.

Considering these premises, we will approach the case study taking into account the following points:

Attachment: as religion reinforces the feeling of attachment to place, we will analyze how the relics contributed to nourish a sense of place in the city, also contributing to the urban fabric.

Mobility: the history of relics is also the history of “their mobility”; relics circulated along commercial routes and were sold, moved or stolen. This intense circulation has contributed to a transfer of sacredness from the East to the West and this is reflected in the spatial identity.

Landmark: relics have somehow contributed to creating the identity of places, and have also facilitated its location on the European religious map. Concerning the case study, we will analyze how the monumentalization of the places of memory (i.e. the construction of the basilica, commemorative elements, etc.) reveals the spread of the sacred value of the relic: from the altar, through the sacred structure, and to the territory.

Although at present relics are still objects of worship keeping past values alive, in functional terms, they have mainly assumed a symbolic value that deserves different semantic values and urban functions.

634 The Resilience of the Serpent: The Ploutonion at Hierapolis of Phrygia as an Underground Religious Space from Hellenism to Late Antiquity, between History, Epigraphy and Archaeology

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Abstract

Hierapolis of Phrygia (Pamukkale, Turkey) was a famous holy place in Antiquity, among Pagans and Christians, for two important sanctuaries, attracting thousands of pilgrims and the curious: the underground cave of the Great Mother of the Gods and the tomb of the apostle Philip. Both have been recently discovered (2008-2018) by the Italian Archaeological Mission of Hierapolis (MAIER), led by Francesco D’Andria (D’Andria 2011-2012; 2013; 2016; 2018; 2019a-b; 2020; f.c.). The submitter of this proposal is a member of the same Mission, as ancient historian and epigraphist, since 2012 and member of the Società Italiana di Storia delle Religioni (SISR) since 2008.
The Phrygian cult of Kybele by the cave, directly connected with the underlying sismic fault, was quite ancient: it predated the Hellenistic foundation of the Holy City by the Seleucid kings (3rd cent. BC) and was later associated with the mystery cult of Plouton and Kore, derived from Eleusis (Attica). The Hellenistic Ploutonion became then a worldwide renowned destination for religious tourism: many authors (Cicero, Strabo, Galen, Apuleius, Cassius Dio) travelled to Hierapolis to observe the chtonian deities’ grotto, exhaling dangerous gases from the underground fault, and described the impressive rites performed by the so-called Galli, the Phrygian priests of Kybele. Old pagan believers still visited the sanctuary in the first centuries of the Christianized Roman Empire (4th-6th cent. AD). About the end of the 5th cent. AD the Neoplatonic philosopher Damascius was the last author who visited Hierapolis: he actually descended into the cave and had a dream vision of Kybele. A few decades later, probably under Justinian, the Ploutonion was destroyed and definitely buried up.

Recent archaeological excavations have finally rediscovered the sanctuary with its sculptures, reliefs, votive dedications and inscriptions (Filippini 2016; f.c.), which attest the long-lasting cults of Plouton (Hades-Serapis) and of Zeus Sabazios, associated with holy snakes. This significant detail matches the religious description given by the sectarian Christian author of the apocryphal Acts of the Philip (4th-5th cent. AD) (Filippini 2015; 2017; 2018), who imagined the legendary Hierapolis of apostolic age as the City of Serpents, dominated by the cruel goddess Echidna, the Great Viper and Mother of all the snakes, and her evil priests. The apostolic romance would have actually depicted the late antique city with its ancestral, and still resilient, pagan cults.

On the basis of recent archaeological and epigraphical findings, this paper would focus on the origins and mostly on the resilience of local cults (Kybele, Plouton and Kore, Zeus Sabazios, holy snakes), centred in the cave of Hierapolis, from Hellenism to Late Antiquity (3rd cent. BC - 6th cent. AD).


334 “Ubi saxa panduntur ibi peccata hominum dimittuntur”: Devotion, Forgiveness and Resilience in St. Michael’s Cave-Sanctuary on Mount Gargano

Ada Campione, Angela Laghezza

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Abstract

The cave-sanctuary of St Michael, located in the bowels of the Gargano promontory (Apulia, Italy), is the most important place where Michael the Archangel has been worshipped in the Latin West since Late Antiquity; it has been a destination of incessant pilgrimages from the end of the 5th century to the present. This place became a prototype for the settlements dedicated to the Archangel, marked by specific naturalistic features all over Europe: the mountain, the water, the rock/stone, and the cave itself, specially in Central-Southern Italy.
The cave and stone assumed a strong symbolic-religious value in the Michaelic Garganic devotion, as an important element of the rituals performed by the pilgrims who flew to the sanctuary looking for healing, salvation and protection. Thus, over the centuries the cave has become a “sacred mine” from which fragments of stone were taken away, and used as relics for founding new sanctuaries and in case of illness, epidemics and dangers. The “virtus” of the Gargano stone is still appreciated nowadays: fragments of stone are also embedded in the house foundations, or in the architraves of the entrance doors to ensure the protection of the Angel, while other miniscule fragments are sewn into newborns’ cloths, to protect them from disease. In the past, the water that oozed from the walls of the cave (stilla), considered miraculous, was collected in a container to treat various diseases.

The ascension itself to the Mount Gargano has a deep religious symbolism: pilgrims and travellers, in fact, describe their difficulties in climbing the mountain, a steep slope which they faced on foot or on carts; the harsh climate, wet and rainy; their final emotion while reaching the sacred cave.

Following a long tradition of research on the cult of St Michael and the pilgrimage to the Gargano sanctuary, this paper aims to propose a reflection on the symbolic and anthropological meaning of the Michaelic cave, as a “resilient” space identified by a specific morphology, and on the socio-religious dynamics connected to it: from the primary moment of the Christian sacralization of the place, mainly as a therapeutic sanctuary linked to the presence of water, to its characterization also as a place of forgiveness in medieval times, and a destination of judicial pilgrimage and suffrage, until its inclusion, in 2011, in the UNESCO World Heritage Site.

62-III Resilient Gnosis
14:40 - 16:20 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021
Francesco Berno, Andrea Annese

771 Mani’s Elkesaite Background and the Five Apocalypses in Baraies’ Homily
Margherita Mantovani
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Abstract
When speaking of the Jewish legacy in Manichaeism, the mention of five apocalypses in the Cologne Mani Codex represents one of the main points of discussion. The nature of the apocalyptic quotations in Baraies’ excerpt (CMC48,16–60,12) has been the object, in fact, of great discussion among scholars. Whether these apocalypses are to be considered as “forgery” (Reeves, 1996; Frankfurter, 1997) or not, this kind of material in the Cologne Mani Codex is useful to understand the process of rewriting of the apocalyptic literature within Manichaeism, as well as its connections with the topos of the heavenly journey. Through a look at the Oxyrhynchus fragments and other kinds of sources, this paper aims at showing the role that the “resilient”
dimension of the apocalyptic literature played in Mani’s polemics against the Elkesaites and in the making of the Manichaean notion of “gnosis”.

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714 The Christology and Soteriology of the *Pistis Sophia* Texts: Who Are They in Dialogue With?

Andrea Annese

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Abstract

The *Pistis Sophia*, a composite Egyptian Gnostic text attested in the Coptic *Codex Askewianus* (fourth/fifth century; original composition: possibly in Greek in the third or early fourth century), is a key example of the textual and conceptual development which occurred within some Gnostic groups and traditions. The four (or five) “books” that form what modern scholars call *Pistis Sophia* belong to at least two different works and show a complex compositional and transmission history which is related to the history of the Gnostic group who composed and read those books (which show some connections with the so-called *Books of Jeu*). It seems that this Gnostic movement (whose members may be labelled “Jeuians” according to Evans 2015) developed and changed its ideas and practices “as the community interacted with other religious groups” (DeConick 2016, 318), also in competition with them. It can then represent a case study of the resilient and developmental nature of a Gnostic group that, even in a late stage of ancient Gnosticism, tried to reaffirm its identity as the repository for the highest mysteries and a “synthesis” of several sources and traditions, which were reinterpreted in a creative way. Starting from these premises, this paper will focus on the Christology and soteriology of the *Pistis Sophia* books, also highlighting some inconsistencies that can be evaluated in the light of the compositional history of that Gnostic work. This analysis will compare selected passages from the *Pistis Sophia* with other Gnostic texts to try to identity with which doctrines and groups the *Pistis Sophia* was in theoretical dialogue (or confrontation). The hypothesis will be checked that the *Pistis Sophia* tried to tackle not only some Sethian themes, but also certain issues debated within the development of Valentinian Gnosticism, as well as doctrines of “mainstream Christianity.” Specific attention will be paid to the *Pistis Sophia* texts’ understanding of the body and death of Jesus and the remission of sins.

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564 Gnosticism in Hollywood at the Turn of the Millennium: An Intertextual Approach

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Abstract

The past few decades have witnessed a great proliferation of films, TV series, video games, comic books, and novels that either explicitly or implicitly reflect ideas associated with “Gnosticism.” Using Hans Jonas’s
conception as a conceptual point of reference, I will analyze a few Hollywood films that emerged at the threshold of the 21st century as paradigmatic examples of this trend, particularly *Dark City* (1998), *Pleasantville* (1998), *The Truman Show* (1998), and *The Matrix* (1999). I will utilize an intertextual approach to show how Jonas’s ideas about Gnosticism, such as anticosmological dualism, nihilism, or psychologically understood *Gnosis*, are evoked in the films. Specifically, I will analyze their semantic, stylistic, and formal characteristics as well as narrative contents. Apart from merely illustrating points of correspondence between Jonas’s conception and the films, I will also discuss disanalogies. To explain them, I will show how the viewer can reinterpret Jonas’s considerations on Gnosticism and recontextualize them to reflect on the problem of modern alienation, millennial technophobia, or capitalistic totalitarianism invoked in the films.

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946 Valentinus Redivivus? The Reception and Reimagination of Gnosticism within the French Gnostic Churches

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**Abstract**

In 1890, the librarian, Freemason and Spiritualist Jules Doinel proclaimed the arrival of the Paraclete and the *gnosis* of antiquity restored after reporting to have had a vision of the celestial *Aeon* Jesus - thus, he formed the Église Gnostique de France, the first religious organization in modern times which self-identified with ancient Gnosticism. This event marks the beginning of a Neo-Gnostic subculture which in its unfolding would attract or influence such prominent personages as the philosopher René Guenon or the infamous British magician Aleister Crowley. Whereas this religious movement has been barely studied, it is especially its decisive reception of late ancient writings such as the heresiological discourse of the Church Fathers or early Coptic Gnostic testimonies like the *Pistis Sophia* which shaped its re-imagination of late ancient heterodox Christianity. Moreover, it drew on its contemporary scholarly discourse about Gnosticism such as in the works of the Orientalist Ernest Renan or the early Coptologist Émile Amélineau. Thus, Coptic and Early Christian Studies were unintentionally instrumental for the formation of this new religious movement - a connection which has not been studied before. Departing from this lacuna, this dissertation project investigates the modes and means of the reception of heterodox late ancient theology and texts within the Gnostic revivalist movement in the 19th and early 20th centuries. By applying methodological and theoretical frameworks from the theories of intertextuality and memory studies, the dependence of Neo-Gnostic writings on late ancient Greek and Coptic texts will be developed and their process of reception understood. Moreover, this project evaluates the Neo-Gnostic movement’s role as a catalyst which triggered further interest in Gnosticism in later religious movements, art and even psychology. Thus, a comprehensive study about a process which ultimately led to a popularization of Gnosticism outside the academic discourse will be given.

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518-I Erasmianism, Female Resilience, and Accommodation

**ONLINE**

14:40 - 16:20 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021

Rainer Leushuis, Maria Fallica
The crisis generated by the competing hermeneutics of Christianity that divided Europe in the sixteenth century is an ideal place to look for experiences of resilience. If resilience is defined, as it is in the general call for the EASR 2021, as “the ability to counteract or absorb a process of transformation”, “characterized by a capacity to endure changes without having to adapt permanently” and “an awareness of how to cope with a crisis”, the theological and literary current labeled “Erasmianism” is a perfect example of adaptation and reinvention in the face of a crisis. Predicated on the theological-rhetorical strategy of “accommodation”, Erasmus’ theology presents a God who adapts himself to the degrees of understanding of the believers, and therefore an exegesis, which, like Erasmus himself, graduates possible levels of Church reform in progressive and inclusive ways. In this theological framework, resilience is deeply linked to accommodatio. This term is understood both as the adaptation of the Spirit, which “accommodates itself to our weakness” and leads the believers “gradually and through distinct stages to such a lofty philosophy”, and as the adaptation of the Christian, who is invited to imitate Paul’s ability to adapt himself and his voice to fellow Christians and their circumstances.

Within this theoretical framework, our workshop will focus on the “feminine” declension of these theological models and concrete experiences of reaction to the crisis of Europe’s political and religious structures. Given Erasmus’ predilection for speaking through female voices, his (moderately) progressive attitude toward women’s role in society, and the influence of his writings on important female voices of the Renaissance, the workshop will examine how Erasmian theology constructed the “feminine” and female voices as specific actors of resilience. Resilience can be validated in this context as the strategy of self-reflection and action of women in a male-dominated structure, and by extension as a form of personal and social liberation. We will analyze Erasmian female resilience in an interdisciplinary approach that combines historical, philological, literary, philosophical, and theological analysis.

541 Erasmus and the Feminine Imagery: The Church as Bride and the Progress of the Church

Maria Fallica

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Abstract

In the last decades, great scientific attention has been given to women’s presence and representation in Erasmus’ writing, given his mostly liberal attitude regarding topics such as marriage and female education. Moreover, the female representation of some of the most important figures of Erasmus’ writings (Madame Folly in the Encomium Moriae, Peace in the Querela Pacis) is an important clue on a specific construction of the “feminine” as a theological device in Erasmus. My paper intends to cross-reference these data with the Origenian inheritance of the theme in Erasmus. Godin’s masterful work on Origen’s presence in Erasmus focuses on the “individualistic” intake on the theme by Erasmus, whilst he underestimates the ecclesiological aspect of it (Godin 1982, 94). My paper will examine Erasmus’ theology and ecclesiology through the feminine imagery of the bride. The erotic imagery has always been a favourite in theologies marked by the progressive ascent of the soul and the Church, as Origen’s and Gregory of Nissa’s works on the Song of Songs testify. Erasmus’ rarefied and intellectual version of this theme is still an open research field which my paper will start to cover.

568 Irony and Folly in Erasmus
Ludovico Battista
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Abstract

It is not by chance that one of the most radical and enigmatic speeches in Erasmus’ production - the *Encomium Moriae* - was pronounced by a female character: Folly. This paper aims at interrogating the ironic logic of Erasmus’ text not simply as the result of a carnivalesque spirit of suspension and derision of traditional orders, or as a literary imitation of the ancient satire, but as the expression of a profoundly original mode of discourse, very serious from a religious point of view, that wants to be completely alternative to that of the “male” theological-philosophical *logos*, which it mocks. This mode relies on a profoundly anti-classical device: the Pauline and apocalyptic logic of catastrophic inversion of the world’s values (“Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?” 1Cor 1,20), reinterpreted through Origen as the revelation of the immense, humanly “foolish” divine mercy, which choses the “things that are not” and therefore forgives everyone. Folly’s discourse thus proves to be amphibolic and completely paradoxical, since it both condemns and forgives - ironically and smoothly - the foolishness of human sin. This way, the paper will highlight 1) on the one hand, the radically corrosive and secularising potential of Erasmus’ scepticism, that relativizes and harshly deconstructs the dogmatic and metaphysical naivety of the totality of human beliefs and attitudes, conceived as sin and therefore foolishness; 2) on the other hand, at the same time, the profoundly ironic, “apocatastic” logic of ironic exaltation of the world’s foolishness as entirely redeemed by the maternal, universal embrace of God’s forgiveness.

718 "Mihi Tecum Vicissim Paulisper Sophistam Agere?": Women and Philosophy in the Erasmian Colloquia

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Abstract

Indebted to classical literature and in particular to some of the greatest dialogue writers such as Lucian of Samosata, Plato and Cicero, Erasmus proposes in his *Colloquia* (1518-1533) a collection of customary conversations on different themes; theological discussions are mixed with pedagogical teachings, grammar notions, philosophical argumentations and contemporary problems, all in a colloquial, and often ironic, dimension and in an accessible Latin.

In the *Colloquia*, very important results are female education and the social role that women play as educators of their children, as well as being responsible for their Christian piety. A key point is the use of female intelligence, rhetorical skills and propensity for philosophical reasoning. The women portrayed in the work and their male counterparts are treated as equals, and engage in philosophical dialogues with each other. This intervention will therefore analyze the female figures of Erasmus’ *Colloquia* in their relationship with philosophy, which focuses on female intelligence, defining women as autonomous subjects who are free to think individually. Indeed, the autonomous use of intelligence is closely related to the debate on free will (a crucial point of theological dissertations of the early sixteenth century, especially in the dispute with Martin Luther) and represents a decisive point of Erasmus’ thought. Women are also champions of *accommodatio* and close to the dictates of the *philosophia Christi*. In this regard, this
contribution will analyze the specific role that the author attributes to them in work and consequently in society.

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557 Paraphrasing the Female Voice: Women, Accommodatio, and Emotion in Erasmus’ Paraphrases

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Abstract

As the leading voice among early modern Christian humanists expressing progressive views towards women’s role in society and encouraging their participation in the debates surrounding religious and social reform, Erasmus is recognized for staging authentic female voices and characters in literary works such as the Colloquies and the Praise of Folly. Often presented in dialogical settings, Erasmus’ female interlocutors actively question the transformations in their gender’s social and religious predicaments between orthodoxy and reform. However, in doing so, they ultimately also embody the strategy of accommodatio whereby a moderate Erasmian “philosophy of Christ” finds its way to the Christian reader’s spheres of thought and action.

My paper will focus on Erasmus’ staging of the female voice in his paraphrases of the gospels. Between 1517 and 1524, in the wake of his landmark publication of the New Testament (a Greek edition and new Latin translation, accompanied by extensive annotations), Erasmus embarked on a related project of retelling the New Testament in his popular Paraphrases, written in Latin but of which the vernacular translations would mediate Scripture to a pan-European readership. In addition to an exegetical goal of explaining Scripture to a wider audience, these texts also feature a rhetorical and literary goal, aiming to perform by imitation a gradual acquisition of faith in the individual reader’s mind and, by extension, in the sphere of thought and action of the listeners in the congregations where Erasmus’ paraphrases were often used as homiletic material. In this process, Erasmus instrumentalizes emotion well beyond the typical oratorical rousing of the audience’s emotions for the sake of persuasion (movere). Embedding the numerous dialogical exchanges between Jesus, his disciples, and other gospel characters in a range of affective and sensorial layers, Erasmus’ paraphrastic text grants a key role to the emotions in the transmission of faith and gospel wisdom. In several exchanges, biblical female voices are uniquely developed in this sensorial and affective context to guarantee accommodatio. My paper will focus on three episodes in the gospel of John (the speaking of the Samaritan woman at the well [Chapter 4], the exchanges with Mary and Martha at the raising of Lazarus [Chapter 11], and Mary Magdalene’s encounter with the risen Jesus [Chapter 20]), in which female resilience is rendered in a context of conflicting emotions (shame, grief, despair, and hope) triggered in reaction to both gospel events and Jesus’ own speaking and emotional state. My paper will argue that female resilience in this emotional landscape serves to reinforce an interlocutorial exchange whose sensorial and affective dimensions guarantee a gradual imitation of and transformation towards faith and gospel wisdom by the reader or listener in their homiletic community.
693 Narratives of the Self and Emotions on Muslim Online Platforms

Rosa Luetge
University of Bremen, Bremen, Germany

Abstract

Even though Muslims are a minority in Europe and islamophobia is widespread, there are numerous young Muslims who demand social and political participation and speak out for themselves. This is also reflected online, where nowadays self-representation and self-reflection take place to a large extent. This happens in social media, but also on numerous other platforms, such as blogs or “lifestyle” sites. The authors present everyday actions, share their thoughts and give tips on beauty, emotions, etc. but also on political issues. These platforms offer low-threshold opportunities for participation and the choice of topics appeals to self-identification.

Moreover, modern societies are characterized by self-help cultures. This is even more successful in online environments, which are full of articles with e.g., 10 tips for finding one’s authentic self. In Muslim online spaces these narratives intersect with religiosity, religious lifestyle and resilience as a minority.

In my paper, I focus on the entanglement of religion and psychology on Muslim online platforms and on the communication and handling of emotions in this environment. This is based on the sociological concept of feeling rules from Arlie Hochschild (1990) as well as sociological analyses of emotions and narratives of the self as in Eva Illouz’s (2007) work on therapeutic narratives in popular culture. In doing so, I examine the normative negotiations of emotions and Muslim subject positions in the tension between marginalization, self-empowerment, and the demands of modern societies.

This allows a deeper understanding of Muslim self-presentations and narratives about the self outside of institutionalized contexts.

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727 “Inner and Outer Peace”: Yoga and Meditation among Muslims in Kosovo

Cecilie Endresen
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Abstract
Neo-spiritual, New Age-inspired techniques purport to foster resilience, and their promise of wellbeing, harmony, and personal growth also appeals to many Muslims. This paper is a study of the reception of yoga, meditation, and guru movements in Muslim-majority Kosovo. An important legitimising strategy for “mind-body-spirit” initiatives in this war-torn society is claims to relieve trauma and cope with crisis.

Holistic healing is e.g. promoted in “hyper-masculine” environments, such as through the organisations of the war veterans from the former guerrilla UÇK/KLA, which promote guru movement The Art of Living and meditation for trauma relief. In this discourse, a collective, ethno-national and implicitly Muslim narrative of suffering is cast in a secularized, health-oriented, yet profoundly neo-Hindu framework. A more individualistic preoccupation with self and lifestyle is found among women in cosmopolitan urban yoga networks, such as the annual Shanti yoga fest that seeks to transcend ethnic and religious boundaries and build a harmonious society upon Indic religious concepts like ahimsa. The project Yoga in Albanian Lands, in turn, connects yoga to local religious traditions and the Ottoman-Islamic legacy.

These are but some examples of how Muslims make sense of neo-spiritual ideas and foreign religious traditions. They also illustrate the resilience of traditions and identities, as well as the reinterpretation and reformatting of local culture and religion in the indigenization process. Moreover, they exemplify the construction of continuity between new and old forms of religiosity, and the fluctuations between the secular and the religious.

915 The Geography of Face Veil as a Visual Islamic Cue among the Followers of Hanafi and Shafie
Naima Mohammadi¹, Fattah HatamiMaskouni²

¹Visiting Assistant professor, Department of Political Science, Law, and International Studies, University of Padova, Padova, Italy. ²University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran, Islamic Republic of

Abstract

The present research is an attempt to analyze diverse connotations of Islamic face veil with respect to the followers of Hanafi and Shafie schools in Iran. The findings indicate that the Burqa is not merely an Islamic garment for Shafie’s followers, but it acts as an articulate language with the potential to eliminate the confinements imposed on women by the hegemony of the patriarchal system and religious ideologies, empowering them to interact socially and communicate with other members of the society. Considering the fact that the Burqa is produced in different colours, forms and designs, it is rich enough to show the marital status, social class, economic wellbeing and the age of the women wearing it in a traditional patriarchal society, whereas fully-black Niqab prevents the identification and differentiation of the face veiled women. The Niqab is another visual cue which has been adopted among Hanafi’s followers to highlight the collective identity of the ethnic and religious minorities. This black uniform covers the whole face except the eyes and does not allow the outsiders to recognize their individual identity. Although Hanafi doctrines are considered as the most flexible and liberal Islamic discourse towards women’s rights, the Niqab represents the most radical type of hijab to contribute to ethnic solidarity. In fact, it is the only sign to distinguish Sunni minority women from the Shia-Persian majority in Iran.

266 Brazilian Muslim Women’s Lived Experiences of Mental Health: Emotions, Violence and Social Suffering
Abstract

The presence of Muslims in Brazil is best known due to the Arab migration flows. However, the first communities in the country were built in the first half of the 19th century by the Malese, enslaved African Muslims. Concerning the converts, the popularization of Islam in the ghettos stands out: inspired by Malcolm X, young people work hard to spread the religion, emphasizing its social justice message.

For psychology and anthropology, the study of the relationship between mental health and religion is not new. However, as a minority religion in Brazil, still surrounded by stereotypes, nothing appears about mental health-Islam in the national research landscape. It has been shown that experiences of suffering lead some women to seek a new worldview in the Islamic symbolic system and, after conversion, suffering is (re)signified through religious rules and rituals, since Islam is understood as a code of conduct that governs every area of the followers’ lives.

Depression and anxiety disorders have alarming rates in Brazilian society as a whole: Brazil has the highest rate of depression in Latin America and anxiety disorders affect 9.3% of the population, which ranks Brazil as the most anxious country in the world (WHO, 2017). Muslims are not immune to these issues and, to understand mental health in Brazilian Islamic communities, we need to reflect on the social dimension of this theme. According to Schwarcz (2019), the myth that Brazil would be a “harmonic and conflict-free country” persisted for a long time: Brazilians prefer to see themselves as peaceful and tolerant, ignoring the fact that the country was formed by the language of colonization and slavery and that the social issues we face today - violence, poverty, hunger, homelessness, insecurity - have a “face”, completely crossed by class, gender and race, layers of oppression that consolidated a profound structural inequality.

Muslims have been underrepresented in the national psychological literature, and the author’s ongoing doctorate on mental health in Brazilian Islamic communities is a first attempt to constitute that field. This communication aims to present some views, experiences and struggles of Brazilian Muslim women regarding this matter: during the ethnographic research, some of them brought up a series of vicissitudes, contingencies and hostilities that permeate their context, highlighting the social suffering they live, due to violence and marginalization.

33-III Yes We Jain!
14:40 - 16:20 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021

Heleen De Jonckheere, Basile Leclère, Tine Vekemans

178 Jain Migrants in North America: Emerging Trends in the Continuity of Traditional Religious Education

Shivani Bothra
Abstract

Rooted in Jain epistemology, svādhyāya, the principle of self-study, is one of the six internal tapas (austerities) that has migrated with Jains as a soteriological commitment. Regardless of international (transnational) or internal (trans-regional) migration, Jains have continued the tradition of svādhyāya in diverse ways. This paper will explore emerging and modern forms of svādhyāya, responding to the question of how an enduring traditional concept of reading scriptures might translate into new forms of religious education of adults to suit the changing times and varied socio-spatial contexts. Drawing from Jains in North America, I will show this single facet of communal life—religious education of adult laity—within the broad field of migration studies. I will particularly examine how involvement in self-study groups differently influences experiences of aging between the first generation of Jains who migrated out of personal choice, and those of elderly Jains who are forced to migrate due to the migration of their children.

179 Taking diksha as a Form of Resilience: Jain Ascetic Youth in the 21st century and the “Anthropology of the Good”

Dr. Andrea Luithle-Hardenberg

Goethe University Frankfurt, Frankfurt, Germany

Abstract

In 2014 Jains were acknowledged as a nationwide religious minority in India. But do they really feel safe and strong? During my field trips in India over the last few years I have noticed that Jain friends raise two major challenges of Jainism in the 21st century particularly often. One is that Jains are in danger of “drowning” in the Hindu masses and the second relates to existential predicaments as posed to humankind in general by issues as global warming and digital supersaturation. Both are particularly crucial from the point of view of Jain ascetics who conceive themselves as “body and soul guards”, and who are in charge to protect and preserve Jain dharma and Jain community in times of crisis. Thus, this paper focuses on providing some insights into the perspective of the Shvetambara Murtipujak Jain ascetics with regard to the issue of survival and resilience. Remarkably, the option of becoming an ascetic does seem to have regained a strong appeal for a substantial number of young Jains in recent years. In fact, the last 10 years show an increasing number of initiations, in particular of young people below the age of 30. In modern times, a comparable process only occurred about 120 years ago, initiated by Ataramji, when the Jain community found its existence challenged by historical circumstances of Christian mission and an increase of reform movements by Hindu neighbours. Nowadays ascetic youngsters are consciously turning away from their lives in urban, globalised settings in order to gain perspectives of real purposes, adventure and challenges. For them, becoming an ascetic does not imply escaping from inner-worldly problems, but it already carries their solution within itself. Based on cultural anthropological field research data from 2015-2020 and the evaluation of recent media coverage, this paper will focus on investigating which forms of resilience strategies regarding the most urgent issues we can identify among the young dikshartis and young ascetics.

Usually social motives for escaping the world are put in front by scholars and also by lay people, such as avoiding marriage and the confinements of family life, longing for the prestige which is attributed to ascetics, the urge to study deeply or a lack of interest in taking part in social competition.
In contrast to this my paper is mainly concerned with spiritual reasonings which are clearly foremost for the ascetics themselves. Thus, I am following Robbins in his striving for an “Anthroplogy of the Good“, in avoiding to dismiss ideals as unimportant or, worse, as bad-faith alibis for the world which is actually created “(2013: 457). In that sense we need to investigate what it means for contemporary Jain ascetics to conceive themselves as the creative energy of persistence with regard to their religion.

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201 Crisis and Continuation: The Digital Relocation of Jain Socio-Religious Praxis during the COVID19 Pandemic

*Tine Vekemans*

Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium

**Abstract**

In early 2020, Jain diaspora communities and organizations that had been painstakingly built over the past decades were faced with the far-reaching consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and its concomitant restrictions. With the possibility of regular face-to-face contact and participation in recurring events - praying, eating, learning, meditating together - severely limited in most places, organizations were compelled to make a choice. They either had to suspend their activities, leaving members to organize their religious activities on an individual or household basis, or pursue the continuation of some of their habitual activities in an online format, relying on their members’ motivation and technical skills. This paper will explore how many of these organizations took to digital media in its different forms to continue to engage with their members throughout these difficult times. Looking at a selection of organizational websites and social media platforms such as Facebook and YouTube, it will examine online discourses that discuss the social and mental impact of the pandemic on Jains and the broader community, explore what type of activities are organized in a virtual form, and assess participation in these activities. To take into account changes in the COVID restrictions and potential digital fatigue, this paper will examine such discourses, activities, and participation ratios over a period of ten months, from March 2020 until December 2020.

Previous research concluded that digital religious activities received mixed reactions from Jain lay audiences, some of whom considered them a mere gimmick, and many of whom viewed them as a fallback option, only to be used in cases in which face-to-face contact or regular participation are not possible, e.g., due to geographical distance, mobility problems, old age or illness. The COVID-19 pandemic and the boom in online religious activity it brought in its wake illustrate the possibilities and limitations of this fallback option, and hold the potential to alter the general appraisal of online religious activities. In this regard, the paper will conclude with preliminary findings which will contribute to a discussion of the long term effects of this crisis-induced digital turn in Jain religious praxis, and in socio-cultural life in general.

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101 Jain Veganism: "Cautiously Integrating" Ahimsā into A Globalized Movement

*Christopher Miller¹, Jonathan Dickstein²*
Abstract

This paper seeks to highlight the discourse of contemporary Jain voices calling for the adoption of a vegan lifestyle as a sign of solidarity with the transnational vegan movement and its animal rights, environmental protection, and health aspirations. Just as important, however, this paper also seeks to present some of the unique features of contemporary Jain veganism, including, most specifically, Jain veganism as an ascetic practice aimed at the embodiment of non-violence (ahimsā), the eradication (nirjarā) of karma, and the liberation (mokṣa) of the soul (jīva). Understood in this way, we demonstrate how Jain Veganism represents a contemporary expression of what Jain scholar Padmanabh S. Jaini has described as Jainism's "cautious integration" with global society.

To illustrate Jainism's "cautious integration", we present two cases studies from two different expressions of Jain Veganism in Europe. First, we consider the vision and goals of the UK-based organization "Jain Vegans" and their annual Paryushan "Give up Dairy" campaign. Next, we present the mission of the Swiss-based organization "Beyond Animal", which was founded upon Jain principles to create a funding platform for vegan entrepreneurs and businesses. While both of these organizations clearly reflect the animal rights, environmental, and health aspirations of other global vegan movements, they are also undergirded by Jain soteriological concerns aimed at the liberation of the soul from matter. Considering Jain Veganism from such a perspective allows us to see a transnational conjunction between the aspirations of the broader global vegan movement and Jain dietary ethics more specifically.

34-III Resilience or Resistance: Repressive Regimes and the Blurring of Boundaries Between the Political and Religious
14:40 - 16:20 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021

Roland Clark, James Kapalo

567 Ambivalent Attitudes towards the Calendar Reform: The Emergence of the Old Calendarist Church in Romania

Iuliana Cindrea-Nagy

University College Cork, Cork, Ireland

Abstract

This presentation explores the ambivalent attitudes towards the calendar reform that started to emerge during the interwar period, especially in Bessarabia and were soon mirrored in Romanian Moldavia. Described as a “faithless” reform by many Orthodox hierarchs, the calendar change was seen as heresy and it led to dissent movements which came to be known as the Old Calendarism. In Romania, Old Calendarists
mostly spread in the western part of Moldavia and Bessarabia, regions with strong monastic traditions, and they came to be perceived as a threat to the idea of the Romanian nation state and its modernizing goals, especially as, during the interwar period, the Romanian Orthodox Church began incorporating elements of national identity. Old Calendarists rejected the 1924 Church reform, which they perceived as a clear indicator that the End of Times was near, and went on to organize their own rules of worship and devotion. The community developed into a spiritual mass movement, mostly comprised of peasants, that soon became the target of the gendarmerie and the secret police. The purpose of the presentation is to show, based on archival materials, the rather tense relationship between the Romanian state, the Orthodox Church, and the Old Calendarists, as well as the apocalyptic thinking that surrounded the calendar issue. It will also reflect, based on ethnographic research, on the present state of the Old Calendarist Church in Romania.

772 Communism as Religious Isomorpheme: The Albanian Case
Konstantinos Giakoumis
LOGOS University College, Tirana, Albania

Abstract

The paper discusses that the dominant phenomenological paradigm of approaching totalitarian regimes as political religions, by drawing religious or sociological parallels indicating similarities between religion and despotic regimes, imparts our understanding of how totalitarian regimes acquired such an outlook in the first place. Building on similar work indicating the influences of Feuerbach’s worldviews on Chernyshevsky and the latter’s influence on Lenin, the paper documents the case of Albania primarily through the discourses of - or accounts strictly controlled by - its communist leader Enver Hoxha. I suggest that the centuries-old religious environmental conditions of peoples in a space contested by totalitarian regimes forced the latter to develop as a religious isomorpheme in order to win sooner and more easily the minds and hearts of “the proletariat”. In this process, however, the Albanian communist regime’s structuralist and functionalist approach in understanding religion - Christianity in particular - failed to appreciate the very essence of religion and its appeal, thereby making the communist religious isomorpheme very shaky and liable to collapse along with the communist mythological constructs on religions and Christianity shortly before and soon after 1990.

296 Icons and Rockets: The Materiality of Resistance, Resilience and Schism in 20th Century Romanian Orthodoxy
James Kapalo
University College Cork, Cork, Ireland

Abstract

This paper explores the problem of history and change in Eastern Orthodoxy. Whereas in forms of Christianity of Protestant origin change is accommodated and valued through acts of conversion often led by apostle-like figures, the Eastern Christian imagination holds continuity central to its self-conception.
Taking up Caroline Humphrey’s (2014) discussion of the Old Believer schism within the Russian Orthodox Church as a reflection of a revolutionary spirit, I present the case of schism from 20th century Romania that shares many hallmarks with this earlier event but which also illustrates certain pathways within Eastern Orthodoxy for divine agency to allow for dramatic shifts. Evaluations of the forces that affect change and rupture in Eastern Orthodoxy, I argue are incomplete without taking account of the presence of structures within Orthodoxy that facilitate radical acts of resistance to externally perceived threats whilst also encouraging internal resilience in the face of extreme or prolonged social and cultural pressure. As Humphrey’s points out, self-legitimation of so-called schismatic groups is possible through acts of embodiment of the true and through the maintenance of rigorously observed boundaries, but the ‘rising up’, I argue here, may require the confluence of divine and material immanence. In the case of the Archangelist movement in Romania, icons, military rockets and caves as refuges supplied the necessary divinely animated material relationships to spark revolt against Church and state.

837 Abandoned Sacred Places: Case Study of the Russian and Serbian Orthodox Churches in Croatia

Lana Peternel1, Filip Škiljan2, Ankica Marinović1

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Abstract

Through the description of destroyed and abandoned churches in Croatia, this paper aims to contribute to the discussion on the status of minority religious communities in the socialist and post-socialist context. Acts of desecration, devastation, or conversion of sacred places and churches established by minority religious communities were the acts of extreme repression toward religious rights and their cultural heritage. However, from the perspective of believers, the destruction of sacred places also raises the question of facing and coping with political repression, and maintaining the faith and religious lifeworld in the circumstances of discrimination and violence. From the anthropological perspective, we aim to describe the meaning of “spirituality” related to “sacrilege” of the religious secret places. The authors are focused on two Orthodox churches, one, Serbian in the Eastern part of Croatia and, the other, Russian on the Adriatic coast. In the inquiry, the authors use a variety of archival materials from state archives, as well as from private archival collections of minority religious communities. Also, the results of the analysis are based on ethnographic field research, in-depth interviews, and visual analysis of archival photographs. The study provides an analysis of the complex political and historical circumstances that trigger the erosion of the multi-religious heritage of marginal communities in the Croatian social landscape.

45 European States and Their Regulation of 'Minority' Religions

14:40 - 16:20 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021

Jelle Creemers, Tatiana Kopaleishvili
This Open Session calls for papers that explore the ways in which European states deal with the presence of “minority” religions in their state territories. Taking cue from the existing scholarship that has understood the state regulation of religion (or secularism) an important corner stone of the principle of sovereignty, this panel invites contributions that examine how this concern with state sovereignty has flared up in the light of “public safety concerns” and the growing multicultural composition of the European nation states. The headscarf affairs, the public anxiety around alternative forms of healing practices (often involving Pentecostal Christian movements) or the controversies concerning dietary rules are only few examples of this. The COVID-19 crisis also involves unseen restrictions to religious freedom - which affect members of minority religions in particular ways. Such concerns are by no means restricted to Islam, but often have an older history that pertains to the conflicts between Catholicism and Protestantism in a given context, or the ways Jewish minorities have historically been excluded from full participation and exterminated. A central aim of this panel is thus not only to explore the causes and mechanisms behind these controversies, but to also take them as starting point in order to understand how such discussions often entail deeper institutional reforms that (at times) also imply a redefinition of the existing state-religion arrangements. This panel is therefore particularly interested in the nation state’s challenges and developments regarding the management of minority religions and invites papers that address this question from close or afar. Contributions that attend to other debates than those around COVID-19 or Islam are also especially welcomed.

14:40 - 15:00

572 The Challenges of New Postmodern Forms of Religion to the Nation State’s Management of Minority Religions

Ales Crnic

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Abstract

Contemporary social and cultural changes are pushing European states to rethink their existing state-religion arrangements and particularly the formal ways of handling the minority religions. Not only do they have to face serious challenges posed by growing immigrant religions - among them Islam being the most feared. In the last decades some postmodern phenomena of new religious movements like scientology, fiction-based (Davidsen 2013) or hyper-real religions (Possamai 2005) like jediism or matrixism and invented religions (Cusack 2010) like pastafarianism, have been seriously challenging the traditional notions of religion. These challenges are not limited only to the conceptual theoretical field, but also pose difficult questions to official bodies responsible for regulating religious life in practice. This paper will very briefly present the Slovenian case of The Trans-cosmic Zombie Church of Blessed Ringing and use it to reflect on the contemporary dilemmas of official registration of religion.

15:00 - 15:20

848 A “Compulsory Invitation” to Active Citizenship: The Development of Instrumentalisation Mechanisms in Flemish Management of Religion (2002-2021)
Abstract

In 2002, primary responsibility for the official recognition of local religious communities in Belgium - subsequently implying subsidies and support from different levels of government - was moved from the federal level to the level of the regions. By consequence, the Flemish Region has been developing over the past 20 years its own policies and practices in view of religion-state relations. This paper will argue that in the course of these two decades a clear development is visible in the attitudes, discourses and actions of Flemish legislators towards religious community life. The extent of this change will first be demonstrated in a comparison between the first Flemish Decrees and Decisions on religious communities in 2004 and 2005 and the new Decree which is currently in preparation (2021). The underlying discursive developments will then be uncovered on the basis of a critical scrutiny of two decades of parliamentary discussions, legislative acts and public statements of the responsible ministers. It will be argued that the attitudinal change involves (a) a gradual replacement of careful distance vis-à-vis religious life by polarized classification discourses; (b) a gradual replacement of appreciation of otherness by direct socialization strategies; and (c) a gradual replacement of mutual trust by strict control mechanisms. In this analysis, primary attention will go to the implications for the recognized religious minorities rather than for the historical majority religion.

15:20 - 15:40

513 Intersection of Various Identities: Case of Ethnic and Religious Minority in Latvia

Anita Stasulane

Daugavpils University, Daugavpils, Latvia

Abstract

The paper will explore the relationship between “religious” identity and “cultural”, “ethnic” and “national” identities of the Old Believer youth in Latvia. Considering that Old Believers represent an ethnic and religious minority of Latvia, this case is of particular interest providing an in-depth insight into the intersection of ethnicity, religion, culture and nation. Applying concepts of multiple identities, this article will explore the role played by religion in the identity integration of young people belonging to the Old Believers’ religious community: (1) their self-understanding as a composition of intersecting identities that influence each other; (2) the manifestations of intersection of various identities; (3) the relation of identity integration to religion. The analysis will be based on the findings of eight-month ethnographic research conducted in the Old Believer youth group in Daugavpils (Latvia) within the H2020 programme project Cultural Heritage and Identities of Europe’s Future (CHIEF). Researchers have highlighted that the rapid changes today lead to an identity crisis: an individual faces difficulty in shaping and maintaining a stable identity, since economic life is becoming increasingly unpredictable and communities become fragmented. The identity of Latvian Old Believer youth forms and develops in a specific social context, and it is affected by culture, epoch and local conditions. The qualitative data acquired during the field work allow the analysis of belonging - the major aspect in the formation of the identity of Old Believer youth. The interview data lead to the conclusion that three types of belonging can be attributed to Old Believer youth: (1) their
ethnicity, which interacts with the national belonging in a complex way; (2) the local belonging is stronger than the global one; (3) the European belonging, which conflicts with the national belonging and ethnicity.

15:40 - 16:00

692 Minority Religions and Resilience during the Communist Period in Lithuania

Milda Alisauskiene

Vytautas Magnus University, Vilnius, Lithuania

Abstract

Based on the narratives of members of minority religions in Lithuania (n=15) this paper will discuss the relations between minority religions, society and the state during the communist and post-communist periods. The history of minority religions during the communist period is an example of resilient religion and a story of survival under the restrictions of freedom of religion in the public and private spheres as well as under the influence of anti-religious propaganda and public policy hostile to any religious activity. Narratives of members of minority religions (Jehovah’s Witnesses, Evangelical Baptists, Evangelical Pentecostals and Seventh Day Adventists) from Lithuania show the features and patterns of resilient religion during the communist period on the individual, organisational and societal levels as well as some of those features being transferred to the post-communist period.

This research was funded by a grant (No. S-LIP-20-24) from the Research Council of Lithuania.

16:00 - 16:20

849 Analyses of the Ways of Adaptation of the Religious Minorities to Soviet Legislation in the Republic of Georgia

Tatiana Kopaleishvili

Evangelische Theologische Faculteit, Leuven, Belgium

Abstract

Georgia is an Orthodox country, building a new model of a democratic state after emerging from the wreckage of the Soviet empire in 1991. Soviet anti-religious politics did not destroy organized religion, but strongly disrupted its healthy forms of interaction with society and the state. Even today state-confessional relations are difficult, complex and tense in Georgia and diverse opinions and trends clash [Lomtatidze e.a. 2014]. On the one hand, the newly-formed state declared a course towards building a secular society, implying a discourse of a clear separation between religion and politics. On the other hand, a privileged position for the Georgian Orthodox Church was legislated [T. Kekelia e.a. 2013]. The state, under pressure of nationalist impulses and having little experience in building a secular society, struggles to find the convenient forms of relations without slipping back into Soviet models of control, keeping the minorities and majority groups in the mode of mutual distrust.
In this presentation we aim to look back at the Soviet period of control and at the ways, in which Evangelical Baptists and Pentecostals followed the legislative base, decrees and policies and adjusted their life to it. We do this in view of a larger project, which is looking for the imprints of the Soviet legacy on the Evangelical minority in Georgia today.

7-III Surveying Ritual Creativity in Contemporary Paganism and New Age Prior to and During the COVID-19 Pandemic
14:40 - 16:20 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021
Nicolas Boissière, Yael Dansac

14:40 - 15:00

706 When a Political “Conspiracy Theory” Becomes a Spiritual Revelation: Elements on New Age Movements and the Swiss Reception of QAnon in Times of Pandemic
Manéli Farahmand1,2, Mischa Piraud3

1University of Fribourg, Fribourg, Switzerland. 2Centre d’information sur les Croyances, Genève, Switzerland. 3Centre d’information sur les croyances, Genève, Switzerland

Abstract

Our paper focuses on recent connections between the QAnon thesis, the New Age/NRM, and neo-shamanic inspirations during the covid-19 pandemic crisis in Switzerland. In examining the dissemination of QAnon’s thesis in the Swiss “cultic milieu”, we observed that several public figures were producing hybrid discourses (between spiritual holistic views and conspiracy theories) on social networks and video sharing websites (such as YouTube). Our online ethnographic exploratory research led us to a systematic analysis of online videos, some exchanges and publications on social medias, allowing us to observe a convergence of interests between holistic Swiss milieus and QAnon theories in the specific mark of the pandemic context. In this presentation we will discuss the Swiss specificity of QAnons’ ideas by exploring two theoretical fields: the one of “conspiracy theories” and of “New Religious Movements” (NRM). Finally, we will present our online ethnographic research on the Swiss relays of QAnons’ ideas and discuss the hypothesis that this use of YouTube consists of a new form of ritualisation.

15:00 - 15:20
“Mayan” Branding of Spiritual Commodities: Creativity and Ritual in Spiritual Seeking the Maya

Quetzil Castañeda

Open School of Ethnography and Anthropology, Chichen Itza, Mexico. Indiana University, Bloomington, USA

Abstract

Spiritual seeking in the new age milieu poses well known methodological, theoretical-conceptual, and analytical problems. While some spiritualities linked to institutional forms or organizations, a.k.a. “religion,” are identifiable as discrete objects of study, the spectrum of spiritual seeking disperses quickly into heterological and heterodox phenomena that resist our knowledge production machinery which converts these into entities amenable to academic-scholarly theorization and research. The majority of analytical categories, types, and expectations do not work or only for the specific ethnographic situation for which they were created. Spiritual seeking the Maya is among this latter variety of phenomenon that cannot be contained—at all or easily—by our meta-theoretical assumptions, categories, typologies, interpretive frameworks, and methodological expectations.

Spiritual seeking of the Maya is among these “new” religiosities that escape our ready-made analytical categories of sociocultural phenomena and our meta-theoretical presupposition that constitute proper objects of investigation. The impossibility of grasping new spiritualities by sorting through types of belief has led to the prioritization of practices—or rituals and ritualization—as objects of study to be analyzed in terms of creativity, experience, meaning, transcultural hybridity, and the politics of appropriation. I discuss two discrete sets of ritual practice that are not simply identifiable as, but branded as “Mayan” spiritualism, the ritual technology of Hunbatz Men and the “sacred Maya geometry” Ac Tah: both are analyzed as creatively invented forms of ritualization that share a genealogy—the latter is a consumer-client of the former who developed his own client-audience and spiritual product consumer-seekers—but that do not easily share analytical (or categorical) similitude or forms of belonging. This analysis aims to expose some of the limitations of this latter approach that places rites/ritual over belief and, in the end, further exasperates, our methodological quandaries.

15:20 - 15:40

From Microdosing to Online Ceremonies: The Use of Psychedelics in Mexico during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Ali Cortina

Universidad Autonoma Metropolitana-Cuajimalpa, Ciudad de Mexico, Mexico

Abstract

This paper explores the ceremonial and daily use of psychedelic resources of various kinds, among which are Magic Mushrooms, Bufo alvarius toad, peyote, DMT / Changa, LSD, among others, that due to the new forms of sociality and interaction restrictions established for the global pandemic of COVID-19 between the
years 2020-2021, its consumption has increased mainly in the urban context, under two trends: microdosing (consumption of low doses of psychedelics) and ceremonies or workshops carried out through internet or phone calls. Both of them are two elements of a very broad social and historical process that articulates the reinvention of the consumption of psychedelics and power plants with the search and practice of New Age spirituality, as well as the reformulation of indigenous and Catholic religious narratives and beliefs.

During this period, for many people this consumption has meant a new way of life that centralizes the connection with the sacred through the psychedelic experience, and psychedelics per se, since these have allowed them to cope with anguish, fear, and different psychosocial problems (addictions or depression) experienced by the quarantine on a daily basis, as well as in conjunctural events, such as ceremonies of high anthropological impact.

In this sense, we will analyze the ethnographies, narratives, conflicts, and the possibilities that these new forms of psychedelic spiritual consumption convey a discourse of well-being based on the notion of Alternate States of Consciousness, and how they are constituting a political force that articulates it spiritually and psychedelically, which will undoubtedly open a broader discussion gap in the future on the universal human right to use psychedelics.

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15:40 - 16:00

403 Decolonizing Spirituality: New Age from the South
Renee De la Torre¹, Cristina Gutiérrez Zúñiga²

¹CIESAS, Guadalajara, Mexico. ²Universidad de Guadalajara, Guadalajara, Mexico

Abstract

In the global South, the New Age Spirituality has hybridized and taken root, acquiring content and aspirations for postcolonial resistance. In this presentation we want to demonstrate the importance of the decolonization processes of modernity in the emergence of four aspects of neo-Mexican Spirituality:

a) the rise of post-national ethnic nations

b) criticism of patriarchy and the emergence of ecofeminist spiritualities

c) the critique of capitalism and the alternatives of sustainable economy

d) the vindication of local / indigenous ontologies vs. scientific knowledge

The New Age Spirituality in its roots and concretions of ethnic and natural rescue in Mexico seeks to “subvert the forms of homogeneity and cultural uniformity” (Santos, 2009) related to race, ethnicity, nation, gender, science and nature.
The New Age Spirituality is not only a market (Van Hove, 1999; Hanegraaff, 1999) but a matrix that is attracted by the search for the elements that were excluded from modernity and in their encounter it re-enchants itself, producing decolonial critiques and deconstructions.

48-III Embodiment in Religious Resilience
14:40 - 16:20 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021

Sergio Botta, Tessa Canella

606 Standing and Singing When Nothing Else Works: How Lithuanian Contemporary Pagans Claimed Their Rights to Their Sacred Site

Eglė Aleknaitė

Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania

Abstract

A performance consisting of standing in a long row of people facing a side of the Archcathedral of Vilnius and singing a folk song definitely could not be found among descriptions of typical ceremonies of contemporary Lithuanian Pagans. Romuva, a community of Lithuanian contemporary Pagans emerged in the late 1960s-1970s as an offshoot of a broader, mostly secular milieu of folk culture revival. Since its official registration as a religious community in 1992, it engaged in a number of endeavours aimed at establishing Romuva as state-recognized successors of a pre-Christian religion of Lithuania. In their endeavours, Pagans used a variety of ways to achieve their goals, including applying for a certain status of a religious community by following procedures defined by national law, applying for permissions to perform ceremonies in certain spaces as defined by acts of municipalities, negotiating with other religious communities, mobilizing their followers during a national census, communicating their message through the mass media, acting through cultural and educational institutions. The presentation focuses on physical actions of a community of Lithuanian contemporary Pagans as a strategy used to claim their religious heritage through discussion of two events: funerals of Lithuanian high priest Jonas Trinkūnas-Jaunius in 2014 and consecration of Lithuanian high priestess Inija Trinkūnienė in 2015. For a number of years, the Pagan community attempted to get permission to perform ceremonies in the catacombs of the Archcathedral of Vilnius where supposedly remains of a fire altar of a central pre-Christian temple of Vilnius were located. Because of resistance of the Catholic Church, the municipality of Vilnius allowed Pagans to perform their ceremonies nearby but not exactly in the Cathedral or Cathedral Square. In both cases analyzed, Pagans decided to walk in or go through the Cathedral Square wearing archaic national costumes and singing (used both in their ceremonies and in secular contexts by various revivers of folk culture), officially not breaking the law, but explicitly ritualistically confirming their right to the space. Thus, the two events present creative ways how through ambiguity of meanings of clothes used and songs performed, visual sights and sounds they create, and ritualization of physical movement, the Pagans symbolically broke imposed restrictions and intruded into the sacred space, according to them, monopolized by the Catholic Church. The analysis of the events allows us to see how boundaries between the religious and the secular may be changed, how religious and secular ways of action can be combined, how physical actions or simply being in a certain space can be interpreted.
as secular, religious or both to achieve goals of the community while competing with other religious actors and interacting with secular ones.

588 Bodies in Action: What Multimodality Can Tell Us about the Resilience of Vernacular Religious Practices?
Kristina Eiviler
University of Zurich, URPP Language and Space Lab, Video group, Zurich, Switzerland

Abstract

From pilgrims who come to Deviy stone (Russian: Девий Камень) and Gus’ stone (Russian: Гусь-Камень) in park Kolomenskoe (Moscow, Russia) for making wishes regarding their health, fertility, or marital status; to those who walk The Path (Swiss German: Der Pfad) with stone-objects and artefacts, in park Sattel-Hochuli (region Schwyz, Switzerland) for healing or feeling the energy of the space with pendulums - I explore the cross-cultural phenomenon of interaction between people and objects of veneration.

How do these ritual practices, which are not integrated into any monotheistic religions, maintain resilience? What is the role of the body in passing the knowledge related to them? In which ways practitioners use their bodies to construct venerated spaces?

Arguably, these cases can be seen as representative examples of vernacular practices (Primiano 2012: 383–384). Considering that an official entity does not establish them, they can be subject to a loose consistency. I argue that embodiment has the central function in the above-mentioned processes. In the talk, I will use multimodal interaction analysis to discuss embodiment. By analyzing video excerpts from my video corpus, I will focus on the induction of interactions: communication initiation, turn-taking, and breaking the silence in the group, to show how the ritual reality is braided with the mundane through the bodily, verbal, and spatial resources. Further, I will explore the process of knowledge-transfer, by analyzing the co-created multimodal gestalt. Finally, I will show how practitioners “do-space” (Hausendorf 2013; Jucker et al. 2015) into a venerated one.


Constructing a Diverse Community through Embodied Consistency: The Case of the Multi-layered and Multi-sited “Community” of a Tenrikyo (New Japanese Religion) Centre in a Parisian Suburb

Margaret Brady
Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris, France

Abstract

How may embodied and spatial consistency allow for the concurrent existence of diversity? In this paper, findings from research conducted at the main European centre of the new Japanese religion of Tenrikyo, located in a Parisian suburb, are discussed. Although the majority of the core social actors linked to this centre were Japanese Tenrikyo followers born and raised in the faith living in the Paris region, its multi-layered “community” also included multiple nationalities, countries of residence, and religious identities, amongst other differences. The key to the interconnectedness of this social collectivity was the embodied religious practice of the “Service” ritual that was orchestrated in the sacredly framed space of the centre’s sanctuary. This ritual served as a linking factor of consistency between diverse and dispersed social actors and expanded out to other contexts connected to this centre and relatedly, to its wider social group. Concretely, the “Service” ritual is positioned as the chiefly important component of the Tenrikyo faith and consists of a series of intricately choreographed dances accompanied by instrumental performers. In circulated Tenrikyo discourse, it is not a performance focused on the musical or dance skills of the performers, but rather an exercise in and display of people occupying different roles who come together to create a greater whole. This performative ritual and the space in which it occurred played an important role in the promotion of particular social dynamics, understanding of the self, dispositional modalities, and cosmological conceptualizations that expanded out to the greater social whole of this religious centre. It served to imprint and reproduce ways of being not only through ritual practice, but also shared bodily practices and physically manifested inter-relational dynamics. Through this, the resilient core of this religious tradition was maintained, while adaptations and diversity simultaneously promoted unfixed variations.

Bringing the Body Back to Live: Yoga between Authenticity and Cultural Appropriation

Marianne Fibiger
The department of the study of Religion, Aarhus, Denmark

Abstract

This paper will discuss the meaning of involving the body in religious worship or lived religion in contemporary time in a so-called secularized society. I will be focusing on two main examples: a) The use of yoga and meditation in the worship of Amritanandamayi (Hugging Amma) in Denmark and b) The integration of yoga in the Danish National Church. From my point of view, these are two very good examples of how yoga within the last few years in a much stronger way has been coupled to bodily performances as a bridge-builder not only to a better-balanced living but also to a closer relationship to what is understood as spiritual or religious life.
I will use different theories on performativity and embodiment: Erving Goffmann and his emphasis on the body ‘as integral to human agency; Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology and what he calls the lived body as being in constant “dialogue” with the world; and Jeremy R. Carrette and his emphasis on how spirituality is transformed into a process of shaping matter, of making bodies matter. This will lead to the discussion on authenticity on the one hand and cultural appropriation on the other when yoga-related closely to the body is in play in lived religion in contemporary Denmark.

134 Learning Orthodox Christianity through Practice: Resilient Rituals, Resilient Bodies
Helena Kupari
University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland

Abstract
In contemporary research, religious conversion is conceptualized as a gradual change in religious identity and belonging. Nevertheless, the assumption often remains that it is a cognitive phenomenon. Recently, researchers have begun to emphasize the role of embodied practice in conversion. In these studies, conversion appears less about adopting new beliefs than about constituting a pious self through engaging in new rituals, practices and behavior.

In this paper, I discuss the role of embodied practice in conversion to Orthodox Christianity. Compared to many branches of Western Christianity, Orthodoxy places a high emphasis on practice. Furthermore, in emic Orthodox discourse, becoming and being Orthodox constitute life-long processes of learning realized in and through everyday life. In this paper, I use interview material produced in collaboration with people who have joined the Finnish Orthodox Church as adults to investigate how converts approach, adopt and make use of Orthodox rituals and practices as part of their processes of religious change.

The continuing (and growing?) interest attracted by Orthodox Christianity is, in itself, an indicator of the resilience of “traditional” religion in contemporary Western Europe. In this paper, however, I focus more on the resilience of religious practice as a technique of self-formation, as well as on the resilience of bodies, habits and sensibilities to alterations. Common themes in my interlocutors’ accounts are both the efficiency of embodied practice as a pedagogical technique and the gradual and lengthy nature of the learning processes involved.

104 Religious Changes in Latin America: Beliefs, Identity & Democracy
14:40 - 16:20 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021
Álvaro Augusto Espinoza Rizo

In the last 50 years, Latin America has undergone a series of religious transformations that have influenced the social, political, and economic life of the region. In particular, growth of the evangelical-Pentecostal groups has had a strong influence on the political affairs in the last 20 years.

These religious groups often legitimate morally conservative positions and are economically associated with right-wing groups linked to the elites in power, remarkable example being President of Brazil, Jair Bolsonaro, who is associated with such evangelical churches as the Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus (IURD) from Edir Macedo.

In the Central American case, influence of religion on politics can be seen in the 2018 elections in Costa Rica, where the candidate Fabricio Alvarado promoted a political agenda openly based on the religious positions. In the same year in Nicaragua, the beginning of protests against the government increased political, social, and religious polarization, anti- or pro-government political stance being associated with the religious affiliation.

This session is open to researchers, whose studies concern the religious phenomena in Latin America. The topics that can be addressed are empirical results of the research, methodologies of research on the issue of religion, religious behavior in times of the coronavirus, rituals, identity construction, religious movements in / and indigenous communities, religious phenomenon, violence and peace processes, religious groups and gender, sexual and reproductive rights, management of social crises, justice and democracy, and other topics relevant to the issue of religion in Latin America.

442 Schisms and Revivals: Postdenominationalism and the Evangelical-Pentecostal Landscape in Mexico
Carlos Ibarra¹, Edson Gomes²

¹COLEF, Tijuana, Mexico. ²ITESO, Guadalajara, Mexico

Abstract

This paper deals with an issue that Latin American religious studies have faced for several decades: the lack of categories to classify properly the diversity found within the evangelical spectrum of Christianity. Most researchers use the pentecostal, neopentecostal and evangelical indiscriminately to refer to any Christian denomination which does not belong to the Catholic spectrum, to mainline Protestant Churches or to non-Trinitarian groups such as Jehovah’s Witnesses or the Seventh-Day Adventists. Using field-data, we argue that the postdenominational category, widely used in English-based studies, is a necessary addition to the Spanish-based religious studies, because it will allow for a more precise understanding of the religious diversity and evolution of the religious phenomenon, not just in Mexico but in Latin America as well.

667 Religious Change and Cultures of Citizenship in Latin America: Lessons from Ethnographic Fieldwork in Argentina, Bolivia, and Guatemala
Tobias Reu
Abstract

As a major recent trend in Latin American religion, the increasing political influence of so-called “neo-Pentecostal” actors has attracted considerable attention by academic observers and the public. The emergence of these actors in Latin America coincides with an increasing alignment of the evangelical electorate with right-wing conservative forces in the United States, and it chimes with the international dissemination of political issues pertaining to the US “culture war” that this has occasioned. The rise of political evangelicalism in Latin America is generally understood as part of a wider religious transformation that consists in the growth of Protestant churches at the expense of traditional Catholic practices of worship.

Driven by a variety of successful religious organizations, which address socially and ethnically diverse audiences and disseminate competing theologies and church growth models, evangelical proselytism is not uniform across the region. However, pan-American television networks and lively structures of cooperation, which are promoted by international organizations such as the US based Willow Creek Association, create coherence among evangelical organizations of the “neo-Pentecostal” brand. At least to the public perception, the narrative connecting the religious transformation of Latin American societies with the rise of “neo-Pentecostal” identity politics seems fairly self-evident.

However, a closer look at the issues complicates the matter considerably: Actors entering Christian identity politics to much fanfare, such as Luis Fernando Camacho and Chi Hyun Chung of Bolivia, fail in the attempt to consolidate the electoral potential that the growth of Protestantism supposedly holds; the reform of abortion legislation in Argentina, a marquee issue in this context, stirs much Catholic passion yet prompts a heterogeneous evangelical response; shifting alliances in Mexico and Nicaragua indicate that the connection between Protestantism and right-wing politics is not at all cast in stone; and even clear examples of electoral success by a Christian right, such as the cases of Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil and Jimmy Morales in Guatemala, are based on combinations of motifs comprising the disenchantment with swampy political elites and a populist insurgent Zeitgeist, in addition to elements of an evangelical dominion theology.

To approach the complexity in the connections between religious change and the “neo-Pentecostal” moment in Latin American democracy, this presentation focuses on the cultures of citizenship emerging from practices of congregation. Based on ethnographic insights derived from fieldwork in Catholic and evangelical communities in Argentina, Bolivia, and Guatemala, it explores how members of churches and lay religious groups translate their faith and their practice of congregation into civic subjectivities, stances toward authority, and styles of participating in political communities. In taking a comparative approach, this presentation discusses conceptual tools toward an understanding of the interconfessional trends and elements of local political culture that characterize Christian participation in contemporary Latin American politics and society.

Álvaro Augusto Espinoza Rizo

Bielefeld University, Bielefeld, Germany. University of Groningen, Groningen, Netherlands

Abstract
The city of Managua, Nicaragua has currently two undergoing processes of transformation: the first process is the socio-religious change manifested in the growth of Evangelical Pentecostal groups to 40% of the population; the second process is the urban transformation of a city that does not have a clearly defined center and is undergoing processes of gentrification and ghettoization.

In this context of a city without a clear center, Pentecostal groups that have grown seek to make themselves visible and mark specific spaces relevant in the city, especially the new subcenters generated by the town's expansion. However, this growth and visualization of Pentecostal groups have been stopped since 2018 when a series of protests against the government changed all Nicaraguans' priorities, including the priorities of the churches.

After two years of struggles and an ongoing socio-political crisis where churches were forced to take sides, the pandemic of COVID-19 increased Nicaraguan society's problems. In that sense, religious activities from the Catholic church tend to become spaces where detractors to the government meet up. In contrast, Pentecostal activities try to appear separated from political content and focus on performing rituals against the traditional evils in the society; the most recent example is the COVID-19. In Pentecostal churches, their activities are inside the frame of the spiritual warfare among the city, which justified their religious actions and rituals of exorcising demons and sacralizing the city.

In this context where the political and religious world is intertwining, it is possible to see how the patron saint festivals and religious celebrations turn into struggle and resistance spaces. However, at the same time, religious activities themselves become objects/objectives to be appropriated by the government, trying to usurp religious institutions from the right to direct these festivities.

This presentation is based on my dissertation's first analysis of my fieldwork made in Nicaragua in 2020. I will focus on the present.

How is the process of sacralization of public spaces through performing rituals and the process of ritualization of daily life in Nicaraguan Pentecostalism.

How public spaces become the object of dispute and sacralization through rituals in the city of Managua.

How the political crisis of 2018 and the COVID-19 pandemic (2020-202#) have collaborated to transform and re-signify religious practices in the city of Managua.

24-III Resilient Religious Communities: Changing Identities, Needs, and Relations across Time and Space
14:40 - 16:20 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021
Angela Bernardo
“Where there is a Rabbinic will, there is a halakhic way.” The Effects of the Freedom of Religion Act (1922) on the Jewish Community of Helsinki

Mercédesz Czimbalmos

Åbo Akademi University, Åbo/Turku, Finland

Abstract

When Finland became independent in 1917, long-lasting legislative reforms were implemented in the country. One of these was the legislation of the Freedom of Religion Act (FRA) in 1922, which granted the right to Finnish citizens to practice religion in private and public or to refrain from belonging to any religious community altogether. The FRA also addressed the question of children whose parents belonged to different religious congregations or who were not members of any at all. It defined the religious affiliation of children after their father; this was, however, against the Jewish law (halakhah) the Jewish Community of Helsinki wished to follow, which traced a child’s religious affiliation matrilineally. As the number of intermarriages in the congregation was growing rather quickly, the FRA forced the community’s leadership to employ new strategies and to adjust the administrative and religious practices to the local conditions, in order to preserve the congregation as an officially Orthodox Jewish community.

The aim of this paper is to explore and analyze the changes that took place in the Community as results of the FRA, through exploring the official, institutional and individual narratives and levels of religious practice in the congregation. Even after the FRA was modified in 1969, the strategies that were established as results of the original law remained in practice in the Community. A further aim of this case study is, therefore, to reflect on the reshaped identity of the congregation and the constant identity-negotiations of its membership whilst taking the earlier narratives into consideration. The core material of the study consists of both archival sources and newly gathered ethnographic interviews that were collected within the Minhag Finland Project during 2019-2020.

15:00 - 15:20

758 Shifting Positioning of a Norwegian Jewish Community Amidst Shifting Contexts: Some Explorations into How Det Mosaiske Trossamfund i Oslo Has Reshaped Its Identity in the Post-War Era

Tyson Herberger

Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences, Hamar, Norway

Abstract

This case study on Oslo’s main Jewish community, Det Mosaiske Trossamfund (DMT), will offer initial insights into how DMT has positioned and repositioned its understandings of Jewishness and DMT’s relations with the wider Jewish world from 1945 through to the present era. The paper will analyze the rhetoric used by leading actors in the community over time to see how they have described the community in various public documents, pronouncements, and articles – including histories, memoirs, newspaper articles, and intact community records from selected points in DMT’s history.

Specifically, it seeks to explore the narratives and discourses around (1) DMTs understandings of Jewish identity broadly and DMT’s identity narrowly, and (2) its relations to Jews both in Norway and beyond. This
paper is part of a larger project on modern Norwegian Jewish identity with a focus on pluralizing and de-essentialising Jewishness. As such, it will pay particular attention to how DMT rhetoric and narratives relate to questions of both Jewish identity and intra-Jewish relations with an eye towards plural Jewish identities and non-essentialist forms of Judaism.

It will do this by analyzing the language used in response to specific junctions in time such as the requests from the Norwegian authorities to support Polish Jewish refugees in the late 1960s, discussions in the 1990s of Shoah reparations, and more recent shifts to loosen the criteria of who is Jewish enough to qualify for admission to the DMT-affiliated preschool.

15:20 - 15:40

730 War and Resilience: The unsteady identity of the Turcophone Orthodox Christians of Anatolia during the 20th century
Ayca Baydar
Independent, SOAS alumna, Ankara, Turkey

Abstract

The disintegration of the Ottoman Empire transformed a multi-ethnic and multicultural empire to homogenous nation-states. During this transition period pre-national communities in the Ottoman Empire were targeted by the policies of homogenization propounded by political actors. The case of the Turcophone Orthodox Christians of Anatolia presents a good example of how religious communities came to be reshaped into “national” people. This group of Christians was Turkish speakers but used the Greek alphabet for their script and coexisted with their Muslim neighbors for centuries in inner Anatolia. In this sense they were the group least connected to the culture of the Greek nation. Moreover, their Orthodox faith did not equate to national solidarity with Greece in the 19th century. With the rise of nationalism, Orthodox Christians started to be defined as “Greek” and so the Turcophone Orthodox Christians’ existence became unacceptable outside of the narrowly defined nation. Thus Greek centers sought to “nationalize” them to reshape their identity in line with the spirit of the times. However, it was not until the first quarter of the 20th century that the Turcophone Orthodox Christians developed Greek national consciousness. They identified themselves, first and foremost, with their religion. For them, affiliation with the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate did not imply support for the Greek state as their link was not political. This changed with the continuous state of warfare during the early 20th century, which disrupted the close cultural interaction and coexistence in Anatolia. Moreover, the division of the Greek and Turkish struggles followed the religious line. This means that even if the Turcophone Orthodox Christians did not have a Greek national consciousness, they were inclined towards the Greek side in the Greek-Turkish War because of their religious affiliation. In other words their transformation was due to the climate of hostility more than any ideological attraction. An analysis of the discourse of the Turcophone Orthodox Christians’ press during this period demonstrates the transformation of their self-definition. The proposed paper aims to trace how war and polarization determined and defined the group’s identity and how the communities in question adopted and adapted to their new “national” consciousness.
Cyprus, has always been the crossroads of many peoples, religions and cultures. Maronites, Armenians, Latins, Jews, Nestorians, Jacobites and Copts found refuge on the island bringing with them their cultural, liturgical and linguistic particularities. To what extent these people integrated in the Cypriot society can be assessed taking the religious community of the Maronites as an example.

The Maronites belong to the universal Maronite Church, an ancient, apostolic Church that grew in the centre of Syriac-Antiochian traditions. A solid Maronite presence in Cyprus can be traced back to the Crusades following the fall of Jerusalem in 1244 and the Crusaders’ defeat in Acre in 1291. Encouraged by the Lusignan dynasty, they soon formed a prosperous colony: they settled in seventy-two villages. However, this prosperity did not come without a cost. The Maronites had to affirm their submission to Roman Catholic authority on different occasions. They were encouraged to frequent their churches, celebrate mass on their altars and follow Latin traditions and culture. As such they constituted a religious community without a voice during the Middle Ages. However, they spoke Arabic and Syriac and the language used in their religious services was Syriac.

The Venetian period, finds the Maronites occupying thirty villages, reduced to four by the end of the Ottoman Conquest in 1878, until today. What was the reason for their dramatic reduction and the failure to support their own culture and identity?

At first in their Ottoman entourage, the Maronites lived in rural settlements face to face with other religious groups, sharing common ways of life, common beliefs and religious practices. They lived in harmony with the Muslim population who frequented their sanctuaries and shared common traditions in the margin of the official religions. All the inhabitants of the island, lived in poor health conditions, affected by famine, poverty and the epidemics of plague. However, this structural proximity together with an inadequate organization of the Maronite Church favoured frequent movements among the religious groups through mixed marriages or conversions.

In time, the rise of nationalism especially among the Greeks, inflated Muslim aggressions and the persecution of certain pashas forcing Maronites to covert or flee the island. Their attachment to the Latins and the arrival of missionaries to restore “true Christianity” often designated them as internal enemies. Missionaries formed schools, provided books, crosses, rosaries, Western images and practices for the local Maronites. The Roman Church especially in the eighteenth century, sought to clearly mark the separation between Catholics and other denominations, Christian or Muslim.

Everything changed towards the end of the nineteenth century when the Maronite Clergy took control of the Maronite Church in Cyprus until today. But by this time, significant Maronite territory was lost.

Today, a dynamic strategy has been developed for the survival of the Cypriot Maronite Arabic. This is the dialect spoken by the first Maronites embroidered with Aramaic and Mesopotamian terms. The dialect has
been recognized by the Council of Europe as an endangered language promoting activities empowering children and youth for its revival and protection.

16:00 - 16:20

521 Twice Gone and Still Here: The Case of Resilient Orthodox Community of Bršljanovac in Today’s Croatia
Danko Dujmovic
University of Rijeka, Rijeka, Croatia

Abstract

Due to the Ottoman occupation of the Moslavina region in the northern part of today’s Croatia from the 16th till the end of the 17th century, the medieval cultural landscape was affected by great changes. The area was depopulated and devastated, and the vast majority of the settlements, parishes, churches, estates etc. vanished, or at least only scarce traces remained. After the reconquest of the land by the Habsburg Monarchy, the repopulation and renovation were in progress. Among the newly arrived inhabitants were the orthodox Serbs who fled from the Ottomans due to the Austro-Turkish wars from the late 17th and early 18th century. By settling in the Moslavina region, they have reused the earlier layers of the cultural landscape and readjusted them for their needs. The parish system was organized and the Orthodox churches inherited positions of the medieval Catholic ones. In these circumstances, the Orthodox monastery of Bršljanovac was founded in early 18th century with its own history of moving from one place to another, rebuilding, reusing the previous cultural layers and materials and readjusting to the needs of the local community.

ISC 27 Theoretical and Methodological Questions
(Individual Short Communications)
14:40 - 16:20 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021

Roberto Gronda

696 Beyond the Death of God: How Religion Still Matters
Simone Raudino1,2, Patricia Sohn3

1Kyiv School of Economics, Kyiv, Ukraine. 2European Commission, Brussels, Belgium. 3University of Florida, Gainesville, USA

Abstract
In 1882, Friedrich Nietzsche announced that “God is Dead.” However, that was not the end of his speculations on the subject. He continued: “And we killed him. How shall we comfort ourselves, the murderers of all murderers” who brought God to die “under our knives.” Nietzsche was writing about 19th century Prussia as he witnessed people’s belief in the ontological existence of God wither. Nietzsche’s ideas were used, perhaps incorrectly, to help shape what would later become known as the “secularization thesis”: the idea that the advent of modern nation states and industrial societies would, and should, progressively diminish the social and cultural importance of religion. In political science, particularly among modernization theorists, the secularization thesis was historically of paramount value: religion was approached as a defect to be discouraged (and, in international development efforts, perhaps to be dismantled) rather than a topic of neutral empirical inquiry. Even with recent studies suggesting that the modernization thesis was incorrect, it remains highly significant as an assumption in many parts of political science. We argue, to the contrary, that religion remains salient around the world -- and perhaps even in the West -- drawing upon a few preliminary case studies.

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715 A Relational Approach to Comparative Studies of Religions and Non-religions
Niels Reeh
University of Southern Denmark, Odense, Denmark

Abstract

The paper firstly argues that nonreligious groups relate themselves to religion and that we should take this relation between religions and nonreligions much further into consideration. Secondly it is argued that we need not define “nonreligions”. Instead of defining “religion” and “nonreligion,” we can depart from the fact that both religions and nonreligions relate to and constitute themselves vis-à-vis other religions. Religious and nonreligious groups, in other words, define themselves in a relation to what they perceive to be their most immediate competitors. Thus, I suggest that there is a social field of groups that relate and react to each other, which we can study as a relational field without the need of a definition and all the problems that the definition of religion and nonreligion entails.

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223 Analysis of a Spaceless Resilience
Samanta Viziale
University of Torino, Torino, Italy. University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen, Denmark

Abstract

A group of people sitting by the fire, one of the oldest ideas of encounter in the human imaginary. In history, different religions took this into account, developing the idea of “religious community”. Temples, churches, mosques and more generally sacred places have hosted groups of believers throughout history; these facilitate a deep connection with the gods. In 2020, religions embracing the idea of separate spaces for praying had to face a big challenge: the impossibility of meeting in person.
The utmost importance given to such a space forced the community to reorganised their practices, dealing with the dilemma “Could the virtual space be sacred?” However, not all religious faiths consider space as an essential factor: in the texts of Agni Yoga, the doctrine conveyed by Helena Roerich in the 1920s, ‘sacred’ and ‘holy’ are related to words such as knowledge, fire, mission, paths, moment, teaching, principles, language, destination, significance, and man. The lack of attachment to a specific concept of space, allows the Agni Yoga community to easily accomplish its daily spiritual work (despite the possible technical problems that everyone could experience). The activities have been restructured in online meetings and meditations. Is a religious belief more resilient if it involves the “spaceless factor”? 

This intervention aims to analyse if the concept of space can be an obstacle in considering resilient a religious belief, and at the same time if the “lack of outer space” impacts spirituality as a tool of resilience, by straightening an inner space and connection.

778 Open Access Content for Scholars Around the Globe
Gabriele Zeller, Mareike Heinritz
Tübingen University Library, Tübingen, Germany

Abstract

The interlocking of scholarship and research supporting services is becoming increasingly important. To overcome unfairness of access to academic publications and information Open Access (OA) has become the order of the day. In times when libraries have to remain closed due to the Corona pandemic, free access to electronic media is even more appreciated.

In Germany, the team of the Specialised Information Service for the Study of Religion (Fachinformationsdienst Religionswissenschaft) runs the international ‘Bibliography of the Study of Religion’ (RelBib). Scholars not only have free access to RelBib without prior registration but also to as much OA content as possible.

In our paper we will discuss the meaning, purpose and the costs of OA in general as well as the OA services of RelBib which we provide for scholars of religion. Since we would like to overcome the inherent Western perspective of centre-periphery dichotomy, we invite scholars to help us enhance the diversity of RelBib by contributing to it.

287-X The Resilience of the Science of Religion(s) between Hermeneutics and History
14:40 - 16:20 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021
Horia Corneliu Cicortas
La resilienza come fattore essenziale nell'opera ermeneutica dello storico delle religioni.

Márcia Maria Enéas Costa, Josilene Silva da Cruz

Universidade Federal da Paraíba, João Pessoa-PB, Brazil

Abstract

Il presente lavoro mira a discutere la rilevanza della resilienza come carattere essenziale dell’esperienza e del lavoro ermeneutico dello storico delle religioni. Pertanto, per raggiungere questo obiettivo, la ricerca bibliografica è stata utilizzata come tappa essenziale dello studio. Tra gli elementi evidenziati nel presente lavoro, l’accento è posto sull’aspetto della resilienza come fattore per superare le crisi e le difficoltà che il ricercatore e studioso di religioni dovrà affrontare nel suo lavoro quotidiano. Inoltre, un altro elemento significativo in questo testo è l’uso dell’ermeneutica come elemento di studio della storia delle religioni. Nell’ambito dei principali eventi che si sono verificati all’inizio degli studi delle religioni in modo non confessionale – come è narrato nelle biografie dei membri della Scuola Italiana di Storia delle Religioni, a partire da Raffaele Pettazzoni – troviamo diverse situazioni che dimostrano la necessità di atteggiamenti resilienti per raggiungere gli obiettivi prefissati dai mentori della storia delle religioni in ambito italiano. Quindi, nel nostro paper metteremo anche in evidenza alcune delle sfide affrontate da questi studiosi riguardo alle questioni metodologiche nel loro contesto culturale. La conclusione che abbiamo raggiunto mostra che nel percorso metodologico effettuato dallo storico delle religioni si attua una forma di resilienza che permette di affrontare le sfide imposte dall’approccio all’oggetto religione in modo scientifico, in ragione dell’assenza di una metodologia unitaria, il che causa una serie di critiche e un atteggiamento generale di sfiducia da parte degli altri specialisti.

Convergenze Parallele: Angelo Brelich e Ugo Bianchi, dal Maestro Raffaele Pettazzoni al Metodo della Scuola Italiana di Storia delle Religioni

Concetta Giuffré Scibona

Università di Messina, Messina, Italy

Abstract
Il contributo si propone di mostrare, attraverso l’esame preciso di alcune significative e cruciali scritture di carattere metodologico, accompagnate dal racconto di precisi e particolari momenti dei diversi percorsi esistenziali, come l’opposizione tra i due allievi, al di là delle evidenti diversità caratteriali e di scelta spirituale, sia stata in realtà assai meno sostanziale di quanto una insistente narrazione, diversa ed estranea alla Scuola ed alla Metodologia della Scuola italiana di Storia delle religioni, voglia far apparire.

In realtà i due più famosi e validi allievi di Raffaele Pettazzoni hanno costruito, dalle basi del fondatore della scuola italiana di Storia delle religioni, le due linee complementari di quella metodologia storico-comparativa che resta a tutt’oggi lo strumento più valido per la ricerca storico-religiosa.

La Angusta Porta et Arta Via della Storia delle Religioni

Augusto Cosentino

Independent Researcher, Villa San Giovanni, Italy

Abstract

La Storia delle Religioni combatte fin dalla nascita per liberarsi dall’abbraccio quasi incestuoso della teologia, ma anche per allontanarsi dalle lusinghe altrettanto mortifere dello scientismo e del positivismo. Nel Novecento inizia un processo di crisi che progressivamente la riduce nell’angolo. Anzitutto l’accusa di essere nata in una prospettiva sbilanciata di tipo eurocentrico, nell’alveo di una concezione culturale e religiosa di matrice greco-romano-giudaico-cristiana, che diventa un peccato originale che viene espiato solo decostruendo il concetto stesso di religione.

La seconda accusa è quella di costruire pericolosi Idealtypen, astruse categorie metastoriche, proprio a partire dal concetto stesso di “religione”. Si propone di cassare ogni velleità di categorizzazione, eliminando così la stessa disciplina in nome della sua imperfezione formale.

Nel XXI secolo, dopo essere sopravvissuta a questi attacchi frontali, sta ora soccombendo per un attacco alle spalle. Il diffondersi e lo strapotere dei Religious Studies, pericolosamente contigui agli studi teologici nelle istituzioni accademiche anglosassoni, sta sempre più mettendo all’angolo gli studi storico-religiosi, che vantavano una solida e continua riflessione sul metodo e soprattutto sull’oggetto e sui contenuti. Inoltre assistiamo ad un nuovo assalto della teologia storicizzante, che vuole riassorbire la Storia delle Religioni nel suo contesto. Infine, connesso al precedente, c’è il tentativo di usare la Storia delle Religioni come strumento di dialogo interreligioso. Scopo nobile che però non può essere precipuo della disciplina, se non in un’ottica di eterogenesi dei fini. Il presente contributo intende indagare se e come la disciplina riesca ad assorbire tali assalti senza sparire.

The Concealment of Religion in the Postmodern Age. Covid-19 as Case Study

Luca Siniscalco

Università eCampus, Italy, Italy. Università degli Studi, Milano, Italy
Abstract

The aim of the presentation is to analyze the mythic-symbolic and archetypical core of religious traditions considered as a resilient tool of religions themselves in the age of secularization.

Starting from Mircea Eliade’s concept of the “hiding of the sacred into the profane” and considering Ioan Petru Culianu’s idea of “mind games” – according to which the cognitive structures of religion are understood as an unavoidable lens of the human representation of the world – we will develop the methodological and theoretical framework in which the thesis of the survival of religious experience in postmodernity can be properly contextualized.

In order to verify this perspective, a case study will be presented and discussed: the Covid-19 symbolic framework. Thus, the representation of the Covid-19 pandemic, both in media communication and in various theoretical interpretations, is broadly characterized by a mythic-symbolic (and theological) representation. Concepts such as apocalypses, end of times, human salvation, taboos emerge in a secularized world that is in its main structures basically dominated by the safeguard of the “nuda vita” (Giorgio Agamben). At the same time, paradoxically, the various limitations on the sacred practices of institutional religions simultaneously develop a religious framework, installing new divisions between what is considered and lived as sacred (fully real) and conversely as profane (tricky and misleading).

Eventually the case study will show two main conclusions: the mythic-symbolic heritage can change and be opposed, but it never completely disappears; scientific and technical questions are also broadly crossed by religious concepts and archetypes.

Coffee break
16:20 - 16:40 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021

320 Resilience, Domination, and Inequality in the Ancient Funerary World
16:40 - 18:20 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021

Rafael Antonio Barroso Romero

Death played a key role in ancient societies since it demanded new ways to express power and identity. Dead lived side by side with the living, either in the vicinity of the city or within its limits, so also in the tomb the social role and/or identity of the deceased was to be defined, especially by the aristocracy in urban areas and proto cities. That was the starting point for the many forms by which social relations were expressed in necropoleis of the ancient world: grave goods, verse or philosophical inscriptions in tombs, distinctive monuments, the cult of the ancestors... However, if we understand resilience –in a broad sense– as the ability of an agent (human or not) to adapt in the face of a disturbing element or an adverse state or situation, then death can be understood as the ultimate life stressor for the community, and therefore the trigger par excellence of resilience situations. Resilience can then manifest itself through numerous
elements, in the same way as religious strategies put in place in the face of the death of an individual important to a group. How might resilient strategies be traced through material culture, written evidence, or discourses around death in general? Does it vary in any way according to the relations of power and domination in which the deceased was already embedded in life? On the occasion of the forthcoming edited volume by M. Erasmo, *A Cultural History of Death: Antiquity*, this panel aims to discuss those general questions as well as (1) how power relations were represented, perpetuated and endorsed in the ancient funerary world, (2) how the funerary world can be a resource of resilience and what are the best methodologies to address it and (3) how the dead were socially and religiously constructed, from their burial, through their recollection, rites in their honour and/or funerary monuments.

465 Perception of Death in Greek Society in the V Century BC

Anna Gorokhova

*Moscow Pedagogical State University, Moscow, Russian Federation*

**Abstract**

The proposed paper will identify the influence of the perception of death on the social background and mentality of Greek society in the V century BC. In order to do that the following questions will be discussed: what was the meaning of death for the Greeks? How did the concept of death change according to their beliefs? What kind of events could influence that transformation? Was there any connection between life after death and life before death?

Research methodology: the method of synchronicity and diachronicity, a comparative analysis of Greek mythology, laws and curse tablets.

Preliminary results of the research allow us to say that the attitude to death in Greek society changed in the course of events at the end of VI-V centuries BC. There is a connection between the system of laws and the early judges in Hades. Another connection can be seen between norms/values and gradual stratification of the kingdom of Hades for criminals’ souls and souls of people who had not done anything wrong in their lives. The idea of punishment had a great influence on the topography of the kingdom of Hades where it is possible to observe a particular structure by the V century BC which will also be discussed in this paper. Another aspect is the influence of the dead on the life of men in power and ordinary people that can be traced with the help of the curse tablets which were found in graves, wells or in the sanctuaries of deities, e.g. Demeter.

602 Constructing identity and Preserving Memory within the Etruscan necropoleis

Diana Pavel

*Max Weber Kolleg, University of Erfurt, Erfurt, Germany*

**Abstract**
The Late Classical and Hellenistic periods, particularly 4th-2nd centuries BC, present a time of great changes for the Etruscan society, with the gradual conquest and even destruction of cities (Veii, Volsinii) or of sanctuaries (Gravisca) by the Roman expansion throughout the Italic peninsula. This gradual integration into the Roman sphere of influence brought effects on a socio-political scale, as well as on a cultural and religious level. The impact has also shaped the discourse within the funerary realm, where Etruscan aristocratic families continued to build tombs and funerary monuments in the impressive necropoleis that had been in use for centuries - such as the Monterozzi necropolis in Tarquinia or the Banditaccia necropolis in Caere - until the 3rd-2nd centuries BC, with the use of some of these tombs documented until the 1st century BC (Tomb of the Typhon, Tarquinia).

The aim of this paper is to investigate the construction of the funerary discourse visible in the Etruscan necropoleis in these times of socio-political, cultural and religious changes due to the increasing influence and gradual assimilation of the Etruscans into the Roman sphere of influence. This investigation can be further pursued by analysing the evidence provided by a series of tombs built during these centuries, such as the Tomb of the Cardinal (Tarquinia), Tomb of the Typhon (Tarquinia) or Tomb of the Reliefs (Caere) among others, stemming particularly from Southern Etruria. Further reflections regarding the construction of identity, as well as the emphasis on the status and power of certain families within the Etruscan aristocracy, can be seen from the material culture (sarcophagi), from the epigraphic sources within the tombs, as well as from the pictorial tradition, particularly the painted walls of tombs within the aforementioned Monterozzi necropolis. All these, together with the prolonged use of these tombs, can provide further glimpses into the attempts to perpetuate memory and maintain social, cultural, and religious identity in the context of the impending Roman sphere of influence.

439 Monumenta Vadiniensium: Reflections About a Singular Group of Roman Funeral Epigraphy of Northern Hispania

David Martino-García

Complutense University, Madrid, Spain

Abstract

The inclusion of the peoples from the North of the Iberian Peninsula in the Roman Empire in Augustus’s time transformed their funeral customs. One of the clearest pieces of evidence of such a change was the erection of funerary monuments crafted in stone and written in Latin, following the Roman customs. In the area of ancient Cantabria, the group of Vadinienses inscriptions stands out in particular. It consists of a very large group of inscriptions, which currently exceeds 80 pieces already and whose chronology covers the first centuries of the Christian era. In addition, they present very interesting, homogeneous features in terms of the type of support, the epitaphs content and their decoration. The large number of these inscriptions and their homogeneous characteristics allow for an analysis of multiple social, political, religious and artistic aspects related to
the process of Romanization of these Cantabrian people. The aim of this
contribution is to analyze, on the one hand, the different epigraphic formulae
used in the epitaphs, and, on the other hand, the religious symbolism of the
iconography in these monuments, reflecting on its uniqueness in the context of
the epigraphic uses of Roman Hispania.

678 To Live is to Die - Sepulchral Inscriptions of Slaves and Freedmen in
Roman Dalmatia
Roko Sven Surač
University of Zadar, Zadar, Croatia

Abstract

Roman law denied any human characteristic to slaves which was especially shown in the period between 2nd
century BCE to 2nd century CE. They were mere tools at the disposal of their masters and were treated as
such. The only instance where slaves were given a right to be humans is when they died. It was an
obligation of the master to organize a decent funeral for his slaves, which at times extended to erecting a
tombstone for them. In other cases, tombstones were erected by the family or friends of the deceased thus
confirming that slave “became” human. Freedmen were in a better position concerning the “human”
aspects of their lives, but they were not given the same rights as free people. This paper aims to present
sepulchral inscriptions of slaves and freedmen in Roman Dalmatia and to try and put inscriptions in the
context of the social funerary practices and relationships between master and slave, patron and freedmen as
well as religious aspects of the practice if there are any.

322 The Subtle Persuasion Art: The Aristocratic Audience and the
Divinization of the Augustus. The Augustan Resilience and the Rhetoric of
Death
Antonio Pio Di Cosmo
ISACCL, Bucharest, Romania

Abstract

The Metamorphoses by Ovid introduced the theme of the apotheosis of Cesar’s soul (Ov., Met. XV, vv. 843-
851). Ovid in the “Fasti” recounted the transfiguration of Cesar’s body (Ov., Fast. III, vv. 697-710).
As Pontifex Maximus, Caesar, was sacred to Vesta and the goddess protected his body from the
conspirators. For this reason, the goddess replaced him with a puppet. The Ovidian expedient revealed
an arcanum imperii and expressed a shared idea about the destiny of the man, who exercised the imperium.
Whosoever held the *imperium* was sacred and did not suffer the fate of common people, but somehow survived. For example, Romulus, the first Roman king, according to this *Legenda Aurea* did not die, but became the god Quirinus (Plut., *Vita Romul.*, 27-28; Tit. Liv., *Ab Urbe Con.* I, 16).

Nevertheless, Octavian’s body, the first Emperor, was purified by the *rogus* and his soul ascended to heaven. This event was observed by Numerius Atticus, an eyewitness who recognized the Emperor’s soul (*Svet.*, *Aug.*, 100). The eyewitness was a common expedient, used to demonstrate the other-life of the sovereign. This stratagem is an expression of the Augustan resilience to the critics of the senatorial aristocracy, unconvinced by the rhetorical strategy of the Imperial House.

The present research proposes a revision of the phenomenon and analyzes the sociological and anthropological implications of the resilience strategy of the Augustan propaganda. The idea of the after-life of the sovereign is interpreted as a passage, that makes the “mystery of royalty” understandable.

The transformation of the sovereign’s body was considered an instrument, that reaffirmed the eternity of the State with respect to death.


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257-II Underground Religious Spaces as Resources for Community Resilience
16:40 - 18:20 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021

Renata Salvarani, Giuseppe Pace

559 The Cave Church of Ayia Napa (Cyprus): A Bastion of Local and Religious Identities in a Nightclubbing Resort
Mia Trentin
The Cyprus Institute - STARC, Nicosia, Cyprus

Abstract

The Virgin’s cult in the cave church of Ayia Napa started developing from the Byzantine period, and the shrine quickly became one of the island’s primary pilgrimage sites. Locals and pilgrims on their way to the Holy Land worshipped the cave church as attested by the numerous graffiti - recording names and dates of the visits in different languages - and pilgrimage accounts. The complex flourished during the Lusignan and Venetian periods, and the cult was further consolidated under the Ottoman Empire thanks to the “holy girdle of Ayia Napa”, a belt believed to help infertile women to conceive a child. With its long-lasting and deep-rooted history, the site conveyed the area’s socio-cultural rural and genuine identity. The situation crucially changed after 1974, when many Greek refugees from the northern part of the island moved south to escape the Turkish occupation. In a couple of decades, the rural village of Ayia Napa became one of the major touristic destinations of the island, and its development continued, promoting a nightclubbing resort model. Nowadays, the monastery is lost in a multitude of clubs and bars. The cult is still lively, but the socio-cultural landscape has crucially changed, and it is challenged by mass tourism. To mitigate the impact of the resort model on the cult site of Ayia Napa and promote it as an identity community site within the current featureless urban setting, the Bishop of Constantia and Famagosta has promoted a museum in the monastic complex. In collaboration with the Department of Antiquities and the Municipality of Ayia Napa, the project aims to preserve the church’s function as a cult site while promoting the knowledge of the local history and heritage among locals and tourists. Due to its complex and multilayered reality, the site is one of the case studies included in the EU COST action project Underground for Value. The COST action will enhance the overall initiative’s impact on different aspects such as the local community involvement, the participatory approach to the Cultural Heritage, the development of sustainable and resilient models to promote and renew the local economy starting from the natural and cultural heritage.

This paper will describe and discuss these aspects and the related challenges to underline the underground site’s relevance across the centuries and at present as a catalyzer for the local community and its resilient response to the current situation.
Religious Practice and Resilience in the Nazi Concentration Camps

Eileen Lyon

State University of New York at Fredonia, Fredonia, USA

Abstract

Several studies of spiritual resistance in the Nazi Concentration Camps have demonstrated the key role that religious and cultural activities played in the maintenance of both individual and collective identities and higher survival rates. Jewish writers speak of Kiddush Ha Hayyim, the sanctification of life, as an important component in Jewish resistance both in the ghettos and the camps. Christians, too, exhibited powerful forms of resistance in their continuation of traditional religious and cultural practices. While conditions in the camps were such that many questioned or set aside their religious faith, there are also remarkable stories of continued religious practice. These practices made prisoners resilient.

Fasting in Auschwitz for Yom Kippur, keeping some elements of Shabbat observance, gathering before work for Shacharit, or morning service, crafting rosaries out of the meagre bread rations, confession of sins to priest-prisoners, and clandestine celebrations of the Mass were powerful assertions of individual and communal identity in a context that was designed to eradicate such identities. Prisoners took tremendous risks to engage in such activities as the result of discovery was severe punishment or death. Yet, such martyrdoms seemed to serve as inspiration for further activity rather than a deterrent. This paper will look at examples of Jewish and Catholic resilience and spiritual resistance and demonstrate the similarities in the ways these actions functioned. It will briefly discuss four types of spiritual resistance – prayer and fasting, the creation of religious texts, the crafting of devotional objects, and the carving out of worship space. These actions brought great strength to prisoners, helped them to survive, and ultimately to heal from the horrors of their experiences.

Underground Religious Historical Sites in the Time of Heritagization: Mutations, Enhancements and Risks

Elisa Bellato

Università della Basilicata, Matera, Italy

Abstract

What happens to underground religious historical sites in the era of extensive heritagization? Does the fact of being underground entail specific heritage practices? And how does the religious dimension fit into this process of conversion?

To transform a place in a heritage and touristic sense it can be a resource for local communities, but it carries some risks. It means changing the way of perceiving and living in the space and it introduces new, in some way, homologating issues, as they are connected to the economic world of work and to the institutions responsible for safeguarding the cultural properties. Tourism also involves new rituals shaped by historic
and cultural value or sometimes by more or less dubious fascinations: thinking of the dark tourism phenomenon.

Durkheim’s idea of “non-religious sacred” will be used to understand the new form of attraction to this kind of sites. Also of interest will be Mircea Eliade’s description of the modern desacralized world where non-religious people still recognize exceptional qualities in certain places. Furthermore, the concept of rite, defined as a complex cultural creation by anthropological studies, will be applied to analyze the tourist visits with their social and symbolic meanings at both individual and collective level.

Two cases study will be introduced: the Fontanelle cemetery and the catacombs of San Gaudioso located in the Sanità district of Naples. They are both underground religious and historic sites, but they describe different stages in the heritagization process and in the involvement of local communities. They are examples of places of memory and worship transformed into laboratories for social, cultural and economic development. Two cases in which religiousness is or could be a qualifying element and a powerful tool capable of supporting and leading the programme of action out of a simple technical and economic perspective.

256 Underground religious spaces as resources for community resilience
Renata Salvarani¹, Giuseppe Pace²

¹European University of Rome, Rome, Italy. ²CNR - Ismed, Naples, Italy

Abstract

Underground spaces mark in space deep transformations experienced by a community.

Grottos and caves become places of worship for marginal or persecuted groups, they allow minority religious groups to survive after great social and cultural changes; cavities and abandoned environments are used as homes by minorities, refugee groups, marginalized, homeless; tunnels and galleries are used as shelters during wars and invasions; hypogeal burial areas are utilized continuously across the ages; under the ground are accumulated waste, deposits of the past, traces of events far in time.

They are not only places of memory (Halbwachs 1925, 1941; Assmann 1992; Ricoeur 2000), but also dynamic elements able to interact semantically with the society that created them, continuing to keep them as a reference.

They connote themselves in a religious sense and remain in use for long and very long durations, changing function, assuming different semantic values. They play a specific role in the urban fabric becoming a sort of mine providing inputs for resilience processes (memories, links to events, a memory of pain, a memory of trauma).

Inside underground spaces can take place a salvific search, featured also in a religious sense, which then produces effects of resilience in the life of the city on the surface.

The focus of the session is on the analysis of the socio-religious dynamics connected with underground spaces, as well as on the anthropological, symbolic, and mythological values of the acts of descending and
ascending, bringing to light, hiding underground, being born in a cave, discovering springs and groundwater, finding and re-finding holy bodies, relics and signs.

The connections of the topic with valorization programs throughout Europe and the Mediterranean area are objects of the session as well. The introduction of case studies is welcome as well.

360 'Pagans' and Gnostics in Late Antiquity. Strategies of 'Doctrinal Resilience' ONLINE
16:40 - 18:20 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021

Maria Vittoria Cerutti

The workshop session aims at focusing on forms of ‘doctrinal resilience’, that is argumentative strategies within literary sources of religious and philosophical-religious interest, developed among the ‘last pagans’ and Gnostics in order to resist the spread of the ‘religious otherness’ and its impact.

More specifically, the contributions intend to investigate resilient strategies displayed in Late Antiquity, on the one hand by hellenismos and on the other hand by Gnosticism, in front of the crisis represented for them - respectively - by the spread of Christianity and the development of the so-called Great Church.

Therefore, a first research area aims at exploring how literary sources of religious-philosophical relevance not only criticize, but also - at the same time - use, adapt and resemantize doctrinal elements of Christianity and integrate them in their own traditional religious heritage, in order to resist the pervasiveness of the vera religio - or better the vera philosophia - and survive it. The core of the research is the investigation of literary sources that unfold a sort of chrēsis, which goes in a different direction and pursues different purposes than the classical culture’s chrēsis (chrēsis orthē or usus iustus) as theorized and practiced by the first Christian authors [Christian Gnïka, Chrēsis, il concetto di retto uso. Il metodo dei Padri della Chiesa nella ricezione della cultura antica, tr. it., Morcelliana, Brescia 2020; Markus Mülke Hrsg., Chrésima. Exemplarische Studien zur frühchristlichen Chrēsis (Untersuchungen zur antiken Literatur und Geschichte, Band 138), De Gruyter, Berlin 2019; A.M.Mazzanti ed., Un metodo per il dialogo fra le culture. La chrēsis patristica (Supplementi Adamantius IX), Morcelliana, Brescia 2019].

In this perspective, we are not strictly dealing with an anti-Christian thought, but rather a post-Christian thought, that - for these reasons - may offer some aspects of analogy with the contemporary post-Christian Western world.

A second research area aims at focusing on Gnostic sources in order to investigate their way of using (chrēsis) Christian elements for resilient purposes. More specifically, the contribution in this area intends to distinguish and clarify two forms of resilience: the former, older and - we can say - intra ecclesiam, represented in particular by some Valentinian sources and the latter - more recent and extra ecclesiam - expressed in particular by the so-called secondary Christianization offered in Coptic Sethian texts.
The speakers will focus on theoretical questions and case study analysis of particular relevance, on the basis of their own fields of research and methodologies, such as the History of religions, the History of philosophical thought, ancient Christian literature and the History of Christian theology.

538 An Introduction to the Subject and a Case Study

Maria Vittoria Cerutti
Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, Milan, Italy

Abstract

Having introduced the subject of the workshop, the paper focuses on some aspects of religious terminology developed in literary sources by the so-called “last Pagans”, such as Quintus Aurelius Symmachus’ s Relatio Tertia.

The purpose of this paper is to show how these sources offer an ideological restructuring of the traditional heritage in order to resist the religious and cultural changes. In particular, they suggest a sort of chrēsis (i.e. “use”) of some typical Christian elements, revisited and integrated as much as possible in their own traditional heritage. This chrēsis goes in a different direction and has a different purpose to the chrēsis (chrēsis orthē or usus iustus) of the classical culture as theorized and practised by the first Christian authors.

The cult of the One and the dialectic between cultus and prudentia seem to be two elements which are particularly meaningful for the pursuit of “resilience”.

562 Inducing Resilience as a Non-Conflicting Process: A Study of the Apologetics in the 2nd Century

Angela Maria Mazzanti
Università di Bologna, Bologna, Italy

Abstract

The 2nd century AD is a problematic time for Christians. Christians present a different identity that is “critical” of the culture and religion of the time. They tend to understand and distinguish between the different theological and anthropological concepts of their faith by using language with specific semantics and new ideas which do not correspond with the philosophy of the time. During this period, Christians spread around the world and gradually had more contact with society. There is a contrast between the two cultures but, on the whole,
Christians try to explain their ideas sometimes without provoking a conflicting resilience. Some “Apologies” written for the emperors are evidence of this approach taken by Christians. The work of Justin, to be presented to the imperial _scrinium a rescriptis_, is an important example of this. Justin, both at the beginning and in other passages of the “Apologia”, gives importance to traits that Hadrianus, Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius believe to be fundamental for power as proven by their non-dynastic choice of successors. υσβεια e _φιλοσοφία_ are mentioned as elements that λόγος deems fundamental. This study will develop these concepts, considering the double semantics found in Justin’s “Apologia” and making some comparisons.

480 Chrêsis as Resilience in the Neoplatonic-Christian Dialogue: Syntax and Semantics
_Giulio Maspero_
Santa Croce, Rome, Italy

Abstract

_Chrèsis_ is a phenomenon common to both pagan and Christian thought. Metaphysics itself can be read as Plato’s _chrêsis_ of the myths of the poets. Later on, the Fathers of the Church have recourse to Plato himself and to other philosophical and cultural elements. The aim of this contribution is to show that _chrêsis_ is an element that manifests mutual resilience in the dialogue between Christians and Neo-Platonists in the 4th century. In particular, the use of anthropological elements (semantics) that emerged in the comparison (sintaxis) between the two fields in Julian’s pagan restoration seems significant. In this context, the influence of Iamblichus will be particularly studied with reference to the Cappadocian Fathers.

406 Julian, Apostate or Post-Christian? Strategies of Exclusion in the Late Antique Religious Debate
_Leonardo Lugaresi_
Indipendent Researcher, Cesena, Italy

Abstract

In the polemical confrontation between Gregory of Nazianzus and the Emperor Julian we can see two opposing but similar “strategies of exclusion”. On the one hand, the pagan emperor completely removed all traces of his Christian background from his political self-presentation and programmatically excluded Christians from the cultural and political field, confining them to the mere dimension of assistance to the poor. On the other hand, the Christian bishop and theologian responded by attributing to him a paradoxical
Christian identity, in the negative form of apostasy, and in turn excluding him from the cultural field, denying the political relevance of the moral virtues boasted by Julian and asserting the pivotal role of Christianity in culture and society.

450 Gnostic Strategies of Resilience: Valentinians and Sethians Facing the So-called Great Church (2nd-4th century)

Giuliano Chiapparini
Catholic University, Milan, Italy

Abstract

The research concerns forms of resilience typical of Gnostic contexts towards the majority Christianity (or Christianity of the Great Church) of the first centuries. This resistance is investigated in the context of the changes both internal to Christianity itself and relative to the society in which it was imposing itself. In particular, we intend to study resilient tendencies expressed by Valentinian sources of the second century, such as, for example, the “Valentinian Doctrinal Letter”: the anonymous author tends to reduce the descending graduation of the Pleroma, in order to be less criticizable by the heresiologists; in fact, Irenaeus and Tertullian are more tender with this position. Another Gnostic source under investigation is the Gnostic Ptolemy’s “Letter to Flora”; we intend to verify if, as some scholars have argued, it presents a “blunt” Gnosticism to be better received by the faithful of the Great Church. It should be noted that this is a sort of intra-ecclesial and more ancient resilience, to be distinguished from a second, later and extra-ecclesial form of resilience, such as that expressed by the so-called “secondary Christianization” typical of “Sethian” Coptic texts, a strategy on which the studies of the Coptologists have insisted and which in any case deserves to be investigated.

518-II Erasmianism, Female Resilience, and Accommodation

ONLINE
16:40 - 18:20 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021

Rainer Leushuis, Maria Fallica

600 Mental Prayer as a Recommended and Suspected Practice (14th-16th centuries)

Isabella Gagliardi
University of Florence, Florence, Italy

Abstract
The practice of mental prayer became widespread thanks to the rise of the so-called devotio nova: previously, the habit of praying mentally without uttering words and thus getting used to building an intimate and direct relationship with God, was rather the prerogative of religious elites. Thanks to the success of strictly Christocentric Mendicant theology and pastoral care and, later, thanks also to the efforts of Geert Groote and his foundation of the Canons Regular of Windesheim, the devotio nova was even recognised by the Council of Basel. Between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the practice of mental prayer was increasingly opposed to oratio vocalis: the perception of a qualitative difference between prayer recited verbally and prayer modulated in the depths of the conscience began to emerge, and the latter increasingly came to appear superior to the former. In the first part of this paper, we will present some of the sources that contributed to the construction of such a perception, emphasising those elements that contributed to the massive diffusion of mental prayer as the highest system of prayer and highlighting how, in the end, concepts and attitudes of a mystical nature were popularised. Through this practice, in short, God burst powerfully into the daily lives of the devout, and not only those who were culturally better prepared and theologically more expert: it was often women who practised mental prayer and contemplation, reclining in the inner cell they built in their own interiority. In short, everyone could immerse themselves within themselves, inhabiting that claustrum animae which was no longer the exclusive prerogative of the Church and its institutions, thus raising the problem of the exercise of spiritual direction. Such a type of oration was thus on its way to becoming suspect. In the second part of the contribution, therefore, those texts and experiences will be presented which place at the centre of the question the problem of discretio spirituum connected to mental prayer, highlighting its decisive role and its progressive passage from charisma to function.

532 “The place of speaking for a speaking that has no place”: The Theresian Method of Mental Prayer and the Legacy of Spanish Erasmianism

Niccolò Brandodoro

Università di Roma "La Sapienza", Rome, Italy

Abstract

The practice of mental prayer represents the most evident symptom of the important transformations that characterized Sixteenth-Century European spirituality. Even though it is possible to trace back the genesis and the development of such modus orandi - from the first centuries of Christian theology up to the diffusion of devotio moderna in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries - it is during the Sixteenth Century that the oratio mentalis had its moment of greatest expansion and cultural establishment.

More precisely, as shown by Marcel Bataillon in his monumental work Erasmo y España, the spread of Erasmus of Rotterdam’s thought - especially in the Spanish Empire of Charles V - encouraged the proliferation of a restless sensibility animated by a strong desire for spiritual regeneration. This cultural environment gave place to an experimental research of new religious practices that contributed to the diffusion of interiorizing meditative techniques.

Considering this intellectual context, the present intervention focuses on the theme of the mental prayer starting from the writings of Teresa of Avila, following the “trail of Erasmianism in the spiritual literature” ("la estela del erasmismo en la literatura espiritual", Bataillon, 1937, p. 549) of Spanish mystical movements. In order to measure the importance of such a legacy, this research analyzes the relationship between the “feminine discourse” ("discours féminin", De Certeau, 1982, p. 262) produced by Teresa before the male authority of different spiritual directors who watched over her camino de perfección. In particular, this
inquiry questions the role of Jesuit confessors (especially Baltasar Álvarez, Diego de Cetina and Francisco de Borja) with whom the Spanish mystic came into contact, paying special attention to their influence on the genesis of the Teresian method of mental prayer.

519 “Nihil est adiaphoron in casu confessionis et scandalí”. The Erasmian Legacy in the Constitution of a Lutheran Church
Marta Quatrale
Freie Universität, Berlin, Germany

Abstract

The topic of the accommodation to the different stages of weakness of the believers represented under the keyword “Schonung der Schwachen” an important issue in the constitution of a Lutheran Orthodoxy. Martin Luther supported explicitly the accommodating attitude of the young humanist Philipp Melanchthon against the radical spiritualism of Andreas Bodenstein of Karlstadt (1521-1522), in his purpose of maintaining the Church traditions, as long as they do not contradict the Word. This aim – clearly echoing Erasmus’ conception of the adiaphora – was repeated by Melanchthon, in accordance with Luther, during the negotiations with the so-called Zwinglian party in the Marburger Colloquy (1529). Such a relatively accommodating theological framework changed drastically after Luther’s death and the Lutheran defeat in the Schmalkaldic War (1547), with the implementation of the so-called Leipzig Interim (1548), a temporary settlement in which Melanchthon was involved as author. This time explicitly, the keyword adiaphora represented once again the basis for a given compromise with the counterpart –read by the most radical Lutheran wing as an anti-christian sign, re-activating some apocalyptical pattern used by Luther himself – against Rome in the very first years of the Reformation. “Nihil est adiaphoron in casu confessionis et scandalí” – with this harsh statement, a leitmotif for almost 30 years, the radical wing rejected the idea of inclusive reforms of the Church, to underline the identification of the true doctrine with Luther’s doctrine alone. Depriving the confession of faith of its traditional theological-political role of making compromises legal and implementing them, they tasked it for the very first time with confessing a professedly ‘true’ doctrine. The aim of the present paper is to trace back some patterns in the Lutheran conception of this Erasmian legacy, between willingness to compromise and apocalyptical patterns.

148 Islam and Muslim Communities in Latin America and the Caribbean: Narratives of Resilience and Change
16:40 - 18:20 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021
Ken Chitwood

In recent decades, global Islamic studies expanded to include geographies and communities beyond a conventional Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) core. Research in South Asia, Europe, Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa widened the field’s scope, introducing fresh, critical understandings into scholarly discourses about Islam and Muslims’ lived realities across the world. Nonetheless, global Islamic studies’ scope still
fails to fully incorporate marginal geographies and the study of Islam beyond the MENA remains underrepresented. There is a pertinent need to further globalize the study of global Islam in scope and conceptual frames. This is particularly evident when it comes to Latin America and the Caribbean. Research on religion in Latin America and the Caribbean has grown to appreciate the changeability and variety of religious expression in the region over the last several decades. Studies on various traditions thickened scholarly understanding of the region’s religious diversity and introduced new ways of understanding transformations in culture, society, and politics across the Americas. Still, the study of Islam and Muslim communities in relation to this evolution remains marginal when compared to that of other traditions. This workshop aims to address these gaps by convening a conversation between leading and emerging scholars whose work focuses on Islam and Muslims in Latin America and the Caribbean. In particular, it provides an opportunity for comparative perspectives between and across disciplines and case-specific analytic frameworks -- in Colombia, Mexico, Brazil, Puerto Rico, and the Latinx U.S. -- that variously address the theme of “Resilient Religion.”

Facing numerous crises and changes over the last 500 years, Muslims in the region have shown a great degree of resilience and diversity in their approaches to processes of religious, environmental, social, economic, and political transformation. The following papers address such processes and Muslims’ adaptation and resistance to them. Featuring geographic and disciplinary diversity, these papers together address three broader arguments: 1) Islam and Muslims are not foreign to Latin America and the Caribbean, but are an integral part of the region’s historical and contemporary evolution; 2) Latin America and the Caribbean should be considered part of dynamics of change in global Islam despite relatively lower numbers of adherents; and 3) recognizing these two facts helps us see the reordering of Latin America and the Caribbean and global Islam in new light, thus opening new avenues for historical understanding, contemporary research, and public debates over religious versatility and resilience in the late-modern world.

111 Colombian and Mexican Converts in Search of Islam: Transnational Movements’ Ideologies, Local Issues, and Social Change

Baptiste Brodard

Universidad Veracruzana, Veracruz, Mexico

Abstract

With their active role in shaping organizations, converts play an important role in Colombian and Mexican Muslim communities. In both countries, recent Muslim communities integrate a high percentage of “indigenous” people, making the tension between transnational trends and local contexts particularly sensitive. Having embraced Islam for a variety of reasons, these “new Muslims” are exposed to a wide range of interpretations of Islam both on-site and online. In this regard, how do they cope with diverging ideologies, competing discourses, and discrepancies between movements coming from abroad, including Shiite, Salafist and Sufi groups? While local possibilities in terms of places of worship venues and relations with Muslim leaders often determine their ideological orientations, converts also play an active role in the search for the “authentic” expression of Islam. Even more substantially, many of them seek a way to live Islam in harmony with their social, family, and cultural context. This search for a balance between the new religiosity and lived reality, which is not evident in a context where Muslims represent a slight minority, questions their capacity for adaptation and resilience. On the basis of ethnographic observations and interviews, I will address the question of the influence of transnational Islamic movements on Muslim converts in Colombia and Mexico on the one hand. On the other hand, I will reflect on the influence of these

...
converts on religious trends in their local context, and thus on their role in adapting Islamic discourses and practices according to their needs and socio-cultural challenges.

150 Puerto Rican Muslims and Their Politics: Resilience Through Intersectional Activism
Ken Chitwood
Freie Universität Berlin, Berlin, Germany

Abstract

When students protested at the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras (UPRRP) in March 2017, Adrián - a staunch supporter of Puerto Rican independence and a recent convert to Islam - stood with them. Praying at the university’s gates every evening, Adrián was the only Muslim at the demonstrations. The convergence of Adrián’s faith and resistance politics on display at UPRRP helps bring into focus some of the contours of the political and ethical self-fashioning of Puerto Rico’s Muslim convert population. As “quadruple minorities” - Puerto Rican in the Muslim community, Muslim in the Puerto Rican community, and both Puerto Rican and Muslim in the context of American empire - Puerto Rican Muslims represent a numerically small, but categorically complex constituency that invites scholars to better understand the diversity, intersectionality, and changeability of religious and political expressions in the late-modern age. Muslim converts in Latin America, the Caribbean, and Latinx U.S. have generally been overlooked in considerations of the region’s politics and religious make-up. However, significant aspects of their political perspectives and practices illustrate the complicated landscape of both contemporary Islamic politics and those of the Americas. In this paper, I analyze Puerto Rican Muslims’ multivalent politics based on ethnographic fieldwork in Puerto Rico and the U.S. from 2015 to 2018. Examining individuals, concepts, practices, and institutions variously understood as “Puerto Rican” and “Muslim,” I flesh-out what resilience looks like in the everyday religious and political lives of Puerto Rican Muslims in Puerto Rico, New York/New Jersey, and Florida.

151 Islam and Islamization in Brazil – Stories about Immigration, Prejudice and Resilience
Luciana Garcia de Oliveira
Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil

Abstract

Although Brazil is a country of ethnic, cultural and religious plurality, there are few references about Islam and the Muslim community in Brazil. This silence, at the present time, occurs due, among other reasons, to the association of Islam with foreign agents, more specifically, to Arab immigrants. However, in reality, the Muslim presence in Brazil is reflected in a diversity of institutions, mosques and associations that, generally, follow the ideological orientations of the Muslim-majority countries: a Sunni majority and a Shiite minority. In São Paulo, the city with the highest concentration of Muslims, Islam is intrinsically associated with Arab identity. All Islamic spaces were built by immigrants through the funding of some Arab countries such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt. The imposition of Arab identity in Brazilian Islamic spaces causes discomfort to the African immigrants and, similarly, to Brazilian converts, who began, increasingly, to occupy these places.
The result of this discomfort was the creation of new spaces, new mosques and mussalahs, built to accommodate the increased demand in Brazil and as a way to act with resilience in the face of an impending conflict. And, in order to dissociate themselves from “Arabism”, the converts “Islamized” themselves, according to the literal reading of the sacred text of the Qur'an. In these spaces, Islam is transformed into an interracial religion, as defined by the Ummah (the global community of Muslims). This proposal aims to analyze the dynamics and complexity that permeate the recent phenomenon of conversions to Islam in Brazil, more specifically, in the city of São Paulo.

170 The Emergence of Muslim Identity Representations among Immigrants in Mexico’s YouTube Sphere

Nik Hasif

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Abstract

Historically, Islam and Muslims have been present in Mexico for centuries through Spanish colonisation, the presence of an Arab diaspora, and immigration; nevertheless, they were considered ‘hidden’. Thanks to 21st-century social media – YouTube in particular – this minority community, consisting of 7,982 members (INEGI, 2020), has gradually become more visible to the wider public. Muslims, particularly immigrants, are engaging in YouTube culture, thereby attracting a following in Mexico’s online communities. By focusing on videos produced by Muslim immigrants as a point of departure, this exploratory study seeks to understand how the dynamic of Muslim identity is manifested and negotiated online. This study also investigates how these Muslims are perceived by an online audience. To achieve these objectives, a digital ethnographic approach was employed, comprising an inductive content analysis and semi-structured interviews with these creators. Preliminary results from the study indicate that these YouTubers promote adherence to Islamic identity through non-religious YouTube channels, serving as a unique differentiation marker while also providing a means of self-affirmation. Their religious identification is mediated under five core thematic categories: name, verbal, conduct, graphics, and material expression. The fact that the identity negotiations take place within the diffuse border of YouTube enables us to witness the simultaneity of the global and local in Islam, as well the resilience-building of immigrant Muslims through digital-religious practices and expression.

238 Small Communities, Big Transformations: Muslim Converts in Mexico

Mariana Valdez

Hamad Bin Khalifa University, Doha, Qatar. University College London, London, United Kingdom

Abstract

The case of religious conversion to Islam in non-Muslim majority countries such as Mexico underlines the importance of taking a global perspective on Islam and Muslim communities. In the case of Mexico and
other Latin American countries that are known for their Catholic majority populations, the idea of a “foreign”
religion that might even be categorized as “exotic” or “negative” by lay people is unthinkable.

Contrary to perceptions of “otherness,” Mexico has been the cradle of various new Muslim communities. Thus, it is important to notice the slow changes of religious dynamics in a region characterized by a generally hegemonic Catholic religion. In this paper, I analyze the experience of Muslim conversion of Mexican women in a specific region of Mexico which is known to be a Catholic bastion in the country; the city of Guadalajara. Mainly, the interplay between living in a general (Christian/Catholic) religious society, their access to (or lack of) religious information, their own views about religion and how these visions and practices created gaps that were filled by the religion of Islam. This will show the struggles of common Mexicans trying to find spiritual meaning in their lives, even though, their society (and usually their lives) seems to be permeated by the Christian/Catholic religion. The emergence of Muslim converts gives a glimpse of the resilience afforded by Islam in what can be thought to be a highly contested religious scene.

33-IV Yes We Jain!
16:40 - 18:20 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021
Heleen De Jonckheere, Tine Vekemans, Basile Leclère

243 Redefining Harmful Actions: The Concept of Intention in Umāsvāti’s Tattvārthasūtra and Its Commentaries
Ana Bajzelj
UC Riverside, Riverside, USA

Abstract

When someone harms a living being, does it matter if they did it intentionally or unintentionally? Perhaps they caused harm accidentally, or they were simply careless or intoxicated. What if they were very careful but caused harm anyway? The early Śvetāmbara canonical strata seem to disregard the significance of motivations behind actions when it comes to karmic retribution. The early portions of the Āyāraṃga, for example, state that every action draws karma. The Sūyagaḍaṃga, further, attributes the distinction between mental intention and physical action to the wrong view of the kriyāvādins (1.1.2.25), and it mocks Buddhists for emphasizing the importance of intention. For a Buddhist, the text claims, someone who pushes a spit through a gourd, mistaking it for an infant, is a murderer; however, a person who accidentally roasts an infant, mistaking it for a gourd, is not (2.6.26–28). Despite the initial rejection of the idea that unintentional and intentional harm differ, the distinction between deliberate and nondeliberate actions with regard to karmic accumulation did gradually come to be accepted in Jain teachings, and increasingly more emphasis was placed on various motivations behind actions, including intention.

This paper will explore the concept of intention in postcanonical philosophical texts, focusing on Umāsvāti’s Tattvārthasūtra with two Śvetāmbara commentaries (Tattvārthādhigamabhasya and Siddhasenagaṇin’s Tattvārthādhigamaṭikā) and two Digambara commentaries (Pūjyapāda
Devanandin’s Sarvárthasiddhi and Akalaṅka’s Tattvárthavārttika). In contrast to the early canonical sources, Umāsvāti proposes a complex theory of action and delegates an important function to its conative aspect. Not only does he distinguish between actions that are known/intentional (jñāta) and not known/unintentional (ajñāta), but he also divides actions into three steps, namely, the act of planning (saṃrambha), the act of preparation (samārambha), and the execution of an action (ārambha). The commentators elaborate on these central terms and locate them in the broader context of the Jain karmic doctrine, clarifying how the difference between performing actions intentionally and performing them unintentionally affects karmic bondage. This paper will examine the significance of recognizing agency in an otherwise seemingly mechanistic karmic system as well as analyze its implications for the Jain ethics of nonviolence. It will, further, discuss the possible reasons that influenced such an important doctrinal change by tracing Umāsvāti’s sources, and explore the ways in which postcanonical philosophical texts mark this redefinition of harmful actions as still uniquely Jain.

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Crisis of God, an Automated Universe and the Three Virtues

Pragya Jain

International School for Jain Studies, Pune, India

Abstract

The religious world is broadly divided under two categories: theists and atheists while Jainism stand out as trans-theist (as per various researches) for their unusual approach towards the belief of God’s existence. This paper under the panel of “Yes, we Jain!” - Overcoming crises in the Jain tradition would identify and discuss the attributes which make Jainism stand different from others and answer the question “who do Jains worship?”

According to Jainism, there is no almighty who interferes with the mortals or other substances; there is no creator who has created the universe; there is no destroyer who can punish the evils of the world, yet there is a state of supreme contentment. Jainism believes the one to be worshipped should possess non-attachment (vītrāgtā), omniscience (sarvajñatā) and be a promulgator of the right path (hitopadesītā). These attributes can be acquired by anyone who has realised his true self. On the basis of these, Jainism has sustained its concept of worshipping a God without expecting anything in return.

Jainism allows active engagement in various activities related to the idols (deva), books (śāstra) and teachers (guru). Lord Mahavira, the twenty-fourth tīrthaṅkara, is considered to be the one ruling the current Jain statute but the first in this era was Lord Adinath. Also, in the beginningless universe, one cannot identify the first Jain God. Also as all Jain idols look the same. From adding signs and a signatory comment at the bottom of the idols to accepting śvetāmbara and digambara rituals of worshipping, Jainism has grown manifold to sustain in the modern times. The five ultimate states, pāṇca paramaśṭhī, which are worshipped on a daily basis by a Jain believer - Arihanta, Siddha, Ācārya, Upādhyāya and Sādhu - are also states, and not persons. This means that they should possess the three above said attributes or virtues of some degree so that to be worshipped.

Hindus are the hard-core theists. Their concept of a creator, a destroyer and an operator is strong enough to gain wide acceptance. Jainism had to set its foot down to keep believing that the world is an automated system. On the other hand, staunch belief of Buddhism that there is no possibility of a God was argued and
refuted by Jain scholars at many instances in various texts. Since the Nirvāna of Lord Mahavir, various religions sprouted but the three virtues of a Jain God helped sustaining every time.

**782 The Fundamental Virtue of Indian Ethics? The Concept of ahiṃsā in Early Yoga, Jainism and Gandhi’s Philosophy**

Agnieszka Rostalska

Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium

**Abstract**

The origins of the concept of ahiṃsā, literally non-harmfulness or nonviolence, date back to ancient times. This Indian ethical ideal was famously revoked by Mahatma Gandhi, who did not reduce it simply to not killing nor not making harm. Instead, he proclaimed it a universal principle of benevolence which expresses the love for fellow beings, similar to caritas. In his understanding, ahiṃsā means complete refraining from non-harmful acts, including the physical, mental and verbal acts of violence. Moreover, one’s intention of making harm towards other beings is not just wrong but damaging to the agent. In Gandhi’s view the exercise of ahiṃsā implicates guardian-like and benevolent attitudes towards all living being (including animals), and its instances are reduction of suffering, an active help and any behavior which aims at avoidance of other’s and one’s hurt.

In the Yogasūtras of Patañjali non-harmfulness (ahiṃsā) is a virtuous yogic ideal. Patañjali considered it as one of the five precepts (yama), which constitute the great vow (mahavrata) of a yogin. As advised in the Yogasūtras (2.31) these should always be obeyed, independently of time, place and circumstances.

The concept of ahiṃsā may be understood here in two ways. In the narrow sense, it refers to the virtue of non-harmfulness, the first of the five precepts - non-killing or not causing physical harm. In the wider sense, as a principle which encompasses all five moral precepts: nonviolence (ahiṃsā), truthfulness (satya), not stealing (asteya), impulse control in the form of sexual restraint (brahmacharya), non-possession (aparigraha).

According to Patañjali, in result of practice of non-harmfulness towards all living beings, the enmity ceases not only for the yogi - in his or her presence the natural enmity between animals ceases as well, i.e., between the cat and the mouse.

Gandhi’s endorsement of the ahiṃsā principle appears not only in the moral context, as he has considered it a part of efficient political practice. However, not all Indian philosophical traditions share such a radical view. The Jain tradition is here exemplary, where the precept of ahiṃsā is followed very literally. On the path towards liberation, one avoids any form of physical and mental nonviolence towards all beings (Ācārāṅga Sūtra) However, ahiṃsā in classical Yoga is the initial step, among other steps, leading towards realization of one’s self.

In my talk I will juxtapose the interpretations of the concept of ahiṃsā of early Jainism and classical Yoga traditions. Moreover, I will inquire if the theoretical context in which the concept appears suggests that ahiṃsā was a cherished virtue in the ancient times in India.
From the turn of the common era to the 11th c., the edifice of philosophy in South Asia was shaped by constant inter-doctrinal debates, in such an essential way that the shared conceptions of what constitutes a sound argument to establish a valid philosophical thesis, had a central role to play in one’s broader conceptions of what there is and what should be done.

Now, this debating hall was dominated by conceptions found in the Hindu tradition stemming from the Nyāyasūtra; and in the tradition of the Buddhists Dignāga and Dharmakīrti. In such a situation, Jain philosophers had a two-fold resilient strategy: first, they adapted those dominating conceptions to make them fit a theory of knowledge more specifically Jain; second, they developed a revolutionary argumentative framework, within each philosophico-religious tradition which could be classified, with the Jain approach at the top of the edifice.

More precisely, Jains understand any judgement as being only partially true, because it is performed about an essentially complex object, that only the Jain non-one-sided ontology is able to take into consideration without any loss.

In this paper, I will present how the Jains were able to establish their theory of non-one-sidedness and their theory of viewpoints in defending it against the attacks coming from the Buddhist tradition from Dharmakīrti to Śāntarakṣita. I will in particular focus on the Siddhiviniścaya, Establishment of the Accomplished One, of Akalanka (720-780); and on the Nyāyakumudacandra, the Moon that shines on the lotus that is logic, of Prabhācandra (980-1065).

In turn, this new type of interfaith dialogical setting, developed in the Jain theory of viewpoints, will enable me to suggest a new, more inclusive type of philosophy of religion.

Nadezhda Beliakova

Institute of World History, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russian Federation

Abstract

The Council of the Evangelical Christian Baptists Churches movement among the Evangelical-Baptists, which was structurally shaped in the 1960’s was known as the “Initiative Movement”. The “separated” movement is usually examined in historiography as part of an anti-totalitarian discourse, as a resistance movement that opposed the Soviet regime, or in the discourse of religious awakening (see the works of Michael Bordeaux). The appeal for religious freedom made them international actors of the Cold War (for more on the subject, see the article by Beliakova, Dobson (2016)). In my report, I will analyze the daily collective practices of Evangelical Christians and see how they could be perceived and dubbed as political acts of opposition. I will consider the perception of their specific collective practices by both fellow believers and Soviet officials from various departments. Based on the texts of the petitions of the initiators themselves and their memoirs and oral history materials, I will raise the question of how much they themselves perceived their actions as a confession of faith or a political demonstration and how their activities were interpreted in the context of the Cold War.

781 Sacred Objects as Tools of Imperialism: Orthodox Christianity in Kazakhstan

Daniel Scarborough

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Abstract

In the late 19th century, some members of the hierarchy of Russia’s official Church advocated state support for Orthodox Christianity among settlers in Central Asia as a means of securing territory for the empire. Imperialists such as the priest, Ioann Vostorgov, argued that Orthodox farmers were more important than soldiers for the acquisition of territory. He proposed that holy relics be introduced into newly acquired territory in order to promote religious practice among local settlers. Yet, Church authorities were also concerned that popular Orthodoxy be protected from “schismatic” and “sectarian” practices. Thus, popular religion was both promoted and regulated. This paper discusses a pilgrimage by the bishop of Turkestan in 1910 to a holy spring near the modern city of Almaty, which had been locally venerated since the 1860s. It argues that this visit constituted an attempt by the hierarchy to coopt popular Orthodoxy for use as a tool of its own religious and political authority. The paper also examines the targeting of sacred sites by opponents of imperial authority in the 1916 uprising by the Muslim population and the 1917 Bolshevik revolution, which suggest that the identification of Orthodox sacred space with imperial authority was shared by the opponents of that authority.
Ukrainian Political Religion: Structural Analysis, Dimensions of Becoming and Development

Olha Prymak
Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Kyiv, Ukraine

Abstract

This paper attempts to substantiate the reality of the formation of a specific ideological complex and its acquisition of religious character in the form of political religion during the Euromaidan events of 2013-2014 and after them on the basis of structural-functional and phenomenological analysis. The investigation revealed elements of the Ukrainian political religion and their functional role in the whole complex, which gave grounds to consider them not purely situational organic social phenomena, but intertwined with following formed ideological system and particularly mythologized. Among such elements the author distinguishes: sacred symbols (elements of space (Institutskaya Street, some drawings on buildings, the Trade Unions building, St. Michael's Cathedral) and time (Maidan events as part of sacred history), sacred figures (Nebesna sotnya); "honouring memory" and actions as part of a political ceremony, where the events of 2013-2014 are an integral part of the consideration of Ukrainian statehood and independence at the vast majority of public official state events. Then the worldview principles of this religion are analysed, which include, in particular, the inadmissibility of ambiguous analysis or interpretation of the events of 2013-2014, that are in fact sacred in this system of views and actually correlate with the religious faith. The inquiry outlines the transcendent character of the original Maidan movement's ideas (a symbol of the "Revolution of Dignity") and the principle of coalescence in national, religious and political dimensions. The Author emphasizes that the Ukrainian political religion went beyond the platform of public ideas and became real political decisions and state regulation, which can be seen in specific legislation, in particular, on decommunization and the amnesty of the Maidan participants, which show support for state power elements and their participation in the relevant propaganda. In addition, the question arises of potential causes and motivation for the intensification of these processes in public space and their power implementation, with reflective understanding of the dynamics of socio-political change by scientific thought (the concept of "religious-political space"). The article concludes that the subsequent political religion was endowed with the inconsistency and low level of development, which has already caused its marginalization as a certain artificial ideological system and has gradually been demonstrating its populist nature as political technology. Finally, the article analyses the prospects for the development of Ukrainian political religion.

Materiality and Emptiness in the "Garden of Paradise": The Conversion of the Inochentist Spiritual Center into a Soviet Site of Proletarian Pilgrimage of 1920s

Dumitru Lisnic
University College Cork, Cork, Ireland

Abstract
The presentation explores the textual evocations of the materiality of the “Garden of Paradise”, an underground monastery and a utopian communal religious society from Odessa Oblast of Ukraine, produced before and after its violent closure by Soviet authorities in 1920. The study examines the intuitive side of the confrontation between believers and atheist actors over the role and place of religion in society, by looking at how at a local level people dealt with the absence of confiscated sacred objects, and identifies and analyses the effects of the agentive power of the missing material religion removed as part of the conversion of the monastery into a state collective farm. Removal, displacement, and replacement of religious and nonreligious objects and practices, each of them exercising its own agency, were part of a complex confrontation between religious actors and state officials, and were central to a creative process in which religious groups resisted or manifested resilience while atheist officials elaborated new antireligious policies. My research draws on newspaper articles written by sel’kory, or the rural correspondents of Soviet newspapers, who describe various aspects of everyday life, encountered people and events. My study is centered on the case of Inočentism, a vernacular version of Eastern Orthodox Christianity that emerged amongst Romanian-speaking peasants at the beginning of the 20th century in the northern part of today’s Odessa Oblast of Ukraine.

15 Traditional Instruments and New Challenges: The Squaring of the Circle? ONLINE
16:40 - 18:20 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021
Kerstin Wonisch, Roberta Medda

15 Traditional Instruments and New Challenges: The Squaring of the Circle?
Roberta Medda-Windischer, Kerstin Wonisch
Eurac Research - Institute for Minority Rights, Bolzano/Bozen, Italy

Abstract

Religious diversity and integration issues are undoubtedly amongst the most salient ones on today’s political agenda in particular not least due to the challenges posed by migration. How to reconcile the demands of cultural diversity and political unity, that is, how to create a political community that is both cohesive and stable, and satisfies the legitimate aspirations of minorities has been thus a subject of considerable debates (Marko, 2012; Joppke, 2012). Any effective mechanism for the governance of religious diversity is based on the guarantee and protection of the right to identity, the principle of equality and on the will of States to accept international as well as regional obligations, especially in the field of human and minority rights (Thornberry, 1991:392). For long-established religious communities there are at national and international level well-established standards and institutional frameworks that have been traditionally conceived and applied to these communities.

This panel seeks to critically analyze whether it could be beneficial and meaningful to compare and extend to religious migrant communities some components of the institutional and legal frameworks conceived by and/or for long-established religious groups. Focusing on legal and institutional frameworks related to the accommodation of religious diversity in Europe and beyond as well as reflecting on national experiences with legal and institutional frameworks and policies provided for long-established religious communities
such as the Sharia councils in Greece, Rabbinical courts in Israel or the Roman Rota in Italy, this panel ultimately aims to assess the potential and shortcomings of these frameworks in providing for a general model of religious diversity governance in integrated societies for majority and minority religious groups - long-established and more recent religious communities.

407 The Resilience of Religious Visions: A Discursive Approach to Change and Resistance to Change
16:40 - 18:20 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021
Bastiaan van Rijn

Visions have played a constant role in the religious history of Western Europe. From the diviners and mystery cults of ancient Greece to the contemporary interest in Near-death Experiences, visions have been a constant presence. They can be defined as (multi-)sensory experiences with religious content and religious consequences, judged by the receivers to have a trans-empirical source (based on Mohr 2006). Research into such phenomena has picked up over the last few decades, showing that far from being a perennial religious experience, the content and structure of visions have changed with the times (e.g., Zaleski 1987, Dinzelbacher 1998, Schlieter 2018). Yet despite this change, the appearance of consistency does point to the overall resilience of these interrelated phenomena.

This panel will investigate just how changes, or lack thereof, influenced the “traditions” of the Western European visions. Starting in the 16th century, and tracing the phenomena throughout the 20th century, questions will center on just what it means for this visionary ‘religious experience’ to survive the sands of time. As will be shown by the various contributions, what seems to be a resilient adaptation to newer times and religio-socio-political contexts, might in actuality be a bigger transformation than one would suspect.

From the 16th century onwards, Christian afterlife visions underwent a minor transformation as they reflected new religious views as well as political and social influences. In the late 18th century, these afterlife visions were appropriated by heterodox religious systems to scientifically prove their views. In the 20th century, visionary experiences had reached high diversification with paradoxical explanations; fueled by the turmoil of the interwar period, religious visions remained resistant in face of both secularization and academic disputes. These are but three of a variety of contexts that had an impact on visions in Western Europe during the last five centuries, on which will be drawn during the panel.

The case study of religious visions can teach the study of religion about the resilience and adaptability of experiences that many describe as religious, while keeping in mind the academic problems that come with using the terms “experience” (e.g., Sharf 2000) and “religious” (e.g., Taves 2009).

505 Signs of the Times: Changes in Early Modern Religious Visions as a Result of Cultural Transformations
Sarah Perez
University of Bern, Bern, Switzerland

Abstract

Since the Middle Ages, visions have been known not only as experiences but also as a popular literary genre. Often understood as steady and invariable phenomena, they indeed do reflect religious views as well as political and social influences and are thus accompanied by constant change. Therefore, visions can not only be understood as constants within their respective religious discourses, but they also show processes of transforming social, political and religious norms based on the changing elements. This paper intends to show the resilience of vision experiences, which take up the rising individualization of early modernity (1500-1800) and thus form a connection to contemporary near-death experiences. A detailed analysis of early modern case studies can show subtle distinctions in the interpretation of the vision narratives that represent a changing focus: the emphasis on the individual’s experience and its instructive character.

After a short summary of medieval visions, in which their main elements will be presented, as already done by many researchers (Dinzelbacher, Zaleski) a few early modern case studies will be analyzed. In a comparison, it will be shown that similar elements can be found between these two periods. Furthermore, using the example of ecstasy, the moment in which the soul leaves the body and which often marks the beginning of the vision, it will be shown that although at first glance this element is consistent in the Middle Ages as well as the early modern period, significant deviations can nevertheless be found. Recurring linguistic conspicuities indicate that the meaning of ecstasy is tied to the understanding of body and soul, and thus a difference can be found between the medieval and early modern interpretations. These subtle differences are then considered in the context of political, social, and philosophical transformations.

Although this paper will discuss the early modern vision, its leaning on medieval discourse, and at the same time its mutability, it can at the same time be assumed that modern near-death experiences similarly draw on numerous elements of medieval and early modern visions and reinterpret them in a modern context.

The slight variations within the specific example of ecstasy indicate that throughout time, religious visions have been a recurring first-order category of experience that had a lasting impact on people and reflected religious views and cultural circumstances. Therefore, the resilience of religious visions, which is partly based on the transformation of its interpretation, can be exemplified by the analysis of particular visions in medieval, early modern and modern times.

Bastiaan van Rijn
Universität Bern, Bern, Switzerland

Abstract

Even for religion, change is inevitable. At the end of the 18th century, a remarkable series of events made it possible for the hitherto purely religious vision (as a first-order concept) to become intertwined with science (as a first-order concept). Originally, animal magnetism seemed like a weird match for visions—as a healing
system with as goal the balancing of an internal fluid, it did not deal much with, what we may anachronistically call, altered states of consciousness. However, animal magnetizers discovered that they could induce a somnambulistic state in certain ill persons; these somnambulists would gain extraordinary abilities, such as increased eloquence, but also introspection, medical knowledge, and most importantly for this paper, clairvoyance. It didn’t take long for some magnetizers and somnambulists to turn their newfound visions to religious purposes.

This paper will trace how visions changed in character after this ‘democratization.’ At first, there was the promise of taming the religious vision in the name of science, seeing as a once-elusive phenomenon was now more or less inducible at will. Replication was furthermore used together with manageable this-worldly visions (e.g., of specified cities or households) that promised to be verifiable. This meant that aspects that once seemed to belong to the death-bed visions of earlier times got combined with motives from natural somnambulism and regional variants of phenomena resulting in extra-sensory perception (avant /a lettre). It seemed that in the animal magnetic discourse, then, the religious vision would be integrated into a whole from which it was no longer discernably unique.

But ultimately, it seems that animal magnetism—not the visions it adopted and used—was the party that changed. In the more spiritually inclined circles, somnambulists more and more reclaimed exactly those attributes that once belonged to the popular concept of the religious vision. Religious actors used the now replicable visions for their religious purposes, such as verifying Swedenborg’s teachings. This-worldly experiments were now the ones being pushed in service of a higher religio-scientific goal. In the end, such attempts partially paved the way for Spiritualism to take root in so many Western countries as forcefully as it did.

This short history of animal magnetism’s relationship to the religious vision can help to see how culturally constructed religious phenomena can weather outside pressures, and how they might be said to have a certain agency of their own. Furthermore, it sheds light on how such phenomena could fruitfully be incorporated into new idiosyncratic systems, thereby in the end changing their environment as much as being changed themselves. On the other hand, it also raises questions on when ‘resilience through adaptation’ turns a once well-recognized concept into something new; to come back to animal magnetism, should the adaptation described above be seen as still belonging to the discursive ‘tradition’ of the vision—or is such an assumption based too much on similarities rather than differences?

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225 Commodifying Happiness: Self-Improvement, Self-Healing, and Faith Branding in Contemporary Religious Discourses

16:40 - 18:20 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021

Jens U. Augspurger

Happiness can be described as a significant identity marker in discourses on postmodern spirituality. This panel compromises theoretical papers and case studies discussing the decontextualisation and fragmentation of complex belief systems for means of self-improvement.

In response to the demand for more subjectivity and self-reflexive experience in post-industrial societies, self-religions offer access to discourses that emphasise an individual’s fulfilment through a feeling of
happiness and well-being. The highly commodified regime of happiness-consumption presents itself as a means to achieving from within. Following the regime’s claim, virtually any individual can succeed as long as they properly observe the prescribed practices.

The papers offer critical approaches to the consumerism of happiness within contemporary religious discourses, such as the marketisation of religion and sanctity through religious enterprises. Special emphasis will be laid on discussing the association between experience of the Self, such as improvement and healing, and the branding of faith.

430 Rebranding Yoga Experiences: Clearance Sale in Yogaland?
Jens Augspurger
SOAS University of London, London, United Kingdom

Abstract

India has successfully branded itself as a provider of authentic yoga experiences. Yoga tourists regularly expect to find authenticity, which mediates their experience in India. With the growing popularity of yoga, this romantic idealisation, known as Yogaland, portrays India as a pristine and spiritual country. But many practitioners perceive India’s rapid economic growth and modernisation as evidence of growing Western influence. Yogaland’s offer of an ‘authentic’ spiritual path to happiness and yoga’s role as an antidote to the perceived ills of modernity is at stake, causing major renegotiation.

This paper explores the rebranding efforts and commodification of these yoga experiences in response to socio-economic change in India. It will consider the travel itineraries of yoga tourists in India while seeking to (re-)situate the experience-ability of Yogaland. The discussion particularly considers the imagination of Yogaland as a critique of consumerism, despite the fact that it arguably follows a distinct market rationale.

585 Mindfulness Practices in Japan: Attributions and Experiences in Neoliberal Settings
Silke R.G. Hasper
Heidelberg University, Heidelberg, Germany

Abstract

Mindfulness is a rapidly growing global industry that is seemingly irrevocably linked with the quest for happiness. For mindfulness practitioners in Japan, stress reduction and the goal to increase happiness is often the initial motivation to become engaged in the field of mindfulness. However, most mindfulness providers in Japan try to decontextualize practicing mindfulness from this individual quest for happiness.

This paper explores how attributions towards mindfulness shape the experience of practices that are labelled as mindfulness. Seeking to understand the reciprocal relationship between attributions and
experiences, the paper also asks how the experience of practicing mindfulness shapes those attributions. Therefore, the paper will also investigate where, how, and by whom this image is established and spread by combining discourse analysis with fieldwork carried out in the Greater Tokyo Area.

595 Encountering the Self: Ānandamayī Mā as the Embodiment of Bliss
Arkamitra Ghatak
Heidelberg Centre fpr Transcultural Studies(HCTS), Heidelberg, Germany. South Asia Institute(SAI), Heidelberg, Germany

Abstract

This paper takes as its case study, the relationship between Ānandamayī Mā(1896-1982), an Indian spiritual leader globally reputed as a saint and Melita Maschmann(1918-2010), a German journalist and author who met her in 1962 and stayed in her proximity till the former's death. Maschmann's memoir and other devotional accounts describe their encounter with Mā as “blissful.” Such accounts also underscore that Mā had reached the nondualist state of identity with Brahman (Supreme Self), which the Advaita(nondualist) school of Vedanta philosophy identifies as the ultimate stage of self-realization.

This article studies the spiritual appeal of the unlettered Ānandamayī Mā for foreign and West-educated devotees in terms of “authentic” encounters with the esoteric philosophy of Advaita Vedanta she offered to seekers by embodying in her person, non-duality as a “living truth.” Mā’s “blissful” personality unperturbed by worldly trappings transmuted Advaita from philosophical knowledge to the emotional state of “bliss,” making it available for consumption to self-realization aspirants who came in contact with her. This article draws attention to an alternative concept of happiness-as-Bliss and divine selfhood as overlapping layers of experience derived from Vedanta philosophy, therefore problematizing the treatment of happiness as a monolithic neoliberal construct.

626 Happiness, Mindfulness Apps and the Design of Asian-Inspired Narratives
Benedikt Julius Kastner
Hamburg University, Hamburg, Germany

Abstract

Mindfulness apps such as Imagine Clarity and The Mindfulness App have become popular throughout the globe. With millions of downloads, these apps constitute different monopolies of knowledge about mindfulness. Examples are guided meditations, breathing exercises, healing sessions, and the conception of happiness. Design, sound, narration, and content provide the consumer with a wide range of performative ascriptions of what mindfulness does imply and what it does not. Asian and Buddhist inspired narratives are often applied to help selling the product. But, how are these narratives related to happiness?
Neither mindfulness nor happiness can be understood as monolithic blocks. In this paper, I would like to explore the following questions: How are mindfulness and happiness presented in an app? Why are images of Buddhist monks, the Himalaya, isolated monasteries, and Buddhist scriptures being used to promote this connection? Can apps be understood as brands? What has “authenticity” to do with a product’s branding?

607 Rethinking Resilience and Religious Coping among Migrants ONLINE
16:40 - 18:20 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021
Maria Kanal, Eric Trinka

The coordinators of this panel propose a special session engaging resilient religion in the contexts of forced migration. The panel, which is composed of invited papers, will be a multi-aspect discussion that centers Dr. Kenneth Pargament’s work on religious coping. The goal is to ascertain the relevance and value of Pargament’s groundbreaking theoretical framework for studying religious coping in present migratory contexts. Dr. Pargament will join the panel as a respondent.

Presenters will address religious coping through a variety of approaches, including cultural psychology and the psychology of religion, religious studies, spatial studies, acculturation studies, literary studies, migrant mental health, and trauma studies. Both quantitative and qualitative studies will be presented. While the panel explores religious coping phenomena in present migrational contexts, discussion will also include methodological considerations for future applications of Pargament’s work to the field of migration studies.

Papers will be distributed among presenters ahead of the conference. The panel will include brief recaps of each paper and robust discussion of each other’s work. The panel will conclude with a 30-minute response from Dr. Pargament.

590 Psychosocial Determinants among Forced Migrants: A Comparative Analysis on the Importance of Religiosity and Meaning in Resilience and Coping
Önver Andreas Cetrez
Uppsala University, Uppsala, Sweden

Abstract

(Forced) migration and resettlement, often accompanied by horrendous experiences in country of origin, inhuman conditions during migratory journey and consumptive encounters with the host society, often lead to strains on one’s outlook on life and can have an impact on one’s health, both physically and mentally. Therefore, this paper aims at exemplifying in which way psychosocial determinants can affect a person’s resilience, outlook on life and integration into the host society.
The empirical material for this report is based on the Horizon2020 RESPOND-project (www.respondmigration.com). The focus of the project was largely on the migrants themselves, a micro-perspective, using interview material based on semi-structured interviews (n=474). The interviews were made during 2019-2020. The themes covered in these interviews were linked to migrants’ health concerns in the destination countries.

Analyses include a thematic overview of newcomers’ vulnerabilities based on gender and country of origin, as well as an analysis of their experiences of health. This further includes an analysis of their responses regarding adaptive and extreme responses, using the Social-ecological model of resilience (Ungar, 2012) and the Adaptation and Development after Persecution and Trauma Model (ADAPT) (Silove, 2013).

Results show that: religion and spirituality are prevalent coping mechanisms, with variations of positive and negative outcomes; gender is a significant marker of vulnerability; psychosocial determinants such as legal status, arrest and/or detention at the borders, exposure to violence, etc. have a negative impact on newcomers’ health. Based on the results, it is recommendable that program administrators and policymakers, when responding to resilience-based initiatives, should develop their initiatives in the social-ecological context of family and community resilience.

581 The Role of Religion and Culture in the Coping Process of Syrian Refugee Women in Turkey

Maria Kanal¹, Halina Grzymała-Moszczyńska²,¹

¹Jagiellonian University, Kraków, Poland. ²Jesuit University Ignatianum, Kraków, Poland

Abstract

Background and aim

Since the emergence of religious coping theory (Pargament, 1997) numerous studies proved that faith-based coping is an important and effective part of the coping repertoire for forced migrants at any stage of their journey and resettlement. With important developments in cultural coping theory such as the cultural transactional theory of stress and coping (Chun, Moos, & Cronkite, 2006) and collectivist coping (Kuo 2013, Fischer et al. 2010) researchers became better equipped for conducting culture-sensitive studies of specific manifestations of religious coping strategies. The main objective of this study is to identify how the intersection of religion, culture and gender influences the coping process of Syrian women in Turkey. Keeping in mind that coping is both a gender and culture-specific process the presented study is attempting to answer the question: how are the Islamic faith and Syrian culture affecting the coping process of refugee women?

Methods

21 semi-structured interviews with Syrian, Arabic-speaking women residing in Turkey were conducted in Hatay, Turkey. Research questions pertained to daily stressors and strategies used to cope with the experiences related to forced migration and resettlement in Turkey. Grounded theory was used as a methodological framework for this study.

Design
21 qualitative, in-depth interviews were conducted with Syrian refugee women living in the Hatay region of Turkey. Grounded theory was used as a methodological framework for this study.

**Results**

Findings are structured into two thematic categories: context-specific stressors and coping responses. Coping strategies are discussed in three thematic threads: faith-based coping (such as patience (sa'br) or thankfulness (ta'hlid), home-making coping and strategies focused on rebuilding identities.

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506 **Respondent**

*Kenneth Pargament*

*Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, USA*

**Abstract**

24-IV Resilient Religious Communities: Changing Identities, Needs, and Relations across Time and Space

16:40 - 18:20 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021

*Angela Bernardo*

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359 **Resilient as the God: Dionysos as a Model for His Worshippers in the Seventh Homeric Hymn**

*Jacopo Khalil*

*Sapienza - Università di Roma, Rome, Italy*

**Abstract**

As both myth and history amply show, the Dionysian cult could frequently be subject to the opposition and repression of some authority figure. One example of this can be found in the seventh Homeric Hymn to Dionysos, the most ancient version of the myth of the Tyrrhenian pirates known to us.
The story runs as follows: Dionysos appears, disguised as a young boy, to some Tyrrhenian pirates. They kidnap him and hold him for ransom. Only the helmsman understands that a divinity is concealed beneath the disguise. After the appearance of some miracles, all the pirates are eventually transformed into dolphins, while the captain is killed.

The myth has many similarities with other so-called resistance myths (like those of Lykourgos and Pentheus). But this is not exactly about resistance, if by “resistance” we mean the capability to resist change or motion. By overcoming his opponents, Dionysos does undergo a change and accepts motion; eventually, he reinstates his honours and also increases them, bringing new worshippers under his influence. Thus, the narrative of the seventh Homeric Hymn to Dionysos – I argue – is an exhibition of divine resilience, if by “resilience” we mean the capability, for instance, of a person or a society to go back to a previous state after undergoing a change. The coming back to the previous state does not annihilate what derives from the change: in fact, the experience of the process itself has now settled and will be a feature of the above-mentioned person or society.

In my paper, I will discuss the narrative choices of the hymn, arguing that in representing Dionysos’ resistance to the threat of his opponents, the myth invites the audience/worshippers (but first of all the helmsman) to take the god as a model to endure each threat which may come from a hostile environment. The god cannot be but an ideal model for the audience/worshippers, because – for example – they cannot untie bonds as he does, unless the gods performs the miracle for them (as in Euripides’ Bacchae). At the same time, in the hymn an actual identification is offered to the audience/worshippers: that with the helmsman, who is a human just like they are. The hymn shows the audience/worshippers that by acknowledging the presence as well as the power of Dionysos, and by suffering the potential opposition which may occur within the society, they may eventually expect to receive a reward, just like the helmsman does in the hymn.
and find themselves having to manage an impressive and therefore problematic growth of their “institution”. Internal conflicts, the relaxation of discipline, suspicion of the ecclesial hierarchy, attacks of raiders from "barbarian" tribes, the sensitive matter of positioning themselves in the doctrinal controversies ...: so many problems among which it is necessary for them to learn to navigate if they want to survive.

In this lecture, we propose to analyze the literary representations of the tensions which the first representatives of Christian monasticism had to face and solve as religious communities. The prism which will allow us to appreciate the implementation of adapted decision-making strategies is given by the concept of spiritual discernment: this faculty, perceived at the same time as a charisma and as a technique, undergoes a progressive and transformative conceptualization as the groups evolve into full-fledged communities. The evolving functions of discernment proposed by the texts show the importance of guiding and legitimizing the decision-making capacity of the monastic authorities and, as a result, reveal the problems of both the management of internal and external relations and the preservation of the identity of the group which these authorities must face.

The texts from which we will take the examples to be commented on come from hagiographic literature and ascetic epistolography. Elements of comparison will be mentioned with reference to the Manichean communities which, in Egypt, were contemporary to Christian monasticism and had to face some similar issues (not to mention the religious persecutions they had to endure).

17:40 - 18:00

495 Reinforcing Desert Father Identity: Copto-Arabic Apophthegmata Patrum Redactions as Tools for Resilience
Moa Airijoki
Department of Archaeology, History, Cultural Studies and Religion, University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway

Abstract

The Coptic community in Egypt experienced the late middle ages as a time of both flourishing Copto-Arabic literary activity and, at the same time, demographic decline and socio-political hardship. In this paper, I explore the notion of textual redaction as a strategy of resilience amidst disruptive changes. The Bustân al-ruhbân (Garden of the Monks) comprises apophthegmata from the very popular and, at the same time, variegated Christian monastic textual tradition known as the Apophthegmata Patrum. As scholars have shown, medieval Apophthegmata Patrum collections were in many cases instrumental both for monastic education as well as tools in reform movements. Accordingly, it is plausible to consider medieval redactions of these Apophthegmata Patrum collections as serving mainly didactic and rhetorical purposes. With this paper, I argue that the redactions of some of the late medieval Copto-Arabic apophthegmata served the purpose of consolidating medieval Coptic identity, through imprinting the legacy of the desert fathers into the communal perception of Coptic identity.
“My life in Christ”: Contemporary Coptic Orthodox Anchorite Monasticism and the Language of Resilience

Angela Bernardo
Sapienza University of Rome, Rome, Italy

Abstract

Monasticism is one of the cornerstones of the Coptic Orthodox Church and a key topic in its self-representation in the public sphere. There is no official discourse or narrative of the history of the Coptic Church that does not refer to monasticism as a shared “heritage” and as an integral part of the Coptic identity. According to the Coptic “tradition”, the former founder and father of monasticism was St. Anthony, who spent many years as an anchorite in the Egyptian desert. This paper focuses on the contemporary Coptic Orthodox anchorite experience of Fr. Lazarus el-Antony, an Australian-born hermit, who came to Egypt to live in the desert of the Red Sea by following the example of St. Antony after his mother’s death. Starting from the analysis of two documentaries on the life of Fr. Lazarus and a series of his video memories, this paper aims at examining 1. how Coptic anchorite monasticism can be considered a form of resilience both in Church history and in the life of one of its members, 2. how this monasticism, which is one of the cornerstones of an ethno-religious Church that traces its origins to antiquity, is shaped by the experience of a non-Egyptian born anchorite monk, and 3. how such monasticism, which is considered a shared “heritage” of a community, is portrayed in the discourses and narratives of an “outsider”, what is the symbolic weight of his experience and the language and words he uses for describing it.

408 Mothers and Untimely Deaths
16:40 - 18:20 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021

Giulia Pedrucci

According to S.S. Sered (1994), “Religions dominated by women” are religions in which women have the roles of nurturers, healers, primary childcare providers, and emotional supporters to mothers in case of children’s diseases and premature death. Religions dominated by women are usually polytheistic since they don’t recognize a unique male authority. Taking inspiration from Sered’s work, the aim of this panel is to investigate how religions can help a mother - not necessarily a biological mother - in going through the loss of a child from a comparative perspective. We will go beyond what we call “motherhood as an institution” (Rich 1976; that is, maternal paradigms constructed by religious - usually male - authorities for believers); to focus exclusively on “mothering as an experience” (we would like to recall that, as Ruddick 1989 argues, “to mother” is a gender-inclusive verb). To put it another way, the panel does not intend to investigate eschatological theoretical issues. What we are interested in is: in which ways can concretely religion comfort a desperate mother? Do other women (also mothers?) play a role in the case of premature deaths? In ancient religions, which signs do we have of the usage of religious means by a mother to overcome the pain and remain close to her lost offspring?

432 (Hidden) Presence of Maternity in Funerary Contexts of Urban and Non-urban Spaces in Central and Southern Italy
**Francesca Fulminante**\(^1,2\), **Giulia Pedrucci**\(^3,4\)

\(^1\)University of Bristol, Bristol, United Kingdom. \(^2\)University Roma Tre, Roma, Italy. \(^3\)Hamburg University, Hamburg, Germany. \(^4\)University of Verona, Verona, Italy

**Abstract**

Against the opinion of several scholars of the last century, we believe that the death of an infant was experienced with great pain even in the ancient world. The pain probably belonged to all members of the family, but it was certainly mostly that of the mother. Some recent research has shown that there is a wealth of evidence in myths, literary sources, archaeology (especially sanctuary female and children devotions offerings) that show how much ancient Roman and Italic populations hoped and prayed for safe and healthy birth and cared lovingly for infant and children especially in the early insecure and dangerous stages of life. In this paper we want to investigate grieve and loss especially in funerary evidence. We aim at investigating by what means mothers tried to account for their children death and by what means they tried to stay close to them after their death. Francesca Fulminante will explore funerary evidence in Central Italy during the Early Iron Age. Firstly, she will re-consider the well-known phenomenon of suggrundaria (infant burials among the houses), for which scholars have provided several explanations, but remains still not fully understood. Besides this she will search for expressions of maternal grieve or maternal presence in Latin and central Italian buried communities and try to offer an explanation either for positive or negative (hidden) evidence. Giulia Pedrucci will focus her research on the presence in the tombs of statuettes depicting women with infants. They are rather rare objects in tombs in central Italy, but they increase in Magna Greacia and Sicily. We find, for instance, figurines of the breastfeeding dea nutrix in Roman Gaul in children’s graves, but not in ancient Italy. She will try to investigate the reason for this absence and, on the other hand, why some of these objects are present in funerary contexts of the more southern territories (where, on the other hand, they are rather rare in sanctuaries, unlike what happens in central Italy).

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499 **Sacred Groves and Pregnant Women, Then and Now**

**Attilio Mastrocinque**

University of Verona, Verona, Italy

**Abstract**

In 1988 the concept of Hotspots of biodiversity took solid roots (Myers, N. (1988). “Threatened biotas: ‘Hot spots’ in tropical forests”. *Environmentalist*. 8: 187–208) and hitherto 36 large areas have been singled out all around the world. They are biogeographic regions with significant levels of biodiversity threatened by human habitation, and international organizations such as the Worldwide Fund for Nature support them. Humankind realized that men are threatening wildlife and that this will deeply damage human life itself. The idea of preserving and protecting plants and animals in their original environment is an ancient concern of human societies which was felt more in antiquity than in the Middle Ages and the modern period, after the dismissal of the ancient, pagan gods.

The sacred groves of the Italic and Greek world have been the theme of a conference in Naples, at the Centre Jean Bérard, one century after *The Golden Bough* of James Frazer and questions were raised then, especially because of the multifaceted nature of this phenomenon. The sacred groves were precise areas where plants and animals were protected, where violence was forbidden and thus federal meeting of different peoples could take place safely, where slaves became free and other extraordinary facts occurred.
In the Near East, similar precincts were created, and we know that sometimes the Jews succeeded in destroying them. In some areas of the world unaffected by the monotheisms sacred groves were created and are still existing. They are particularly numerous in India, where they are more appreciated now than in the past because naturalists realized that they contributed to preserving the ancient environment, with its fauna and flora, thanks to the pagan gods worshipped there. Similar phenomena are known also in Africa and in the Far East and their knowledge allows us to understand their functions, also in classical antiquity. They have been particularly important for peoples whose economy was based on agriculture and breeding of animals. Their number increased since fields were used for human purposes and human societies robbed land from wild plants and animals. A more precise distinction was made, consequently, between gods of wildlife and gods of civilization.

433 The Religious Emotion of Mothers’ Grief over Lost Child in Buddhism: A Case Study of the Buddhist Religious Narratives on Paṭācārā and Kisāgotamī
Vladislav Serikov
Goethe-University, Frankfurt am Main, Germany

Abstract

The aim of the contribution is to address the following questions, posed by the panel:

How does Buddhism concretely comfort a desperate mother?

Which role do other mothers play in this process?

How do Buddhist mothers overcome pain and remain close to their lost children?

My perspective combines the religious studies ethnographical (cultural tradition, material culture and the founding narrative’s analysis) and the philosophy of religious emotions perspectives.

My focus will be on the narrative analysis of the two stories from the Buddhist Pāli Canon (ca. 2. CE) about grieving mothers Paṭācārā and Kisāgotamī who both lost their children and subsequently found their ways to the Buddha, became Buddhist nuns and experienced the Awakening.

The stories are significant in the emic perspective. They serve as canonical narratives and ritual templates for the tradition of religious coping with mother’s loss of children from the beginnings of the Buddhist cultural tradition till now (Film “Patachara”, Nepal 2010, Film “Ape Kaalaye Patachara, Sri Lanka 2016). However, they are often overlooked in the ethnographical and religious studies etic perspective with few exceptions (Heim 2008, Schmidt-Leukel 2017).

The case study will show that the structure of the Paṭācārā and Kisāgotamī narrative provides consolation for other grieving Buddhist mothers through “living trough the narrative” and experiencing the Buddhist
religious emotion of compassion (karuṇa) and guidance of the meditation practice for the similarly concerned grieving mothers.

The case study will also show that the canonical narratives of the Paṭācārā and Kisāgotamī picture Buddhist mothers’ grief as religious emotion that helps the concerned mothers to find their way to the Buddhist path of the Awakening to cope with the tragic situation.

Literature:


553 Mothers’ Mourning on Children in Morocco: Reflections on Different Fieldworks
Saddik Darai¹, Jaouad Agudal², Halima Lakhiour³

¹Sidi Mohammed Ben Abdellah University, Fez, Morocco. ²Hassan 1er University, Settat, Morocco. ³Moulay Ismail University, Meknes, Morocco

Abstract

A vast literature exists about mourning as a strong social event. Since Marcel Mauss (1968), mourning is linked to emotions as they are experienced by individuals and the group. For this reason, it has psychological, social and religious implications, especially for mothers, when it is linked to the loss of children. Studies showed that mothers, who experienced the suicide of their adolescent children, suffered from depression (Brent & al. 1996). The literature mentions that even though mothers are the most affected by the loss of a child, they fail to assess how their other children are coping with the same event (Hogan & Balk 1990). The maladjustment caused by death generally, and by the loss of child specifically, has been well studied in recent years (Barrera & al. 2013).

Due to the impact of death on individual social ties and wellbeing, many sociological studies shed light on strategies used by parents to cope with the death of a child. Mothers were found to cry, read, and write on loss and grief, help others, and stay alone (Schwab 1990). For this reason, the quality of mothers’ relationships with doctors and medical staff (Camacho-Ávila 2019), family and friends (Nuss 2014) may be palliative in the bereavement process. The quality of mothers’ relationships and wellbeing related with the loss of a child may be aggravated by structural violence (Sered 2005) that reflects the inequality in the face of death (Glaser & Strauss 1974). Also, the community violence (Rafanell & Sawicka 2020) may impact mothers’ mourning experience negatively. In spite of that, some studies pay attention to the fact that an uncomfortable context does not mean that mothers cannot mourn their lost children (Einarsdottir 2004).
Religious activities and religious discourse as coping strategies, among others, are most used by mothers to bereave their lost children (Ohnuma, 2007). This strategy is not only most used, but it can be the most important (Ungureanu & Sandberg 2010). For its important weight, religious healing is becoming more and more controversial (Schoepflin 2003).

In Islam, child death and mothers grieving are still misunderstood by scholars and there is a scarce literature about the topic in a Western context (Hedayat, 2006). Such conclusions, according to our knowledge, could be said about the Moroccan context. Apart from some studies that focused on the question of child adoption even if it is banned by Islam (Fioole, 2015) and others that showed the presence of religious discourse about death during mourning (Lakhiour 2017), nothing is really done, in the Moroccan context, about mothers’ experience of grieving when they lose a child. Some recent studies had mentioned that, in the Moroccan context, the relation between mothers and their offspring tends to be characterized by secular values (Darai & Agudal 2020).

For those reasons, the present study aims to answers this question: How do Mothers experience and describe their mourning their children?

287-XI The Resilience of the Science of Religion(s) between Hermeneutics and History
16:40 - 18:20 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021
Giovanni Casadio

887 Il Museo più Veloce del Mondo - The Fastest Museum in the World
Carlo Laurenti
Accademia Belle Arti di Roma (ABAR), Roma, Italy

Abstract

Il Museo più veloce del mondo (the Fastest Museum in the World)

1998-2000. A series of four documentaries (20' minutes each) about contemporary China:

“Fretta di Futuro“ (Hurrying for Future)

“L’Arca vuota della modernità” (The empty arc of modernity)

“Il future è pronto“ (Future is ready)
906 Resilient Religion in Action: Faith-Based Organizations Promoting Social Development in China

Monica Romano

Independent researcher/development practitioner, Rome, Italy

Abstract

Starting from late 1990s/beginning of the 21st century, there has been a growing interest in and recognition of the role that religion can play in development and humanitarian efforts, on the part of the academic scholarship and international aid. In particular, research and empirical evidence have been highlighting the contribution that faith-based organizations (FBOs) can make in alleviating poverty, building community resilience, and promoting sustainable and inclusive development.

The complex nexus between religion and development has been increasingly emerging as an area of the study of religion. While development studies and practices tended to overlook religious aspects and dynamics, it has become evident that religion is an important element that needs to be factored in. Analytical research and ethnographic work have been increasingly carried out through a multidisciplinary approach involving social sciences, economics and politics.

The past marginalization of religion in development studies and cooperation was due inter alia to its perception as “anti-modern”, as a phenomenon in declining influence over contemporary societies, and something to be relegated to the private sphere. To add to that there are also the challenges and sensitivities of dealing with religious aspects in development work; some restrictive institutional environments posing limitations to religions; and the often-diverging values between FBOs and secular institutions.

Still, religion has remained resilient and has been gaining prominence in the development discourse, in the broader context of persisting poverty and hunger; a weak public sector often unable to provide basic services; and the failure of some poverty reduction programmes.

In most countries of the developing world, religious traditions have been experiencing a great vitality and even growth. Thanks to their closeness to grassroot communities, their ability to reach out to the poor and marginalized, and the people’s trust in their leadership, religious institutions and FBOs have shown a strong capacity to build social capital, bring about social empowerment and institutional change, strengthen resilience through mutual help and relief support, including in times of crisis and in fragile contexts. A number of studies are now available providing data on the prominent role that religious organizations have in development work.
Starting from the 1980s’ open door policy, China has been experiencing a growing revival in religious beliefs and practices, including at the academic and research levels. The persistence of religion over time and its recent re-emergence is a demonstration of its strong resilience in the face of many past and present challenges. The influence of Christianity on Chinese society and culture remains marginal. Furthermore, despite centuries of “accommodation” and “inculturation”, Christianity is often perceived as a “foreign religion” and in an ambivalent manner, due to its perceived past association with foreign imperialism.

Within this context as well as the Chinese specific institutional framework, the social work carried out by religious groups is an important entry point for religion, granting religions some space to develop and even to be recognized publicly.

There are several Catholic and Protestant institutions carrying out social development work in China. Their work has translated into an increased contribution of religion to the society, greater public visibility and recognition from the state, and better integration into the Chinese cultural and social system. The paper will present some of the Chinese FBOs, whose activities span from poverty alleviation, Chinese migrant workers, relief support in times of crisis, education and health. The information collected derives from a review of existing literature and field work carried out in mainland China.

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856 About Open Hermeneutics or André Scrima’s “éclatement de la parole ‘en moi’”

Daniela Dumbrava

Institute for the History of Religions, Bucharest, Romania

Abstract

The horizon of truth does not always correspond to an adequately expressible language, says the Italian epistemological philosopher Evandro Agazzi. Even more than that, the truths that are considered revelations and that circumscribe the content universes of religious studies, have found their complete framework to be explained. On the phenomenological level, language turns out to be pre-categorical, pre-linguistic, pre-logical, implied by the very institution of the linguistic construct, says Agazzi himself (1966). The question I propose to focus on is the following: if there are religious contents and/or phenomena that make an adequate characterisation through language almost impossible - i.e. the divine essence, the Supreme Being, divine energy, the afterlife, ecstasy, etc. - then there are nevertheless deductive tools that are needed to understand such phenomena. Does the horizon of experience on the phenomenological level really establish a universal denotation of terms and expressions of language? André Scrima, apart from being an orthodox monk with religious experiences that adhere to the Hesychast prayer, was specialised in logic and had a position at the Faculty of Philosophy at the same Chair in the 1940s. The language pertaining to the religious phenomenon is often analysed through a formal, logical-grammatical structure of language. My intervention in this workshop will be to explain what “the apophatic” represents from the point of view of an “open hermeneutics”, where the conceptual sense does not indicate the direction of a thing or even the objective sense of this thing, but rather an éclatement de la parole “en moi”, as Scrima states. The resilient point will be precisely the extreme proximity between reflexive and symbolic thought, from the point of view of a logical-conceptual system.
Abstract

After Schleiermacher and before Heidegger, Gadamer and Ricoeur, Wilhelm Dilthey is considered one of the main exponents of modern Hermeneutics, meant as the theory of interpretation in humanities. In an important essay, *Die Entstehung der Hermeneutik* (1900), Dilthey makes hermeneutics a connecting link between philosophy and history. Dilthey argues that the study of history can be reliable only if it is possible to raise the understanding of what is singular to the level of universal validity. The human sciences in fact require a more full-blooded theory of knowledge (*Theorie des Wissens*) than the natural sciences which rely exclusively on explanation. According to Dilthey, scientists analyze the object from outside, while humanists attempt via hermeneutical methods to view the object from inside. For the human sciences, things in the world are not merely cognitively apprehended as phenomenal objects but known as real and active for our life-concerns (*Lebensbezüge*). The formation of understanding takes place within a particular environment, human mind. In other words, the person who understands a phenomenon is the same as the one who created it. This results in a special intimacy of the process of understanding human phenomena. Dilthey associates the purpose of the human sciences not with the explanation of ‘outer’ experience, but, instead, with the understanding of ‘lived experience’ (*Erlebnis*). If applied correctly, hermeneutics reinforces the validity of the research conducted in the human sciences. In fact, Dilthey regarded interpretation as an art. At the same time Dilthey is considered, following the archetypal fathers Vico and Herder, the main proponent of Historicism in philosophy (*Der Aufbau der geschichtlichen Welt in den Geisteswissenschaften*, 1910). Dilthey argued that events in history are unique and cannot be repeated. To understand the event, one must leave one’s present context of understanding and view it from the historical context of that event. For Dilthey, experience is essentially interpretive and rationality is also socially and historically contextualized and conditioned. Based upon this insight, Dilthey promoted the line of historicism as a doctrine emphasizing the uniqueness, diversity, and differences in social historical phenomena, including religious phenomena.

The problem of the relation between history and religion is even at the center of the work of Ernst Troeltsch, who saw religion as a (relatively) autonomous cultural force and stressed the *sui generis* character of the religious dimension against the background of social, cultural, and historical conditioning. The advocacy of this autonomy derives its meaning from the resistance against all reductionisms, i.e. against all attempts to recognize the existence of religious phenomena, but ultimately to see them as the mere expression of other phenomena.

The strength of these theoretical positions is obfuscated in contemporary debates about the autonomy/heteronomy of religion and needs to be vindicated in the framework of a historical sociology of religion as that advocated by Jean Séguy and Carlo Prandi, who has recently introduced the notion of “ermeneutica necessaria”, pleading for an extreme attention to the ideology that, volens nolens, lies at the basis of all value assumptions and judgments.

Conference Dinner (to be booked in advance)
19:30 - 22:30 Thursday, 2nd September, 2021
In his attempt to outline a genealogy of the term “crisis”, Reinhart Koselleck noted that the original Greek usage of the term κρίσις (krisis) contained discipline-bound specific meanings especially in the spheres of law, medicine, and theology. It basically indicated a point in time in which a decision had to be made, imposing choices between stark alternatives such as right or wrong, salvation or damnation, life or death. From the seventeenth century onwards, the term became to be used as a metaphor and introduced into politics, economics, history, psychology. Nowadays, in the historian language, the term crisis is applied to history with reference to epochal changes, to historical moments in which decisions and choices demarcate and scan the sense of time. There is therefore no actual proper use of the term crisis: it always describes a historical moment which “separates”, leading groups, rulers, and states to “judge”, “choose”, and “decide”.

The history of the ancient Near East experienced a number of historical moments that the modern scholar can define as “critical moments”, that is to say crises. This includes not only an epochal crisis which involves a number of countries and kingdoms (e.g. the sixteenth century Dark Age), but also the passage from a ruler to another, the changes an elite can operate in the economic setting, the decentralization of power to which a weak ruler may lead, the disease or bad omen that affected a man or a dynasty. However, while nowadays crises spark thoroughgoing reappraisals of international financial norms, policy prescriptions and the adequacy of the existing financial architectures, in the ancient Near East, to draw proper political and economic conclusions from a “crisis” and take the right decision, it was necessary to rely on religion and religious practices.

Religion indeed played an important role not only in the formation of powers and ideologies, but also as a resource used by ruling classes in coping with the immediate, as well as longer-term, consequences of dramatic experiences and changes. Religion could thus manipulate decisions to create resilience in the group to face a change and, at the same time, could be manipulated ad hoc to make it resilient: new theologies could be adopted and religious innovations could be introduced in a given epoch or by a specific dynasty and even by individual kings (e.g. the Assyrian kings).

The ancient Near East is therefore an excellent field of research to scrutinize the relationship between crisis and religion. Some questions:

1. How do crises manifest in textual, visual, and archaeological evidence?
2. How were crises represented, narrated and remembered?
3. How did a group reconstituted itself after a crisis?
4. What kind of innovation or change could a crisis spark in and through religion?
5. Are there - in the textual and visual representation - any emotional descriptions of critical periods?

The workshop aims at investigating the representation and remembrance of crises and their aftermaths in textual, visual, and archaeological evidence, and invites contributions to focus on specific case-studies.

654 The Perception and Management of Crises at the Hittite Royal Court
Birgit Christiansen

LMU Munich, Munich, Germany

Abstract

From the Hittite archives a large number of texts came down to us that provide us with information about the Hittites’ perception of situations of crisis and their management. The spectrum of texts ranges from royal annals, state treaties, instructions for servants of the Hittite court and letters to divinatory texts, ritual texts, prayers and myths.

The paper will explore which situations and events the Hittites perceived as crises, how they tried to prevent imminent dangers, and how they dealt with existing crises and tried to identify their causes.

The most important source in this regard is the divinatory texts of the Hittites, which form the third largest group within the Hittite written record. A special feature of the divination practice of the Hittites is that it not only attempted to foresee future events, but generally served to cope with contingency experiences. Evils and crises of all kinds were attributed to the wrath of the gods, the cause of which was largely assumed to be human misconduct.

But who is the deity who is enraged? And what was the behaviour that caused the anger and its consequences? In what way can the deity be appeased? And how can future action be prevented from arousing divine resentment?

These were the pressing questions that had to be clarified by means of various divinatory procedures. Using selected texts, the paper will give an insight into the strategies and techniques used by the Hittites and the experts who conducted them.


Alvise Matessi¹, Nathan Lovejoy²

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Abstract

Throughout the Bronze Age, material and historical frameworks attest to a broad cultural interchange between Central Anatolia and the Eastern Mediterranean, superimposed on patterns of regional differentiation. After the demise of the Hittite Empire, around 1200 BCE, political unity and strong cultural interference left place to a more fragmented panorama, coupled with a conspicuous reduction in interregional contacts evidenced by archaeological, linguistic and historical sources. This paper aims to investigate how cultural interactions were reshaped during this transition. We will show that niches of cross-regional convergence existed in the 8th century BCE, as especially evidenced by the distribution of religious motifs in the Syro-Anatolian area, chiefly the Storm God of the Vineyard. The question remains, however, as whether these cultural analogies resulted from a shared background inherited from the Hittite Empire.
period or were the reflection of a cultural *koiné* determined by the local persistence of cross-cultural interactions within the microregion of the northeast Mediterranean.

This abstract is a result of the project PALaC, that has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement n° 757299).

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373 Kurunta's Rock Relief of Hatip and His Use of the Title MAGNUS.REX

Ana Arroyo

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**Abstract**

In the rock relief of Hatip, as well as in two seals, Kurunta used the title MAGNUS.REX. This title was reserved for Hittite kings only and was connected to the religious sphere by means of the interdependence between divine right and kingship. That is, gods sanctioned the right of a given king to occupy the throne. Kurunta was son of Muwatalli II, however, he was not king of Ḫatti but of Tarḫuntašša, a southwestern Anatolian region dependent on Ḫatti. Thus, how was it possible for Kurunta to use this title? This paper presents and discusses all the hypotheses that seek to explain the use of the title MAGNUS.REX by Kurunta and searches for a possible explanation.

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511 Religion and Politics in the Hittite Empire: Once More on the Apology of Hattusili III

Marta Pallavidini

Freie Universität Berlin, Berlin, Germany

**Abstract**

The so-called “Apology” of Hattusili III (CTH 81) represents one of the most studied and debated document among the Hittite written sources. The text has been defined in different ways: as an “apology”, since it justifies the actions that lead Hattusili to contest the power in Ḫatti; as an autobiography, since a significant part of the text describes events of Hattusili’s life; as a piece of political propaganda, since it conveys specific messages that aim to support Hattusili’s actions and decisions; as a decree, since the last part of the document contains the appointment of Tuthaliya, son of Hattusili, as priest of the goddess Ishtar. The text is, for sure, all of these things but also, in my opinion, something more and, even though it has been analysed by several different points of view, the focus has been in particular on its political implications. Also the focus on the religious elements, for instance on the relationship between Hattusili and Ishtar, has been linked to the apologetic purpose of CTH 81 and therefore, once more, with its political and historical meaning. In my opinion, not all the possibilities of interpreting the religious elements of the document have been considered. In fact - and this is the aim of this paper - the religious aspects can be interpreted also as a medium to dealing with a crisis that culminated in the dethronization of Urhi-Tessup, the son of Muwatalli. Yet, it is possible, in my opinion, to track the beginning of this crisis before this event, in particular during the reign of Muwatalli. By doing this, the religious elements present in CTH 81 can be
connected with a change in the royal ideology (and perhaps also in the religious sphere) that began with Muwatalli and that Hattusili was able to exploit for his own purposes and to impose as a new direction to overcome the crisis.

### 953 Imperial Cult

**09:00 - 10:40 Friday, 3rd September, 2021**

Jörg Rüpke

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**953 Imperial Cult**  
**Domitilla Campanile, Filippo Battistoni, Andrea Raggi, Cesare Letta**  
*Università di Pisa, Pisa, Italy*  

**Abstract**

A roundtable presenting and discussing the recent book by Cesare Letta, *Tra divino e Umano* (Sarzana 2021)

### 394 (I) Spatializing Religious Competition in Late Antiquity

**09:00 - 10:40 Friday, 3rd September, 2021**

Aude Busine, Francesco Massa

*Late Antiquity is a privileged observatory for studying the dynamics of resilience and acceleration which are at the heart of the EASR 2021 conference. The political, social, and economic transformations of the Roman Empire between the fourth and seventh century bred fertile ground for the production, development, and experimentation of new religious concepts, the importance of which was critical in shaping our way of thinking and talking about religion.*

*Using the notion of “competition”, this panel aims to analyze spaces and places where the various religious groups of the Roman Empire lived and interacted— from cities and countryside to centres and suburbs. Some key questions will be:*

**How did the spatial dimension characterize and modify religious interactions?**

**Did the presence and distribution of religious groups have an impact on competitive dynamics?**

**How was the space of the ancient cities occupied by new divine entities that transformed local identity cultural spaces?**
Based on a series of case studies, this workshop session will examine different aspects of late antique religious competition in the multicultural, multireligious, and globalized Roman Empire, such as:

The locations where religious interactions were inscribed;

The key social actors who acted in these contexts (individuals, groups, political and religious authorities);

The balance of power in late antique societies.

By studying the spatialization, the panelists will assess how the specificities of different local contexts affected the religious competition of the period. Through this analysis, the panel will also shed light on the processes that pushed the various groups into strengthening-and rethinking-their religious identities.

485 Beth Shean-Scythopolis, a City of Blurred Identities and Alterities?

Maureen Attali

University of Fribourg, Fribourg, Switzerland

Abstract

Formerly part of the Decapolis, the “Greek city” of Nysa-Scythopolis, also known under its Semitic name Beth-Shean, was prosperous during Late Antiquity; c. 400, it became the metropolis of the newly created province of Palaestina Secunda. From the 4th until the 6th century, “pagans”, Jews, Christians, and Samaritans inhabited the city, dwelling either in its urban centre or in its surroundings (Heyden, 2010). There is no record of major intercommunity violence in the city during the 4th and 5th centuries, except for one episode of dubious authenticity (Chronicon Paschale a. 362). Interestingly, its inhabitants were all regarded as deviant or unfit by those who deemed themselves religious authorities at some point. The Jews of Beth-Shean are dismissed as uncultured and not fit for liturgical reading in the Jerusalem Talmud (Berakhot 2,4). According to a 9th century chronicle (Chronicle II, 5,5-10 ed. Cohen, 1981), the Samaritan reformer Baba Rabbah demoted all local Samaritan priests. The bishop Epiphanius of Salamis, who visited the city during the late 350’s, complained that all Christians in the city were Arians, following their bishop Patrophilus (Panarion, 30,5,5f). It seems that, in various circles, being from Beth-Shean was an ill-repute; indeed, in several Jewish retellings of the Biblical Book of Esther, Haman, the enemy of the Jews, was said to be from either Beth Shean or the nearby village of Kfar Kemos (piyyut n°34 in Yahalom & Sokoloff, 1999; Babylonian Talmud, Megillah 16a; Midrash Rabbah on Leviticus 28.6). The city is also associated with religious fluidity and conversion, as reported by Epiphanius and as evidenced epigraphic finds (Foerster & Tsafrir, 1997).

A similar bias seems to affect the writings of modern scholars. The synagogue found at Tel Istaba, located 300 meters north of the city, has a room with an inscription written in Samaritan characters, but its excavator argued for a building shared by Jews and Samaritans alike (Zori, 1967). Within the urban centre, a building known as the “house of Leontis”, which include many architectural features and typical decor of Late Antique Jewish synagogues, is often referred to as “Judaeo-Christian” (Safrai, 2003). However, this phrase is problematic, as we do not have any indication of anyone calling him or herself a “Judaeo-Christian” during Antiquity (Broadhead, 2010). The unwillingness to consider the building a Jewish synagogue seems to derive from the fact that it was decorated with an elaborate mythological mosaic panel; however, mythological iconography has been found in many other synagogues whose Jewishness has never been disputed. While many studies have convincingly shown that religious identities were far from clear-cut in
Late Antiquity (Belayche & Mimouni 2009) and that the definition of Judaism and Christianity devised by religious authorities did not always concur with the views of sincere believers (Yoshiko Reed, 2003 and 2018), in some case, it seems that cohabitation and Hellenism have been wrongfully interpreted as religious transgressions.

468 Seleukeia Heights. Altitude as a Place of Religious Competition between Saint Thekla and Athena in Seleukeia on the Kalykadnos (Rough Cilicia)

Nuna Terri
Université Libre de Bruxelles, Brussels, Belgium

Abstract

The flourishing cult of Saint Thekla in Seleukeia on the Kalykadnos (actual Silifke), a city on the south coast of Asia Minor, developed at least from the third century onwards, attracting pilgrims from afar - including Gregory of Nazianzus and Egeria. Thekla, the young virgin from Iconium whose story was told in the Acts of Paul and Thecla, is presumed to have finished her life in this strongly Hellenised city of Cilicia Trachea. Even though the western meridional part of Asia Minor had seen evangelisation missions early on at the beginning of the spread of Christianity - e.g. Saint Paul of Tarsus, from neighbouring Cilicia Pedias - the successful implantation of Thekla's cult in Seleukeia was not a foregone conclusion. A Seleucid foundation from c. 294 BC, the city had an appreciable Graeco-Roman pantheon, whose divinities were still worshipped by some part of the population in the fifth century. The Christian cult of the Saint consequently had to compete with pre-existing pagan ones to establish its predominance in the religious landscape.

This is well illustrated in the mid-fifth century Life and Miracles of Saint Thekla, a bipartite work of a devotee of the saint dating from the mid-fifth century. The Miracles show how the cult of Athena was one of the greatest competitors to Thekla’s cult in Seleukeia and its surroundings. The worship of the goddess in Cilicia Trachea is characterised by her sanctuaries in the mountains around the city while in Seleukeia itself, she was probably worshipped on the acropolis. It is therefore noteworthy that Thekla had her own shrine in Meriamlik (also known as Ayatekla), a site located two kilometres south of the city on a hill, with a view towards Seleukeia and its acropolis. Seleukeia was thus divided between two places of worship on high ground, a Christian and a pagan one, which has already been partially discussed by Troels Myrup Kristensen (“Excavating Meriamlik: Sacred space and economy in late antique pilgrimage”, 2016). This opposition and the significance of the occupation of the elevated areas are very much present through the Miracles of Thekla and most probably reflects an important phase in the process of transformation of the religious landscape of Seleukeia and its surroundings. The study of this occupation of the heights by the two divine women sheds new light on the competition between their cults and the development of the implantation of Saint Thekla’s cult.

624 The Military Necropoles of Aquileia and Concordia and the Search for Religious Common Ground between Pagans and Christians in Late Antiquity
Abstract

The suburban and peri-urban areas of late antique cities were places of real competition between pagans and Christians. Christians often established their first places of worship out of the city centres, where pagans used to go for municipal processions. Such processions were fundamental for what has been defined as municipal civilization since they symbolically defined the boundaries of provincial cities’ territories. The rare occasions of conflict, such as the ones that occurred in Val di Non in 397/398 (Venitia and Histria) or in Calama (Numidia) in 408, took place during such festivities. It was also in these places, particularly in the funerary areas where pagans and Christians often found themselves next to each other, that a common ground was negotiated, sometimes even displaying a religious reserve or even a desire to build some kind of agreement that was neutral from a religious point of view. The necropoles of Aquileia and Concordia in Venitla and Histria, provide a privileged observatory where a real strategy of resilience took shape among the deceased and their relatives who came to pay tribute to them.

ISC 28 Late Antiquity (Individual Short Communications)
09:00 - 10:40 Friday, 3rd September, 2021
Claudio Moreschini

214 Group Identity and Social Resilience in Early Christianity. The Case of Tertullian’s De Spectaculis 28-30
Stefan Metz
Eberhard Karls Universität, Tübingen, Germany

Abstract

What is Christian, what is Roman? How ought a Christian live in a mostly non-Christian society? These questions are addressed in Tertullian’s earliest writings. This problem is most prominently and exemplary examined for the Roman games (spectacula) in his Work De spectaculis (ca. 196 a.d.). In terms of social resilience, Tertullian addresses a core question: What is the nucleus of Christianity that needs to be preserved so that the social and religious identity of Christians in the mostly non-Christian context of Roman society and culture remains undisturbed. At first glance, Tertullian seems to be clear that this preservation of (what he deems) a Christian identity can only be achieved by strict dissociation from everything Roman. On closer examination however, in spect. 28-29, Tertullian opens the possibility for a transformation of Christian identity by incorporating elements of Roman culture thus developing a form of “Roman Christianity”. This is achieved through his concept of spectacula christianorum - a rebranding of Christian acts, concepts and media promoted as “holy” alternatives to the Roman games. The examination of spect. 28-29 can shed new light on Tertullian’s conceptualisation of Christian identity as well as on the relationship between social transformation of group identity and social resilience.
860 Pagans, Christians and an Early Clash of Cultures in Late Antiquity?
Thomas Jürgasch
Eberhard Karls Universität, Tübingen, Germany

Abstract

Very often, reflections on cultural encounters and transformations start from a rather peculiar concept of 'culture'. In this context culture is regarded as a homogeneous, coherent and self-contained entity, and as such it is often described using the metaphor of a 'container'. Apparently, such an understanding of culture as a container very often forms the basis for the considerations of the encounters and relations between Christians and so called "pagans" in late antiquity. Thus, such encounters, and especially the conflicting ones in the first here centuries C.E., are often depicted as early forms of a 'clash of cultures', in the context of which a distinctive and coherent Christian culture gets into conflict with its pagan counterpart.

As I will argue, such a view of the late ancient relations between Christians and pagans, based on the aforementioned container metaphor of culture, is ignoring important aspects and backgrounds and promoting a one-sided and truncated perspective on these encounters. Referring to more recent conceptions of 'culture' that stress its network character and the reciprocity relations of the actors involved, I would like to develop a more differentiated view on the relations between Christians and pagans and the processes of cultural transformation taking place in this context, especially during the so-called “Constantinian shift”.

317 Etymological Notes on Ascodrobi, Ascodrugitae, Τασκοδρούγιται, Artotyrites: Galatian Heresies or Something Else?
Andrea Nuti
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Abstract

This paper regards some heretical groups apparently attested in Late Antiquity Galatia, such as Ascodrugitae/Τασκοδρούγιται, Artotyrites etc., which are mentioned, e.g., by Hieronymus (Comm. in ep. ad Gal. 2.3 praef.; see alsoEpiphanius, Panarion proem. I 4-5, 48.14, 49.1-2; Philastrius haer. 74-76; et alii: Augustine, Theodoret etc.).

Information about these heresies is scarce and confused and what we actually seem to possess is barely their names (see, e.g., Raspanti 2010; Hort 1877). My paper will therefore focus on an etymological analysis of these forms as onomastic dithematic compounds, which have a long history within Indo-European
languages. The analysis will include a discussion of the linguistic strata these names may plausibly be ascribed to (i.e., Greek, Galatian/Celtic, Anatolian etc.; see Katz 1998; 2002) and (possibly Galatian) lexical items such as, e.g., δρούγγος (mentioned by Epiph. 48.14: cf. Late Latin drungus ‘globus hostium’, Old Irish drong ‘band’ etc.; see LEIA D-201; Delamarre 2003 s.v.; Rance 2004). We will thus consider the case for keeping apart historical aspects - i.e., concerning the rather uncertain and heterogeneous religious features of these alleged heresies (see, e.g., Trevett 1995; Pilch 2002), as well as their very existence - and the linguistic datum. I will finally advance the hypothesis that at the origin of these names is a long-time standing tradition of Namengebung related to social groupings of various kind and, for us, of ill-defined status, not necessarily religious in nature.

Bibliography (selected)


44 “Inter pressuras atque angustias”. Manichei, donatisti e circumcelliones tra ariani e cattolici nell’Africa vandala

Fabiana Rosaci

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Abstract

Obiettivo del contributo è indagare se il credo religioso di manichei, donatisti e circumcelliones abbia costituito un fattore di resistenza rispetto agli sconvolgimenti politici e militari che hanno caratterizzato la storia dell’Africa nel V secolo d.C. Assodata, soprattutto attraverso la testimonianza di Agostino, la Stimmung della Chiesa africana agli inizi del secolo, oggetto d’esame saranno i decenni successivi alla conquista vandalica, al presunto iniziale bouleversement nella proprietà terriera operato da Genserico, all’esilio, alla deportazione della nobiltà, all’integralismo religioso e alla conseguente violenta persecuzione dei cattolici. Per tutta la loro dominazione, i sovrani vandalici professarono, più o meno tenacemente, il loro credo ariano e, talvolta, nelle loro azioni apparvero privi di qualunque misericordia humanitatis nei confronti di qualsiasi fede alternativa alla loro. È noto come, di contro, i cattolici, preoccupati soprattutto del nuovo pericolo rappresentato dall’arianesimo, non diedero molto risalto alla reale situazione di manichei, donatisti e circumcelliones. Tuttavia, oltre alle notizie circa la loro persecuzione, desumibili essenzialmente da Vittore di Vita, sia Leone Magno che i sermones attribuiti a Quodvultudeus permettono di tracciare uno spaccato sulle condizioni di queste “minoranze” religiose. Bisogna interrogarsi se costoro, che furono perseguitati dagli ariani con le medesime modalità riservate ai cattolici, abbiano potuto costituire una sorta di “focolaio” di resistenza, sia ideologica che fattiva, tra i colpi della disputa tra ariani e cattolici.

938 Tra λόγος e Brahman: Le Filosofie e i Filosofi dell’India nei Testi Cristiani dell’Epoca Imperale

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Abstract

La sapienza indiana affascinò gli autori greci e latini dall’età ellenistica, età in cui, complici la spedizione macedone e la nascita dei regni ellenistici orientali, furono prodotte in gran numero testimonianze sui brahmani e su figure affini. L’intervento mirerà a commentare alcuni estratti di opere di autori cristiani che, in età imperiale, si dedicarono ad approfondire le dottrine dei cosiddetti ‘gimnosofisti’. La Refutatio omnium haeresium dello Pseudo-Ippolito è il testo classico più eloquente sulla teologia brahmanica: in I, 24, 1 si attribuisce ai sapienti indiani la venerazione di un dio definito come λόγος e φως. Sulla scia di alcuni studi già pubblicati a riguardo, si discuterà la possibilità di un legame fra queste dichiarazioni e i testi centrali della filosofia indiana, le Upaniṣad più antiche, che all’epoca dei fatti, secondo alcuni studiosi contemporanei, potevano essere giunte fino all’Occidente. Anche in altri testi cristiani si rileva un alto interesse per l’India: in Clemente Alessandrino, in Sant’Agostino, in altre opere tarde e di paternità dibattuta (De gentibus Indiæ et de Bragmanibus forse di Palladio di Elenopoli e l’anonima Collatio Alexandri et Dindim) emerge quanto il giudizio cristiano sugli austeri filosofi d’India fosse ambivalente. Se, da un lato, se ne ammiravano la continenza e le virtù contemplative, dall’altro, spesso, queste figure venivano paragonate ai seguaci delle eresie rinuncianti più intransigenti, contro le quali la Chiesa aprì una battaglia affatto risoltasi alle soglie del Medioevo.
This paper seeks to explore how the identity changes of the peculiar region named Partium, Romania exhibited a unique form of resilience of various ethnic groups. Owing to the harsh realities of two World Wars and the constant changes of political borders people developed various survival mechanisms that resulted in religious, cultural and language changes for Germans, Slovaks, Ruthenians, Romanians, Hungarians, and Jewish people.

Regional and micro-historical, social and religious investigations will throw light on how people settled there by landlords till the late 19th century, who were neither ethnic Romanian nor Hungarian like Ruthenians, Jews, Polish, Slovaks, changed their identities expressed foremost through their affiliation to a particular Christian denomination like Greek Catholic, Orthodox, Reformed, Lutheran or Roman Catholic faith shows a fluidity in a community during the course of the twentieth century. The papers try to unveil the motivations (existential - economic, social, cultural and political) why they or their parents adhered to one form of religious identity and then underwent identity changes in a very short period of time. They will also address the issue of how the appearance of Neo-Protestant denominations also made the already diverse picture even more colourful. It will be argued that the establishment of Baptist or Adventist communities in Hungarian or Romanian villages or cities could be interpreted through social and economic lines which was another form of resilience to the changing political and social landscape in the Partium region.

945 Survival of Pentecostal, Adventist, Lutheran, Unitarian and Jewish Religious Communities in Bihor County, Romania and in the Sea of Romanian Orthodoxy

Árpád Kulcsár

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Abstract

The paper debates the situation of Pentecostal, Adventist, Lutheran, Unitarian and Jewish Religious Communities. According to statistics some of them show an enormous growth in membership, some of them have almost disappeared, but the presence of all are equally valuable for the whole community of Bihor County, Partium Region.
Identity Changes. Reflections about Changes of Romanian and Hungarian Christian Denominations in Bihor County during the 20th Century. The Case of Silindru

Ferenc Szilágyi
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Abstract

In the 20th century, there were significant changes in the denominational composition of Bihor County. The most important factors of this were the two world wars, the several border changes, the Holocaust, the atheism of the Communist decades and the abolition of the Greek Catholic Church. In this century, a number of new denominations appeared: the neo-Protestants, now considered "well-known" religions, and the most recent small communities, sects.

The Greek Catholic Church was abolished by a resolution in 1948, and its assets were received by the Orthodox community. The reorganization of church life took place in Romania in 1990. The previous religious unbelief was replaced by a euphoric state. Each Church reorganized its internal administration, churches, church centres, schools and universities were built. Parallel to this, several new small groups appeared, which received their followers from the historical Churches.

My research follows the process in which a linguistically and religiously homogeneous village, Silindru, transforms itself into an ethnically and religiously heterogeneous municipality.

ISC 29 Resilient Spirituality (Individual Short Communications)

09:00 - 10:40 Friday, 3rd September, 2021

438 Spirituality that Builds Resilience. The Challenge of Transformation in Ignatian Meditations: The Contemporary Approaches

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Abstract

The paper aims to present two alternative approaches to Ignatian meditations rooted in different understandings of their relationship with the Christian religion as well as spirituality as such. The first is exemplified by the online meditation platform called “Pogłębiana”, created by SJ Daniel Wojda several years ago and dynamically developing in Poland ever since. The second, by handbooks and guidebooks wherein Ignatian meditations constitute the main inspiration for the advice offered on how to lead a good life, avoid crises and achieve success. The works by e.g. Chris Lowney or Margaret Silf fall into the latter category. In both cases, one ought to analyze the conditions affecting Christian meditations and the
“Christian adaptation of mindfulness”, with simultaneous due consideration for neurophysiological data accounting for the quantitative and qualitative measurements of the actual effects of meditation practices in their respective varieties (Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam), as well as the MBSR factor (Mindfulness-based stress reduction) (Radoń 2017, 2020).

The Pogłębiarka platform (from Polish “pogłębiać” - to deepen, presumably one’s faith and contact with God) allows its users (possibly as the only such service in the world) to engage in so-called facilitated (by SJ Daniel Wojda) meditation provided in real-time (streaming, live transmissions), simultaneously via several communication channels (Youtube, Facebook, pogłębiarka.pl). Pogłębiarka is also referred to as #MobilnaWspólnota [Mobile Community]. Its forum and other communication channels allow members to get in touch also in the real world. The example of Pogłębiarka shows that religion can initiate and sustain certain particular forms of spirituality, while at the same time helping one to develop resilience to the changing cultural and social reality by providing communal immunity (Jesuit orders, Pogłębiarka community, communities meditating with the Holy Scriptures) as well as individual resistance within the scope of one’s own life. The activity of Pogłębiarka shows “how spirituality contributes to resilient forms of life-way-navigation in a world of culture and tradition”.

On the other hand, the works by Chris Lowney (e.g. Heroic Living; Heroic Leadership), although rooted in the tradition of Ignatian meditations, also embrace other traditions. Lowney (2009) emphasizes: “I’m not asking Muslim, Jewish, secular humanist, and others […] to embrace my beliefs. […] This book’s ideals are rooted in an understanding of human purpose that many great spiritual and humanistic traditions share”. Also Margaret Silf (Inner Compass, Wise Choices) remains open to ecumenical dialogue.

Spiritual Exercises are considered to be a classic work on Christian spirituality (cf. e.g. Rocha e Melo, Balter 1995; Lambert 2000; Fleming 2008 Nadolski 2012; https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/), and can as such be treated as a methodological contribution to the development of resilience in facing the turbulent everyday reality and crises inherent in the contemporary world, regardless of their contextual or extra-contextual conceptualization that tends to lean towards variously understood and defined inter-religious relations. As follows from Stanislaw Radoń’s research (2017, 2020), meditations – be it rooted in the Christian tradition or elsewhere - facilitate an internal transformation, and consequently modify worldviews and improve resilience - in every sense of the word.

483 Learning and Transfer in Religious and Spiritual Practices
Terhi Utriainen, Maija Butters
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Abstract

Life-long learning is an essential contemporary value and, at the same time, religions involve many kinds of learning. It is therefore important to ask how these two seemingly distinct cultural phenomena are related and entangled today. Learning in religions takes place in both inter- and intra-generational transmission, both within religious traditions and between them, as well as between religious and secular spheres of culture and life. The LeNeRe project (Academy of Finland no. 325148) asks what kind of learning takes place when adult people voluntarily embark on what is for them new religious or spiritual practice. What do they want to learn and how do they learn? Furthermore, how do they transfer their learning in other spheres
of life and assess this transfer and its conditions? We will present the framing concepts and most important research that relates to our research and discuss some of its ongoing case studies and preliminary findings. Our project contributes to discussions on religious change and the exchange between religious and secular culture.

517 Trends in the Analysis of the Phenomenon of Post-Secularity in Modern Religious Studies

Elena Kuzmina

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Abstract

This article is devoted to the classification of modern approaches to the interpretation of the post-secularity phenomenon. Post-secular as a religious, socio-historical and cultural phenomenon is a diverse and multi-layered space for research, and the problem of the post-secular contains a sufficient reserve for the analysis of the religious foundations of the modern information society. Since the term «post-secularity» is already semantically related to the secularization process, our division of a set of presented theories is based on the relationship specific between these two phenomena.

The author has formed three interpretation classes of the phenomenon of post-secularity.

The first includes ideas about post-secularity as a critique of secularization theory. The author analyzes the opinions that secularization has never reflected the true state of religious change. There are accusations that secularization is nothing more than an ideological myth created by «rational intellectuals». Or it is suggested that the theory of secularization is increasingly disconnected from real events, religion does not disappear, and there is a discrepancy between the theory that declares the decline of religiosity and empirical data. Another argument is that secularism has created such problems in society that only new, post-secular, religious responses can be considered appropriate. Secularization has led to a decline in religious authority, which has led to a reorientation towards a worldly life «here and now», but at the same time, modernity has created new risks and fears that regenerate religiosity. Therefore, post-secularity can become the most important stage, creating favourable conditions for the emergence and development of new forms of religiosity.

The second one is based on a dialectical synthesis of religious and secular views of the world. Here we have included some researchers who, instead of considering post-secularism only as correcting the errors of secularism, preferred to see it as a kind of progressive development based on the achievements of both religious and secular eras. In modern reality, the post-secular destroys the boundaries of public and private, secular and religious, which leads to the participation of religion in politics, public debate, and also allows for the resacralization of certain areas of life.

The third one is devoted to a skeptical view of the qualities of religious consciousness and faith practice in the post-secular space. The democratization of religion turns it into an expressive system of beliefs and practices that can be sold as a commodity and as a service in religious markets. This leads to the spread of a new spirituality that exists outside the traditional churches and is no longer a condition for resolving meaningful problems in everyday life. What is important is that the consequence of all these processes is the ever increasing division between “religion” and “spirituality”.
As a result of the analysis, the author came to the conclusion that the problem of the post-secular paradoxically emphasizes the undisclosed potential of the secular in understanding the religious revival, secularization can represent the positive way in which society responds to the call of its own religious tradition.

707 Resilient Hesychasm? Laical Hesychasts in Modern Russia and What Do They Practise

Daria Chentsova

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Abstract

The tradition of hesychasm - in its early stages the monastic tradition within Orthodox Christianity, which originated from the monasticism of Syria, Egypt, and Asia Minor and then disseminated itself in Greece, the Balkans, and Slavic countries, including Russia, - nowadays still attracts its modern followers, including not only monks, but laypeople as well.

Monastic Hesychasm is not a secret teaching, but it is almost closed, and has its restrictions, and that may be the precise reason why Hesychasm as a tradition attracts laypeople who believe that this is where the root of true spirituality lies.

Modern lay followers of the tradition of Hesychasm in Russia differ by their belonging to several major groups: - practising Orthodox Christians (who frequently attend church services and participate in pilgrimage tours), - nominal Orthodox Christians, - non-Orthodox, and - non-Christians.

In Orthodox Christianity, it is possible for laypeople to practise elements of "mental prayer" (or “Jesus prayer”), but in this case, a special blessing from the confessor is required. However, nowadays there are laypeople, who say the Jesus Prayer “on their own”, without any “spiritual guidance”. The followers transform the practice, according to their modern outlook, enrich it, and incorporate their own spiritual experiences in it. Tradition becomes adjusted as a tool for individual spiritual improvement. Thus, elements of Hesychast practice become adopted by non-practising Christians, and non-Christians as well. In particular, there are practitioners who also combine the elements of different traditions (for example, the Jesus Prayer and yoga).

We can follow a thread of the development of these modern approaches to practices due to a number of narratives, created by contemporary Russian laypeople, who pick up the elements of Hesychast practice and claim themselves to be Hesychasts and share their spiritual experience and their reflections on the tradition of Hesychasm through Internet forums and social media.

This paper analyses the phenomenon of contemporary “laical Hesychasm” in Russia and compares the traditional monastic way of practising Hesychasm with the modern one, linking the latter to broader processes of globalization and virtualization of religion, and regarding the broader context of the globalization of Hesychasm and the Jesus prayer in the modern world.
How the Mormon Church Manages to Withstand Crises and Disasters

Liudmyla Fylypovych, Anatolii Kolodnyi

Religious Studies Dpt. of Philosophy Institute, Kyiv, Ukraine

Abstract

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the LDS Church or Mormons) is one of the most dynamic trends of the contemporary Christian world. Throughout its 200-year history, the Church more than once has faced difficult turns of events, but it has always come out on top: it not only endured as an institution but also actively developed thanks to the increasing number of its members and congregations. When considering this religious organization’s perseverance, one notes several factors that have facilitated the Church’s endurance and development: Dogmatic, Historical, Organizational, Family, Clerical, Social, Institutional, Educational, Psychological, Ideological. Among these factors, the most significant are the following:

Social. Mormons in any country represent a strong corporate and solidary community capable of resisting a variety of challenges. They are aware of their unique position, even a particular peculiarity, in society. Separating themselves from the sinful world, they fulfill a certain mission: they demonstrate their belonging to the one true church rather than to one of many existing religious currents in the world capable of saving an individual. Religious exclusivity causes the Church to be restrained in matters of ecumenism or interreligious movements. Mormons are not members of existing global interfaith organizations or interchurch associations. Nevertheless, Mormons are extremely active in the social sphere because of their well-known charitable activities.

Institutional. Institutionalized forms of the Church testify to a historical durability, as they replicate the structures of early Christianity. That connection is manifested especially in the revival of the apostolic tradition (12 apostles) and the opportunity for the Church’s Prophet to make certain changes in its doctrine. The theology of Mormonism is based on the fact that today the Church is governed by the Saviour Himself, revealing His will to the First Presidency of the LDS Church and the Quorum of the 12 Apostles. As in biblical times, the Church has prophets, apostles, seventies, missionaries, bishops, and preachers.

Educational. By opening educational institutions of various kinds, the Church satisfies the needs of young people in receiving a quality education, ensures the social status of Church members, their well-being, and their resistance to moments of crisis.

Psychological. The Church is the kind of community that does not allow its members to remain lonely or deprived. It helps its members to survive in difficult times of crisis and catastrophe. Thus, during the Great Depression in America (1933-1934) the Church refused help from the state for its members, and took over everything. This is what it is discovering today, especially during the pandemic. All Mormons feel like members of a large church family where they find support.

Ideological. The protection of human freedoms and rights, particularly in the religious sphere, is a social ideology for Mormons. The Church is active in asserting the value of religious freedom and opposes persecution on religious grounds. The protection of one’s own and others’ freedoms creates a certain cushion of stability and security for LDS Church and other religious organizations.
The Survival of Folk Magic in Italy and its Metamorphosis into Shamanism

Angela Puca

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Abstract

From the Janare in Campania to the Masche in Piemonte, the Italian regions have a long history of local healers and folk witches, also known as Segnatori. Shrouded in folklore and secrecy, these traditions are still very much alive and practised across the country, specifically in the countryside.

Data collected during almost five years of fieldwork between 2016 and 2021 suggest that the increasing engagement online has fostered a process of unification of such practices under the label of “Segnature”, which - originally referred to the region Emilia Romagna - is now being adopted cross-regionally as the need for a commonly understood label arisen.

By analysing how folk magic has been concealed within and reshaped by the boundaries dictated by the dominant religious system and the contemporary new religious movements, I will argue that this magic tradition is still ingrained in the life of local Italian communities, progressively reframed as a form of autochthonous shamanism.

The matters of syncretism and online engagement will also be addressed as key elements to confirm the resilience of these traditions in the cultural fabric and how the alteration of said amalgamating elements over time shows an enduring core.

Imaginal Architectural Devices and the Ritual Space of Medieval Necromancy

Andrea Franchetto

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Abstract
The material and spatial dimensions documented in the manuscripts of ritual magic that circulated in the medieval and early modern periods have long eluded researchers. Studying where those rituals take place is important to understand the history of the practice of ritual magic. Few attempts have been done to interpret the reasons behind the construction of magic circles and the use of domestic locations. The author introduces a new interpretative category of such ritual spaces: imaginal architectural devices (IADs). IADs pick out a specific kind of portable, spatially unfixed ritual space, where “magical” ones are a key example. They are temporary architectural artefacts, attested across a swath of sources of ritual magic, that work as strategic tools for orienting cognition, behavior, and belief. Drawing on spatial theory and cognitive studies, the author constructs IADs as a typological category for comparative analysis. It describes architectural operations that work at the interplay between mental projections and material culture, and that modify the perception of space. In the second part of the article, IADs will be applied to study the circles described in the second section of the Liber Iuratus Honorii, a thirteenth-century handbook containing instructions on how to conjure different ranks of spirits. In the end, the author suggests future directions of research on the transmission of IADs into contemporary ritual magic.

689 How to Magically Edify Nation: The Rise and Fall of Universalia, The Society of Czech Hermetics
Pavel Horák

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Abstract

The Czech lands are well-known among Western esotericism scholars, especially for their significant role in the early modern period with regard to alchemy, magic, and astrology. Nevertheless, the relatively more recent esoteric phenomena from the 20th century Czechoslovakia are less known due to the Iron Curtain and language-barriers. This paper introduces the biggest and most important esoteric society Universalia: The Society of the Czech Hermetics in Czechoslovak and later the Czech Republic. The society emerged during the 1920s, was dissolved by the Nazi regime in 1942, and subsequently revived in the 1990s. The paper focuses on its interwar activities. By embracing various esoteric means, together with the rigorous education of its members, Universalia was undertaking a bold mission to enhance the nature of the Czech nation. Universalia’s leadership wanted to edify the Czechoslovak nation and thus contribute to its spiritual resilience in an atmosphere of the upcoming war. The paper explains Universalia’s role in the broader socio-historical context of the time, presents its aims, activities, and its most important representatives. The paper focuses on society’s nationalist impulses through analyzing its educational vision to change the Czech nation’s nature by magical means.

639 The Resilience of a Religious Tradition: Gaudiya Vaishnavism in the West
Marta Magyar

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Abstract
Hindusim is often deemed as an ethnic religion. Its largest denomination, Vaishnavism renewed itself in the 16th century in Bengal as the universalizing Gaudīya Vaishnava tradition. There have been unsuccessful attempts to transplant the religious tradition to the West since the 1930s. Changing that in 1966 A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda came from India to the United States and founded the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), a Gaudīya Vaishnava religious organisation which became commonly known as the Hare Krishna movement. Over the past 55 years through ISKCON Gaudīya Vaishnavism has found its roots in the West and continues to grow to count its followers in millions, regardless of gender, race, nationality or religious background. My research focuses on the global mobility of the concepts and values of Gaudīya Vaishnavism and reasons for Prabhupāda’s success and seeks answers to two main questions:

1. How did this tradition that is so different in its externals, lifestyle and values from the host environment’s found its roots in the West and continue to thrive?
2. What is the role of institutionalization in its resilient presence?

I examine which aspects of the tradition are maintained and what adjustments were made for it to persevere in a constantly changing new context. I look at the power of institutionalization and the power of the framework for religious practice established by the founder by examining the heritage he left behind in the form of books, letters, lectures and recorded conversations and texts about the history of the movement.

615 Which Resilience When Only a Few Verses Remain? Contemporary Druidism and the Use of Celtic Languages

Anne Ferlat

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Abstract

The framework of this presentation is the Celtic reconstructionism and more precisely, the Druidism in contemporary France. This Druidic quest aims at practising, revitalising and restoring ancestral spiritual practices on Celtic territories that are aggregated within a nation-state. The French nation-state shelters a mosaic of peoples indeed, who have undergone several waves of acculturation. As far as the action of the Druidic groups falls on an indigenous spectrum between indigenizing processes and indigenous assertion, this search for original sources constitutes a socio-cultural project, being able to have the value of resilience following the example of indigenous peoples in other continents.

The use of Celtic words and concepts in the Druidic teaching and rituals is one of the enculturation processes. Academics and scholars studying the factors, processes, and conditions of resilience among indigenous peoples have demonstrated that language plays a fundamental role on their journey toward health and resilience after traumas experienced during the successive phases of colonisation. Language is one of the major aspects and factors of resilience and a condition for the restoration of self-esteem for indigenous people who have lost the language of their ancestors either because it disappeared or because it was forbidden. This is an issue to shed light on the way Celtic semes may affect the relationship of members of Druidic groups with the world. There is little mention of internal colonisation in Europe, and certainly not in an official way as in countries where the government is trying to repair the wrongs of colonisation in conducting actions in order for indigenous peoples to recover their cultures through projects,
carried out in collaboration with academics and NGOs. Throughout the course of history in Europe, the use of Celtic languages was forbidden, became less frequent, or was transformed. In France, Druidism is practised in various Celtic regions where the Gaulish languages are extinct and where the local dialects, the “patois”, remain little used. Moreover, Druidism is practised by individuals who gather in “groves” which form small communities but do not represent ethnocultural groups per se. However, they resort in their practices to both Gallic and Gaelic terms and words as a Pan-Celtic philosophical and religious language.

This paper is thus intended to exemplify how fragmentary elements from various languages that belong to a same linguistic family contribute to the resilience of individuals and communities in the context of the revitalisation of pre-Christian religions in Europe, according to which scope, methods and processes.

185-I Resilient Visual Mosaics: Transformation Processes in Arts and Religions ONLINE
09:00 - 10:40 Friday, 3rd September, 2021
Cristina Exposito de Vicente

The History of Religions can be analyzed in the light of numerous sources, among which the remnants of material culture that make up the set called Arts. The different modes of artistic expression in societies provide a wealth of information, particularly in the context of religions and how they are practised. In this open panel, we propose a study of the religious phenomenon from different artistic and historical perspectives, with special interest in the so-called “intermediate spaces”. These “intermediate spaces” refer to those moments of transformation, change, and continuity that have been an important milestone in the history of humanity and, in many cases, have given way to the generation of religious systems. The “intermediate spaces” must be considered from a human perspective, viz. people’s capacity to cause a set of changes that affect, to a great extent, social life, economy, health, etc. and that, as a consequence, point to a change in mentality.

The breadth of cultural contexts also helps us to understand the real dependence that exists between nearby religious systems and that find a common visual thread in the Arts. Thus, from the binomial Arts and Religions, where essentially the first concept has been subordinated to the second, we propose a change of factors: to study the changes that affect religions and their adaptation -resilience- to new needs through the Arts. The artistic manifestations and their coexistence in real, marginal and popular spaces allow us to approach the Arts as living elements, artistic mosaics that reflect the rupture or cultural continuity in a clear way if the eyes are educated to see, not only the iconographic or aesthetic element but the mullions.

This open panel will accept research that addresses different periods and cultural contexts, from ancient times to the present, as well as different fields of knowledge (e.g., History, History of Art, Archaeometry, Archaeology, Religious Studies, Anthropology, Sociology, Literature), in order to promote transdisciplinarity and fruitful intercultural dialogue.

729 Aesthetic Experience and the invisible presence in Late Antiquity
Religious Architecture: From Hagia Sophia to the Cordoba Mosque
Belén Cuenca Abellán
Abstract

One of the main study topics in the field of Spanish Medieval Art is the early representations of Islamic Art in Al-Andalus. Generally, Art History has connected the origins of this artistic phenomenon to the literary tradition produced during the conquest process and the rapid expansion of the Islamic religion of the Near East. However, these chronicle sources are too recent. Therefore, the main idea of the present study is to take a concrete case-study that allowed research and to shed some light on the complexity of the formation of peninsular Islamic Art. For this purpose, the maqsura built by caliph al-Hakam II inside the Mosque of Cordoba in the 10th century was selected. The reasons why such a particular building was selected stem from hypotheses formed in previous analyses that highlight the presence of artistic elements linked to the Roman past and the aesthetical canon that encodes the places of worship during the Mediterranean Late Antiquity.

The cultural context of the Late Antiquity in the Mediterranean, a time and space lapse where Early Islam appears, is shown as a complex period where the depiction of what is sacred has an essential and decisive role. Different theological issues around the definition of divinity and the progressively tighter union of political power and religious power had its repercussions in the encoding of big urban areas in the Mediterranean. The house of worship, from the 6th century, becomes of vital importance as it is built in the heart of the city. Also, it goes from being the meeting place of a religious community to becoming the Divine Abode, where God lives among His people. This change is very significant not only because of the above-mentioned reasons but also because of all the iconography and symbology established around the building of the temple, which includes the mosque. In the so-called “microcosmic temple”, whose main example is Hagia Sophia, architecture serves as a means to create a complete metaphor of the History of Salvation.

In a comparative study it will be seen how the early Islamic architecture is added to this aesthetic compendium. This mix is the result of new ways of understanding the immensity of the sacred through metaphors, with the essential influence of the Neoplatonic philosophy that leads to higher levels of abstraction that appears to have arisen in Constantinople in the 6th century.

The aesthetic parameters that come from Hagia Sofia as a new temple devoted to Knowledge, compared with the ancient temple of Jerusalem, can be observed in most religious buildings in the Mediterranean from the 6th century to the 10th century. In Al-Andalus, the complete assimilation of this aesthetic, symbolic, and literary canon, is recorded in the construction of al-Hakam II’s maqsura. Similar metaphors, iconographic and iconological elements, and even liturgical practices similar to the ones set in the Eastern Roman Empire are recorded in the visual discourse of the maqsura, transforming itself, its integrity and its performative character in what will be known as the Islamic Art of Al-Andalus.

755 Cultural Identity, Resistance, or Assimilation? A Reading of the Chromatic Remains of the Magdala Synagogue (Israel) from an Artistic Diagnosis

Cristina Expósito de Vicente

Universitat de València, Valencia, Spain
Abstract

The process of Hellenization that the people of Israel experienced from the fourth century BC. with the political and territorial movements of Alexander the Great in the Middle East, has presented different readings in the panorama of Jewish Studies. So much so that establishing the terms of contact between Judaism and Hellenism will be the main topic for understanding the constant irrigations between the binomial religion and culture in Israel.

All this historical-religious context, with many important underlying factors such as political, economic, or religious interests, does not respond exactly to the terms of resistance or “response to repression”, in the face of surrender to acculturation or simple assimilation.

With this proposal, a new way of analysis of the Hellenic-Roman contact with the world of Judaism is presented, whose main way of interpretation is the artistic diagnosis of the chromatic remains of the time. The particular case study is articulated in the Magdala (Lower Galilee) synagogue, dating from the 1st century CE, specifically on the preserved chromatic remains and mural preparations. The chemical results place the settlement in a prominent position in the historical, religious, and artistic framework, opening new readings in terms of cultural identity.

754 Visual Memory of Medieval Liturgical Spaces. Agency and Affordances of Ritual Artefacts in Western Christianity
Ángel Pazos-López
Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia, Madrid, Spain

Abstract

The iconographic representations of the Christian ritual spaces allow drawing an emotional panorama of the objects and artefacts used in the liturgy. Visual elements such as the arrangement on fixed supports, the presence of furniture or the representation in unreal proportions of sacred objects allow us to reconstruct the patterns of changes between ritual traditions. In this sense, the study of the “agency” of liturgical objects is shown as a way little explored by the historiographic tradition to understand the extra material values of realities linked to medieval worship. The same occurs with the study of “Affordances” applied to cult artefacts, opening a new sphere of interpretation of objects beyond the actors that activate them within the Christian medieval liturgy.

Through a selection of manuscript illustrations from the Western Late Middle Ages –mainly France, Italy and Spain–, the resilient value of cult objects will be shown beyond their materiality, connecting uses, functions and sacred spheres.

629 Florence as a New Rome and as a New Jerusalem in Ghirlandaio’s Visitation
Irina Chernetsky
Abstract

The paper focuses on the architectural settings in the Visitation scene of the Tornabuoni chapel in the Santa Maria Novella church in Florence, frescoed by Domenico Ghirlandaio in 1486-90. Biblical Mary’s visitation with Elisabeth (Luke 1. 39-40) took place near Jerusalem, which is represented here in the background. This city of Jerusalem includes some Roman and all’antica buildings as well as architectural and landscape allusions to Florence. Some figures are portrayed as the members of the Tornabuoni family. Analyzing this scene, the paper argues that the patron Giovanni Tornabuoni commemorates his family within the ideal cityscape, inspired by Leon Battista Alberti’s architectural ideas. This is the new image of Florence, in which the artist stresses not only the family’s past, present and future history, but also embraces the interwoven allusions to the city’s ancient past, glorious prosperous present, and eschatological future.

788 British Ritual Resilience under a Pandemic: The BRIC-19 Project ONLINE

09:00 - 10:40 Friday, 3rd September, 2021

Joshua Edelman

This panel presents the results of Social Distance, Digital Congregation: British Ritual Innovation under Covid-19’ (or BRIC-19), a major year-long research project into the ways in which people across Britain adapted their engagement with ritual under Covid-19 and the associated social distancing measures and restrictions. The project used a mixed-methods approach of surveys, interviews, digital research methods (including archival work and netography), case studies, and a practitioner-based action research group to understand the ways in which British ritual makers strived to serve their communities’ needs during the crisis. The focus of the project was on the range of techniques ritual leaders developed to ensure the resilience and continuity of regular, festival, and life-cycle rituals, and what these suggested about the nature, function and future of ritual work more broadly in the UK and beyond.

Like most crises, the pandemic has shed a clarifying light on the intellectual, cultural, material and psychological structures on which our society depends. This includes our religious lives. As such, the results of this study offer both insight into the ways in which ritual life can be effectively sustained in the absence of physical congregation and suggestions as to the social operations and futures of ritual as a part of religious and civic life in the digital age.

The four papers on this panel all offer valuable perspectives on resilience, but from different vantage points. Two (from Joshua Edelman and Alana Vincent) offer macro-level insights into the project findings, questioning and demonstrating the main areas where “resilience” can be seen in the UK context. Two other papers (from Eleanor O’Keefe and Paulina Kolata) enable us to delve deeper into these insights through case study work in different ritual contexts. Together, the panel presents and analyses the innovations, failures, and resilient patterns that we have seen in our research that we expect will have a significant effect on European religious life in the coming decades.
Fire-Forged Innovations: Introducing the BRIC-19 Project

Joshua Edelman

Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, United Kingdom

Abstract

This paper introduces the BRIC-19 research project, its theoretical and practical background, and its research methods, setting the stage for the three papers that follow.

The paper will set out the situation that British religious communities found themselves in the year from April 2020 to April 2021, when government-mandated restrictions meant that most religious communities were no longer permitted to congregate for public worship or rituals. We will describe the techniques British religious leaders used to adapt their community’s rituals to this situation. As a rule, these innovations were urgent; there was a need to maintain the resilience of religious life in the face of this once-in-a-generation social crisis, and very little time to plan or coordinate. Using the project’s findings, especially from our survey work, we will look back on these adaptations and describe how they were received by their congregations, breaking these differences down by faith, age, frequency of attendance, and so on. Not simply useful academic data, these findings raise suggest important questions about the nature and possibilities of the sense of religious communities, the diffusion of religious authority, and the digital unmooring of religious identity from geographical and cultural limitations.

The core of this paper examines resilience from a practitioner perspective through the work of the action research group. This was a group of religious professionals (mostly, but not entirely, clergy) from a variety of faiths and locations across the UK, who engaged with the project’s other findings and sought to apply them in their own communities in ways tailored for the specific situations that they faced. These innovations – practical, applied outcomes of our research made in collaboration with partners – were then brought back to the group for refinement, discussion, and analysis. Though this method is common in performance studies and business, it is much rarer in the study of religion. This paper will reflect on the process of iterative collaboration between practitioners and researchers: the benefits of this work, the surprises and challenges of it, what it suggests about the interweaving of academic knowledge and practical know-how within religious life, and on the nature of religion as a phenomenon that can be simultaneously (but differently) both lived and understood.

Where Do We Go from Here? Lessons for Religious Communities from the Pandemic Year

Alana Vincent

University of Chester, Chester, United Kingdom

Abstract

After a year of disruption to routine community gathering resulting from government mandated restrictions, what has changed? What hasn’t changed? How do religious communities understand the role of ritual in their collective lives? What lessons have been learned for the future?
The public debates over restrictions on worship under COVID-19 revealed a recognition of the importance of religious practice in Britain which is seldom openly acknowledged within a legal and legislative framework which engages with religion as primarily a question of belief. Drawing on the data gathered through media analysis, the survey, case studies, and Action Research Group, this paper will discuss the forward-facing outcomes of the BRIC-19 project. It will attend particularly to the alterations to practice which may have begun from necessity but have been received by religious practitioners as generally positive developments, and to the ways that alterations during the pandemic (whether they were received as positive or negative), have contributed to wider re-thinkings about the purpose of ritual/worship in communal life.

791 When St Mungo’s Met the Blessed Imam Husayn: Resilience, Heritage, and New Urban Practices of Pilgrimage in the Pandemic

Eleanor O’Keeffe
Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, United Kingdom

Abstract

The impact of Covid-19 on religious rites of pilgrimage has been devastating. With the considerable disruption to the global travel industry, and restrictions on freedom of movement, iconic sites of pilgrimage have become sites of Covid governance, with many closed or access severely limited. Already, a burgeoning scholarship has elucidated the infrastructural impact on the religious tourism industry. However, pilgrimage under lockdown has proved particularly resilient, as sociologists, ethnographers and religious studies scholars are showing. New practices of sociality, bringing forth new spiritual meanings, have emerged in the re-configured shrines under Covid-19. The reinvigoration of notions of pilgrimage via digital means has also excited considerable scholarly interest. Virtual pilgrimages have become phenomenally popular, drawing together global audiences, and facilitating new faith engagement.

This paper offers a new and important perspective on pandemic ritual resilience by taking a local lens to recognise new performative and spatial modes of pilgrimage, which have also been encouraged by the pandemic. In October 2020, a member of the Scottish Ahlul Bayt Society, a faith-based Shia Ithna Ashari organisation supporting the Scottish Shia Muslim community in Glasgow, undertook his own version of the Arba’een pilgrimage, which annually brings millions to journey to the holy shrine and mosque of the Imam Husayn in Karbala, Iraq. Walking from Paisley to Glasgow, sheltering in the holy spiritual and secular places in each city, and bringing with him the lessons and love of the Blessed Imam Husayn, his pilgrimage brought together faith-based and civic notions of spirituality, community, and identity into dialogue, through spatial, mnemonic and performative practices. Reflecting on the nature and affordances of this pilgrimage via interview research, this paper outlines the social, cultural and faith apparatus that supported resilience and outlines what we can learn from this example.
From the Shut Crematoria Gates to Virtual Funerals: Crisis and Resilience in Death Care under Covid-19 in the UK

Paulina Kolata

Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, United Kingdom. Lund University, Lund, Sweden

Abstract

The pandemic has not only threatened human life and livelihoods, but it has also disrupted and drastically reshaped rituals of dying, body care and disposal, funerals, grief, and memorialization across the UK. Covid-19 has transformed the materiality, sociality, and timescapes of death rituals and, at times, it has overwhelmed the religious, public and corporate infrastructures involved in caring for the dead. Social distancing regulations and regional lockdown laws have inhibited rites of washing and dressing the dead, restricted attendance at funerals, and limited access to and movement in spaces where death rituals take place. Drawing on netographic research and qualitative interviews with religious and non-religious ritual leaders, facilitators and mourners, this paper investigates the affective and practical transformations of death-related rituals under Covid-19 in the UK.

The implications of these changes are still emerging, but ritual leaders, death care industry voices, and mourners point to potentially devastating consequences. At the same time, communities across the UK have responded to Covid-19-related restrictions with great creativity and resilience, generating new and adapting existing ritual practices, while utilising and normalising new applications of technology in death care. These adaptations have been developed in specific religious and cultural contexts for managing death. The examples discussed will come from across the urban and rural context of the UK, including voices of funeral celebrants, directors, and digital tech professionals, as well as local grass-root networks such as local Muslim burial societies. By documenting the challenges and creative solutions employed by them to facilitate ritual death care across diverse religious and non-religious settings, this paper focuses on what happens when death rituals are disrupted and what makes adapted death rituals efficacious and meaningful. In doing so, the paper pays attention not only to the death rituals' transformative capacities, but rather to their own capacity to transform and accommodate limitations of the Covid-19 crisis.

286-I Negotiating the Crisis: The Role of Sanctuaries as Places of Resilient Religious Experiences

09:00 - 10:40 Friday, 3rd September, 2021

Ada Campione, Laura Carnevale, Angela Laghezza

Sanctuaries are “special” sacred places. Despite the difficulty of a strict definition, there is a scholarly agreement about a core identity feature: in any religious system, they are places safeguarding a memory, which can be related, f.i., to extraordinary events, bodily relics, or objects of worship.

People usually flow to a sanctuary in times of changes or crises, either from a personal or from a collective perspective. In other words, they attend these places when critical factors (diseases, famines, conflicts, epidemics) threaten their vital relationships with themselves and with the others, interrupting in their everyday lives and interrupting them. Pilgrims reach sanctuaries to seek for healing, solutions, protection from the superhuman agent. Thanks to the performance of both peculiar rites and devotional practices, they start to
cope with their crisis: in other words, they learn to negotiate it and to be resilient. The use, transfer, and relocation of sacred objects often support such crisis management. Dynamics of collective identity involving the lived experience of the devotees contribute to achieving this goal: they include the resolution of distresses, the finding of new social cohesion, the endurance of changes without having to adapt permanently, the experience of relationships not only with human and superhuman agents.

The mobility of people and objects leads to encounters of mindsets and ideas (one of the main reasons for the lively and dynamic, rather than static, nature of the sanctuaries): a feature associated with their unstructured and spontaneous origin. Thus, sanctuaries prove to be social and relational hubs where bottom-up religious expressions vividly emerge, although institutionalized religious actors usually control them.

The memories connected with sanctuaries are shaped and recounted using oral or written narratives to explain their origins, the exceptional or significant events that “took place” there, the presence of sacred objects, attributing new meanings to individual and collective experiences.

The Panel aims at investigating the roles, functions, and patterns of superhuman and human agents in resolving and negotiating crises within the space of the sanctuaries.

We welcome papers focusing on:

experiences of negotiating the crisis in a sanctuary;

the role of institutionalized religious agents (mediation, communication, facilitation);

written sources and material evidence showing the dynamics of interaction within the sacred place;

the function of rituals, devotional practices, relics, objects in shaping the devotees’ resilient experiences.

591 On the Borderline: (Un)disciplined Bodies and Ascetic Performance between Suffering and Resilience. The Life of Daniel the Stylite as a Case Study
Chiara Cremonesi
Università degli Studi di Padova, Padova, Italy

Abstract

Stylitism, as an ascetic bios entailing stasis on the top of a pillar or on several pillars of increasing height - from which the ascetic does not descend, if not under exceptional conditions - was an established practice in Late Antique Syria and also in the heart of the empire, in the Byzantium banlieue, where none other than the Emperor Leo I had ordered the erection of the most impressive of columns for the benefit of Daniel the Stylite (409 - 493). In hagiographical texts, where the code of the marvellous is largely employed, the holiness of the great stylites is expressed by means of the anomaly of a bios “on the borderline”, not only defined by a harsh regimen of fasting and waking but also characterized by challenging pain to the extreme. Bearing suffering, overcoming it, and, at times, reaching indifference to it become the basanos of the exceptional status that allows ascetic saints to take upon themselves the suffering of others, supporting the
resilience of individuals and communities, seeking for healing, solutions and protection. Here, we focus especially on The Life of Daniel the Stylite: indeed, the Life provides exceptional glimpses into the role of (un)disciplined ascetic bodies and performance between suffering and resilience, between power and deviance; into the role of religious device as coping with the crises.

738 Resilient Religious Experiences and Negotiation of the Crisis in a Byzantine sanctuary: The Michaelion of Anaplous
Laura Carnevale
Università degli Studi di Bari Aldo Moro, Bari, Italy

Abstract

In this paper I will analyze some resilient religious experiences in Anaplous, a Michaelic sacred place near Constantinople, included by Hesychius of Miletus (6th century) among the sanctuaries attributed to Constantine, and identified with a Michaelion mentioned by Sozomenus (5th century).

Specifically, I will focus on Sozomenos’ description of the healing process of two sick people, a Christian and a Pagan, who both experience in the Michaelion a divine vision and perform peculiar rites, among which the incubatio.

In the perspective of negotiating the crisis, I will also take into account the role played by the hermit Daniel the Stylite who, according to his Life (13-21), initially dwelt in an isolated pagan temple in Constantinople not far from the Michaelion: this led to problems of co-existence and critical relationship among religious powers, which ended up with the hermit’s choice to leave that (disputed) space and climb his column.

307 The Temple of Jerusalem as a “Trigger Point” for Visionary Experiences: Resilience and/or Individuality in the Book of Watchers (1 Enoch, 6-36) and the Apocalypse of John
Luca Arcari
Università Federico II, Naples, Italy

Abstract

A key concept in recent neurohistory is that of the “neurochemical mechanism” of the human brain, by which the human species has learned “how to assess our status and our standing in the group largely through chemical clues [–from pheromones and hormones to an addiction to gossip]” (Smail 2008, p. 176).
In human evolution, particularly interesting examples of this are provided by that mechanism which Daniel L. Smail has called psychotropic, i.e. human cultural practices that alter or affect brain-body chemistry (listening to pleasing music; seeing a performance; playing a part in a public cultic ceremony).

Religious practices of the Temple of Jerusalem of the Hellenistic-Roman period provide a clear example from the history of religions of the employment of psychotropic practices. Based on the literary evidence, we can emphasize that festivals and practices of the Temple of Jerusalem were specifically constructed to alter the body chemistry of Jewish people. For example, forms of public reading or meditation of authoritative scriptures and traditions (see Neh 8:1-8) have favoured a shared sense of belonging as well as many inner mutations and chemical clues, including experiences which were reinterpreted as a direct contact with the other world (for example, see History of the Captivity in Babylon 8b). Also in early Christian groups, public reunions and shared rituals in particular spaces seemed to favour experiences of first-person contact with the other world, and in so doing early Christian texts have re-proposed and resumed similar narratives and/or experiences deriving from a temple imagery (see Ap 1:10-11; Ascension of Isaiah, 6:10-15).

This paper aims at emphasizing connections between psychotropic “inputs,” which are connected to the imagery and/or the reality of the Temple of Jerusalem, and visionary “outputs” (i.e., first-person descriptions of the otherworld) as they emerge from the Book of the Watchers (1 Enoch, 6-36) and the Revelation of John. Such a dynamic stands out as a clear instrument of resilience and/or individual adaptation: the use, transfer, and relocation of an imagery, which is connected with and/or is constructed on the basis of a specific cultic space, often supports experiences of individual reinvention of that hegemonic cultic space (the Book of Watchers) and/or mechanisms of resolution strategy for the fall and the loss of that same cultic space (the Revelation of John).

475 Representing and Teaching Religious Cultures ONLINE
09:00 - 10:40 Friday, 3rd September, 2021

Petra Bleisch

475 Representing and Teaching “Religious Cultures”: Primary School Teachers in Switzerland

Petra Bleisch¹, Séverine Desponds², Bernhard Rotzer³

¹College of teacher education, Fribourg, Switzerland. ²College of teacher education, Lausanne, Switzerland. ³College of teacher education, Brig, Switzerland

Abstract

In 2014, a harmonized curriculum was introduced in the French speaking part of Switzerland which included a new subject called “Ethics and religious cultures”. With a qualitative approach, the research project investigates every-day teaching practices in Primary schools.

This panel will present preliminary results of the project “Teaching practices in ethics and religious cultures in French-speaking Switzerland”, a subject introduced in primary schools with the new curriculum in 2014.
We will focus on representations and teaching strategies of religious diversity in general, and of Islam in particular.

Bernhard Rotzer will analyze our experiences in accessing the field. As this process provides the researcher with important knowledge, the presentation will show how schools with their many actors and different procedures manage to protect itself. Indeed, in two of the three Cantons, investigating “religion” seemed to be a specific obstacle.

Séverine Desponds investigates teachers’ representations of religious diversity. It will be shown that the way teachers handle challenges in day-to-day teaching is not linked to the school’s context, whether “multicultural” or “homogeneous”, but rather is informed by the teachers’ conception of religious pluralism, which itself is often rooted in biographical experiences.

Petra Bleisch will focus on teachers’ representation of Islam. We observed a tension between their representation of Muslims as “the Other” and their intention to give no special status to Islam, thereby contributing at the same time to the reproduction of essentialized knowledge and the normalization of Islam in Switzerland.

Coffee Break
10:40 - 11:00 Friday, 3rd September, 2021

Keynote Lectures (Bronkhorst)
11:00 - 11:50 Friday, 3rd September, 2021

Maria Piera Candotti

929 The Resilience of Religion

Johannes Bronkhorst

Université de Lausanne, Lausanne, Switzerland

Abstract

Religion is resilient. Abolishing religion appears to be virtually impossible. It is true that certain religions have replaced other religions in the course of history. Christianity replaced other religions in the Roman Empire. Islam replaced other religions (among them Christianity) a few centuries later. But attempts to replace religion tout court have always faced resistance. Marxist regimes tried, but their success was limited. The resilience of individual religions may have its limits; the resilience of religion as such, it would seem, is much greater. Individuals try to be non-religious. There are many of those in the present Age of Atheists, but religion always seems to pop up in one form or another. Something in us makes us susceptible to the
practices and beliefs we commonly associate with religion. The present lecture will explore what that could be and propose an answer.

Keynote Lectures (Thomassen)
11:00 - 11:50 Friday, 3rd September, 2021

Claudio Moreschini

926 Perspectives on the Religious Transformation of Late Antiquity

Einar Thomassen
University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway

Abstract

Late Antiquity saw fundamental changes in the structure of religion; from temple religion to congregation religion, from sacrificial cult to verbal forms of worship, from religion as practice to religion as “faith,” from many gods religion to single god religions. Religion came to be perceived in terms of “truth,” with “paganism” and “heresy” as its untrue others. From having been lodged in the life of ancient cities, religion now became part of supralocal socio-political structures. The lecture will attempt to extract from the massive amount of research that has been done on this period during the last decades some lessons of general interest for the history of religions, including the impact of extra-religious factors on religious processes and the historical contingency of certain entrenched categories in the discipline relating to “polytheistic” and “monotheistic” “religions”. And we shall in the process not fail to comment on the question of the “resilience” of some forms of religion and the lack of it in others.

Keynote Lectures (Timus)
11:00 - 11:50 Friday, 3rd September, 2021

Margherita Facella

941 Conservatism and Adaptability. Zoroastrianism facing the Challenges after the Arab Conquest of Iran (7th-10th c. AD)

Mihaela Timuş

Institute for the History of Religions, Romanian Academy, Bucharest, Romania

Abstract
The Zoroastrian religion survived over more than two millennia, passing through various periods of transition, from the status of a state religion, under the Sasanians, to that of a minority, both in Iran and in India. At different times, in different geographical and political contexts, it found the means to readapt itself to the new historical parameters and to preserve at the same time the ‘everlasting flame’ of its identity.

The present paper particularly addresses issues specific to the way this religion adapted itself during the three centuries after the Arab conquest of Iran. The key problems taken into discussion are: conversion, religious pluralism, polemical encounters with the other religions, dualism against monotheism.

482-II Change, Order, Remembrance: Crisis and Religion in the Ancient Near East ONLINE
11:50 - 13:20 Friday, 3rd September, 2021

Jamie Novotny

431 When I find Myself in Times of Trouble: Assyrian Religion and Kings in Crisis
Jonathan Valk

Universiteit Leiden, Leiden, Netherlands

Abstract

Assyrian kings faced challenges of many kinds. They had to secure their position against rivals from within and secure their realms from enemies beyond; they had to navigate the ideological expectations of kingship with their own personal limitations; and there were myriad other trials and tribulations that could confront them. These challenges produced profound moments of personal crisis, in which Assyrian kings were by no means sure of a positive outcome. Experiences of such crises are described in numerous texts from the Neo-Assyrian period. A closer analysis of these texts demonstrates the centrality of religion in helping kings overcome crisis. Assyrian religion was mobilized in different forms to bolster the confidence of Assyria’s kings in the gods’ support and their belief that the crisis was manageable.

486 Ishtar Prayers and Ashurbanipal’s Account on the Elamite Attack on Der
Johannes Bach

University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland

Abstract
Since the Middle Assyrian period, Ishtar prayers are crucial intertexts for Assyrian royal narrative texts, allowing the kings to tap into a rich formative tradition harking back to the days of the legendary kings of Akkade. Less prominent in the early Neo-Assyrian period, Ishtar prayers resurge in their intertextual prominence under the Sargonids. Specifically Ashurbanipal makes widespread usage of a arrangement of different prayers in his royal inscription. The most prominent case is the account on the Elamite invasion of Der: Ashurbanipal, who did not participate in person in the military repeal of the invaders, employed the so-called Great Ishtar Prayer to justify his (non-)actions. This talk will highlight historical usages of Ishtar prayers in Assyria, discuss their significance (and that of Ishtar) to the royal house of Assyria in the 2nd and 1st millennium, and show how how diverse Ishtar prayers were intertextually utilized depending on their narrative context. Finally, the intertextual analysis of the Der-episode will underline the great sophistication behind the integration of the Great Ishtar prayer, accompanied by an evaluation of the corresponding strategies of validating the king's non-traditional behaviour.

686 The Monsters of Urbanism: Identity (in) Crisis
Karen Sonik
Auburn University, Auburn, USA. Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, USA

Abstract

This paper examines urbanization as revolution and as crisis in Mesopotamia, where the first cities arose over the course of the fourth millennium BCE. It takes as its case study the monsters that rose and proliferated in the visual and literary arts of Mesopotamia alongside developing urbanism and explores the ways in which these served to think through, negotiate, and grapple with new instabilities in personal and collective identity; religion and relationships with the gods; and social status, norms, and practice.

394-II Spatializing Religious Competition in Late Antiquity
11:50 - 13:20 Friday, 3rd September, 2021
Aude Busine, Francesco Massa

427 The locus of the Seven Monks in Gafsa: Cult of Martyrs and (Re)Appropriation of Space in the Arian-Catholic Competition
Gaetano Spampinato, Caroline Bridel
Université de Fribourg, Fribourg, Switzerland

Abstract

Late antique North African Christianity appears to be characterised, in some ways more than in other contexts of the Western Empire, by a particular vivacity and dynamism regarding the cult of martyrs. This dynamism, already attested at the time of Tertullian (3rd AD), is due to various historical and religious
reasons, both in the relationship between Christians and pagans and in the confrontation between Christians themselves: for example, in the 4th century the “appropriation” of the martyrs, their commemoration and the identification and appropriation of places dedicated to them play an important role in the controversy between Catholics and Donatists.

After the Vandal conquest of North Africa, this fervour around the cult of the martyrs continued to play an important role. Indeed, the presence of a new “barbarian” and, most of all, Arian ruler led this cult to play a renewed identity role in the competition between Catholics and Arians, and not only on an “ideological” level, but also in the perspective of control and (re)appropriation of spaces in urban contexts. The discovery or identification of a site of martyrdom or a tomb of a martyr, in fact, can lead to the reclamation by the Catholic components of the city and the consequent control of the building and the surrounding area - a dynamic whose most famous example is perhaps represented by the episode of the discovery of the relics of Gervasius and Protasius by Ambrose in Milan.

In this paper we will focus on a particular case study related to the Carthaginian context in the Vandal period, that of the locus of the seven monks in the monastery of Bigua (Gafsa), martyred in 484. The Catholic sources (first of all, Victor Bishop of Vita in his Historia persecutionis), in fact, remember that in this period there took place what, according to them, was one of the cruellest persecutions against the Catholics, the one ordered by the king of the Vandals Huneric. After presenting the way in which the story of the martyrdom of the seven monks is reported and the association with the heroic gestae of the Maccabees (with whom the monks are related in an inscription), we will analyze the function of their cult and their locus in relation to the space in the city and to the religious topography, also in relation, of course, to the Arian conquerors and to their impact in religious space. In the interdisciplinary perspective that characterises the ReLAB project on religious competition at the University of Fribourg, the analysis of the textual sources on the cult of the seven martyrs will be associated with an archaeological and material perspective of the site, in order to shed light on the dynamics of (re)appropriation and control of the buildings within the Arian-Catholic competition between the 5th and 6th centuries.

441 Intra moenia: The Space of Religious Competition in the “Life of Barbatus, the Beneventan Bishop”

Roberto Alciati

Dipartimento SAGAS. Università di Firenze, Firenze, Italy

Abstract

This paper attempts to discuss the constitution (or consolidation) of a new religious subject through spatialized and spatializing techniques. If religion relates people and space, this happens by parceling out and negotiating a continuous urban (and suburban) space (Rüpke).

Against the wide range of hagiographic texts dating from late antiquity to the early Middle Ages, the “Life of Barbatus, the Beneventan bishop” does not begin - as is usually the case - with the birth and life of the vir deó; on the contrary, it focuses on a specific event in Barbatus’ life and career which took place in 663, when the protagonist was already in his sixties. The panic caused in Benevento by a Byzantine siege, led by the first Roman Emperor seen in Italy since 476, urged Barbatus to monopolize the urban religious space to the detriment of the persistent pagan cults carried out by the Lombard elite who governed the city and the
countryside. More specifically, I will focus on how the city’s defence was facilitated by the apparition of the Virgin Mary on the city walls as a consequence of Barbatus’ prayers. On the other side, the Lombard elite believed that the defence itself was favoured by the pagan cults they practised. The apparition of the Virgin Mary does not occur in a random location: it takes place on the walls of the city, thus being clearly visible to all. On the contrary, the Lombards officiate their cults secretly (in the cellar of the palace of civil power) or outside the city (a tree-worshipping).

This contrast is relevant for two main reasons: it shows that (1) even a dominant religion - such as Christianity in seventh century Europe - still needs to be secured to space, and that (2) spatial coordinates determine the success of a cult, generally at the expense of another.

ISC 31 Late Antiquity and Middle Ages (Individual Short Communications)
11:50 - 13:20 Friday, 3rd September, 2021

Mauro Ronzani

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77 Basileus misochristotatos. Problemi interpretativi della resistenza nicena al tempo di Valente
Rosalba Arcuri

Dipartimento di Civiltà Antiche e Moderne, Università degli studi di Messina, Messina, Italy

Abstract

Dal confronto tra fonti patristiche (i Cappadoci) e storiografiche (Socrate, Teodoreto, Teofane, Zonara) si indagheranno i nessi tra religione e politica nell’età di Valente, l’imperatore additato dai niceni quale persecutore e nuovo Apostata, le cui propensioni fideistiche eterodosse - nella lettura dei posteri - non solo avrebbero condotto al disastro di Adrianopoli, ma anche, sul lungo periodo, causato la diffusione dell’errore ariano presso le gentes gotiche, le quali nella testimonianza di Teodoreto (HE 4, 37) si sarebbero prima convertite al cristianesimo niceno e solo in seconda battuta, su impulso di Ulfila e di Valente, avrebbero abbracciato l’arianesimo. Uno spunto interessante viene da Iordanes (Get. 25, 132), che sembra aver recepito nel proprio pensiero un più risalente accostamento tra ariani e pagani, forse riflesso del lessico giuridico in uso nelle costituzioni imperiali del tardo IV secolo (un esempio per tutti la celeberrima CTh. 16, 1, 2, 1 del 380). Da una rilettura delle fonti si tenterà inoltre di precisare e interpretare il ruolo assunto dai consiglieri di Valente nelle derive autocratiche e persecutorie cui l’imperatore giunse tra il 366 e il 373 nei confronti degli esponenti di spicco dell’ortodossia nicena, ruolo enfatizzato dalle fonti omousiane (Epifanio, Basilio, Gregorio di Nazianzo, Efrem), ma presente anche negli scrittori anomei (ad es. in Filostorgio); a tal proposito, è possibile evidenziare la presenza, tra il seguito imperiale, di un forte partito pannonico, capace di orientare in modo significativo le scelte di politica religiosa e talvolta anche estera dell’imperatore, dinamica che emergerebbe con una certa evidenza al tempo delle sue due guerre gotiche.
Filomena Giannotti
University of Siena (DFCLAM), Siena, Italy

Abstract

Sidonius Apollinaris is a key figure in the religious world of Late Antiquity. Born in Gaul in 430, Sidonius witnessed the fall of the Roman Empire and died in 486 as a subject of the succeeding barbarian kingdom. He became Bishop of Clermont-Ferrand during the collapse of the Empire, and was imprisoned because he led a military and cultural campaign against the Visigoths, when the Christian Church and the secular state were closely linked at the centre of power. His poems and letters are an important historical source for the reconstruction of the religious life in this period, with the cultural clash between Paganism and Christianity, and between Romans and Barbarians.

Sidonius also portrayed the clergy’s virtues as essential to the maintenance of his community in times of stress and dislocation. From among the many portraits of religious proficiency in his epistolary the most heroic exemplum is the priest Constantius of Lyon (ep. III 2). Despite his advanced age and the dangers of the road, in the middle of winter he went from Lyon to Clermont in order to comfort the people under the Visigothic siege, by encouraging and trying to reconcile the divided citizens and restore them to harmony. The standard of this letter is higher than the (already high) standard of Sidonius’ style because Constantius’ extraordinary religious virtue had raised him above the standard of the normal, representing, through his saintly example, the role played by religion as a powerful resilient tool for reacting to a difficult situation.

524 Facing the Last Persecution: Resilience to the Antichrist(s) in the Apocalyptic Thought of 14th-Century Franciscan Joachimites
Marco Giardini
École Pratique des Hautes Études, Paris, France

Abstract

The paper intends to shed light on the various strategies that Franciscan authors inspired by the Joachimite prophetic vision of history (from Peter of John Olivi up to John of Rupescissa) envisaged in order to face the supposedly imminent coming of a great persecutor, identified with the Antichrist. More precisely, the paper will survey the following main subjects: 1) The attempts to identify the Antichrist in accordance with the Joachimite scheme. This matter led to eschatological conceptions quite frequently in contrast with traditional exegesis, and was complicated by the frequently admitted “doubling” of the Antichrist in an Antichristus mysticus and an Antichristus magnus, with the first one equated with a temporal ruler, a pseudo-pontifex at the head of the corrupted Church, or a combination of both; 2) the means by which the believers would cope with the great persecution unleashed by the first Antichrist (the one that was supposed to appear imminently). Several strategies were considered in order to resist his threats: strong and unfailing adherence to the Franciscan Rule, understood as the quintessence and re-enactment of the Gospel, even against its supposed alterations introduced and supported by the Papacy; the collection and
diffusion of prophetic material, combined with the unveiling of their hidden meaning, to allow the faithful to recognize the essential traits of the Antichrist; diffusion of natural knowledge, including the “revelation” of their hidden aspects (especially alchemy), to counteract the violent attacks of the great persecutor.

39 Sequentes gesta et exempla sanctorum alias virtuose in Romana ecclesia observata. Il concilio di Pisa del 1409: i cardinali di fronte allo scisma, un esempio di resilienza.

Michela Guidi
Università degli Studi di Pisa, Pisa, Italy

Abstract

È indubbio che nella storia del Grande Scisma d’Occidente la prospettiva storica e ecclesiologica emersa a Costanza e Basilea costituisca un aspetto fondamentale. Prospettiva pneumatologica e equazione Chiesa-concilio si contaminano e creano i presupposti teorici della inenarranza della sinodo. In questa prospettiva Pisa 1409, seppure il ritorno alla via concilii costituisca il primo passo sulla strada del superamento dello scisma, è stato messo in ombra dall’interesse dimostrato per i concili successivi e per le acquisizioni ecclesiologiche di Costanza e di Basilea. La stagione di studi successiva al Vaticano II ha coinvolto però anche Pisa 1409, anche se in misura minore. Il carattere ecumenico di Pisa 1409 è di fatto oggi riconosciuto da numerosi storici. Si è parlato tuttavia di “conciliabolo”. Al giudizio negativo dominante nella storiografia cattolica, che spesso ha fatto propri argomenti utilizzati già dai contemporanei, si è poi affiancata un altro tipo di riflessione da cui prende avvio questo contributo.

Il biennio 1406-1408 costituì un punto di svolta nella storia trentennale dello scisma. Alla morte di Innocenzo VII il giuramento, più stringente rispetto a quello fatto alla morte di Bonifacio IX, di non omettere niente di quanto necessario al negotium unionis e confermato da Gregorio XII nel primo concistoro pubblico del 22 dicembre 1406 indusse i cardinali romani a sperare in una risoluzione dello scisma. Il fallimento delle trattative, i dubbi di collusio, e infine l’allontanamento dei due papi mostrò la via concilii come l’unica percorribile. Non era più possibile stabilire chi fosse il vero papa e inoltre si fece spazio la consapevolezza che lo scisma doveva essere risolto laddove era sorto, ossia all’interno del collegio cardinalizio.

Quale fu la risposta alla crisi? I cardinali ricorsero a un programma di emergenza richiesto dalla straordinarietà della situazione coniugando la difesa dell’identità alla necessaria dimensione di alterità che il contesto storico imponeva. Avevano la necessità di legittimare la loro azione rispetto alla consuetudine che assegnava la riunione del concilio al papa: una convocazione illegittima avrebbe invalidato tutto il procedimento. La legittimazione poggiò su una base giuridica e su una base ecclesiologica che necessariamente si compenettravano, ma che non dovevano presentarsi come rivoluzionarie.

Il concilio di Pisa 1409 costituisce pertanto un momento ricostitutivo e di rifondazione del privilegio petrino antagonistico rispetto alla radicata concezione assolutistica del papato; sulla base di una azione restauratrice esso innesca una azione di segno diverso, riformatrice (devoluzione della potestas, dimensione sinodale). La necessità di trovare una autorità in grado di guidare indenne la Chiesa alla ricomposizione indusse i padri alla legittimazione del concilio tramite il rapporto diretto con Cristo e il richiamo costante ai concili della tarda antichità e al paradigma cristologico del sacrificio in nome del bene comune. In questa
291-I Religion in Central and Eastern Europe – Towards an Auto-interpretative Perspective  
11:50 - 13:20 Friday, 3rd September, 2021  

András Máthé-Tóth

The panel will focus on three closely related aspects of the Central and Eastern European region. The region is generally understood from a hetero-interpretative perspective compared to the so-called West as a latecomer to modernization. This view provides a framework for the hermeneutics of religion in the region, whereby religion is analyzed and understood concerning the lack of modernity. In our panel, we collect contributions that invest a conscious auto-interpretative approach, building on one’s own historical experience and memory work. The interpretation of religion is made concerning the regional characteristics.

1) Hermeneutics of the Region

In the recent sociological discourses, the geopolitical hallmark of the region is its intermediary position at the crossroads between major cultural and political hegemonies. Its collective memory can be characterized by five common historical wounds (traumas), which have had a decisive impact on social and religious transformations: (i) the lack of national sovereignty, (ii) the refusal to protect minority groups, (iii) politically-determined social mobility, (iv) persecution of religions, churches and dissidents, and (v) genocide and other cases of mass killing. The pervasive presence and political instrumentalization of this wounded collective identity can (and perhaps should) be taken as the pre-eminent explanatory factor when interpreting the present-day success of populism and the social role of religion and the churches.

2) Religiosity of the region

The transformations of religiosity are generally analyzed and interpreted through the theory of secularization. Without denying or relativizing this approach’s values, an auto-interpretative hermeneutics asks about the relationships of religiosity with the specific regional characteristics. What can be considered as variables of religiosity related to the region’s unique variables when by special variables we mean, among others, national pride, authoritarian attitudes, advocacy of stability, and the importance of historical traumas? What kind of religiosity strengthens and what kind weakens social cohesion.

3) Religious denominations of the region

The question of the major religious institutions’ roles and functions is also not infrequently considered from the perspective of the Western European aspects of the transformation. The situation and transformation processes of the Churches and other religious institutions of the region should be analyzed and interpreted in an auto-interpretative hermeneutic concerning the region-specific institutional developments. The relations of these and the state, politics, and civil society have regional characteristics. In the region, the following issues are central concerning religious institutions: state and political instrumentalization of religious institutions to stabilize and strengthen state and national sovereignty; the handing over and
assumption of state tasks by the major religious institutions in the school system, health care system, and welfare system; the autonomy of religious civil society, etc.

723 Metahistories of Classical Antiquity and Wounded Identities in Central-East Europe
Csaba Szabó
University of Szeged, Department of Religious Studies, Szeged, Hungary

Abstract

Classical antiquity still matters in Central-Eastern Europe. The material evidence of the Hellenistic and Roman past is present not only in the architectural and statuary landscape, but shapes the contemporary political discourses, collective mentality, historical and religious narratives too. All of these visual or textual narratives produce metahistories of the ancient past in Central-Eastern Europe. The metahistories of the Greco-Roman past produced in the last two centuries reflect various strategies of healing and coping with transgenerational traumas, political ideologies and collective wounded identities in this region of Europe. In this paper the author presents the local and glocal specificities of metahistories of classical antiquity produced in Romania, Serbia, Hungary and Bulgaria and will also reflect on the appropriation of these in the contemporary religious narratives on public and private levels. The paper will show, how metahistories of the ancient past are used in contemporary theological textbooks, ceremonies or new religious movements as coping strategies of collective wounded identities.

724 Muslim Identities of the Balkans in Relation to the Wounded Collective Identities Theory
Csilla Gyöngyösi
MTA-SZTE “Convivence” Religious Pluralism Research Group Eötvös Lóránd Research Network (ELKH), Szeged, Hungary

Abstract

The Balkans are a meeting point of cultures, civilizations, religions. Thorn between various empires, nowadays Muslims face many identity issues: the question of the umma, the Wahhabi re-interpretation of the Muslimness and its effect on Balkanic-Turkish Islam, the so-called European Islam, the nation-states, their minority and majority status, the Yugoslav war memories, and traumas, the European Union, the very different expectations of showing loyalty pull them in various directions.

The paper will discuss these complicated and mixed identities concerning Wounded Collective Identities Theory. Are the Muslim identities in the Balkans different from non-Muslim identities? What are the particular questions Islam raises in comparison to various Christian, Jewish and non-religious identities? What is the relation between religious and national identities in these specific groups?

The paper will focus on several Muslim groups: Pomaks in Bulgaria, Bosnian and Albanian Muslim communities, Turkish and Tatar Muslims in Romania, and the particular case of Hungary, where a
considerable part of Muslims are of Hungarian ethnicity, converted to Islam as opposed to other communities where Islam is inherited in the family.

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**761 Collective borderline syndrome: Central and Eastern Europe from a socio-psychological perspective**

Réka Szilárdi

University of Szeged, Szeged, Hungary

**Abstract**

This paper presents a thought experiment aimed primarily at a metaphorical collective interpretation of the clinical symptoms and the personality psychological aspects of borderline personality disorder (BPD) in the identity patterns of Central and Eastern European societies. First, the definition of the region and its main approaches are discussed by incorporating relevant social scientific theories. The common motif can be grasped in a kind of geopolitical and geocultural liminality and in-betweenness. Second, I list the characteristics of borderline personality disorder, which is a syndrome of uncertainties arising from a kind of liminal self-interpretation of the individual. Finally, I try to argue that the most fundamental determinants of the societies of the region can be best interpreted as a kind of borderline social disorder.

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**395-I The Voices from the Outskirts: Discourses on Religion and Resilience in Modern Contexts**

11:50 - 13:20 Friday, 3rd September, 2021

Jana Valtrová

In this session, we intend to explore the various strategies and forms of resilience produced by selected religious/ethnic minorities or individuals who find themselves in challenging situations or under pressure from the majority. As a resilience in this context, we understand a broad scope of strategies that are employed to establish or re-establish and represent one’s or group identity in an unfavourable condition. What kind of strategies do people employ to formulate, protect and present themselves? What role does religion play in this process, and how does it function as a mean of mobilization?

To find answers to these questions, we adopt the methods of qualitative research and discourse analysis of various sources - textual, visual, music and oral. The papers are arranged in the two following sessions:

In the first session, we will explore the strategies of self-presentation, legitimization and resistance strategies of minority communities towards the majority through public displays and performances. First of the three papers in this session (“We are the land, and the land is us”. Native People of the State of Washington: Identity, Spirituality, and Environmentalism, Jakub Havlíček) focuses on the ways in which selected Native American tribes present themselves in various museums and centres. The paper will
demonstrate how indigenous spirituality and religion is represented in a close connection with issues of environmental protection.

The second paper (Display Cabinet of The Exile: a discursive analysis of the Tibetan Museum in Dharamshala, Martin Špirk) will focus on the self-presentation of Tibetan culture in Indian exile by the Central Tibetan Administration in the Tibetan Museum in Dharamsala. Presentation of Tibetan culture, history, and religion reflects the political rhetorics of CTA struggling for free Tibet.

The third contribution (Resistance through Music: Ambedkarite Buddhism as a Counterculture against Nationalist Discourse in India, Tereza Menšíková) focuses on the mobilization strategies of Ambedkarite Buddhists in India who strive against the domination of nationalist discourse through musical performances.

In the second session of our panel, we will focus on the role of language in the process of identity-building and the resilience of people whose life was disturbed either by physical relocation, or psychic disorders. The session is focused mainly on the function of language in connection with religion and spirituality in the process of social integration, homemaking and gaining control over one's life.

The first paper (International Catholic Community, Friendship, and Homemaking among Expatriates in Brno, Milan Fujda - Michaela Ondrašínová - Miroslav Vrzal) in this session presents the results of the qualitative research of an expatriate community in the Czech Republic and the specific role of the Catholic community in the process of homemaking.

The second paper "It is not about what they say, but how they say it!" Language use within one expatriate sports club, Michaela Žáková) in this session deals with using a language within a multicultural environment of a sports club.

The third paper (From pathological symptoms to meaningful life experiences, Matej Paulík) focuses on the role of religion and alternative spiritualities in the process of understanding one's state of psychic health.

447 "We are the land, and the land is us". Native People of the State of Washington: Identity, Spirituality, and Environmentalism

Jakub Havlicek

Palacky University Olomouc, Olomouc, Czech Republic

Abstract

The presentation deals with native identity and environmental issues as presented in the museum exhibitions in the State of Washington (USA). It focuses on how the identity of native Americans is connected to environmental protection and preservation issues. As the presentation shows, these issues are seen as an integral part of indigenous spirituality and religion. The presentation is based on the emic viewpoint, as presented by native Americans themselves, through the exhibition of museums established and managed by the Suquamish, the Tulalip, the Lower Elwha Klallam tribes (Tulalip Hibulb Cultural Center, Suquamish Museum, and Carnegie Museum). It also focuses on the issue of connecting environmentalism, spirituality and native identity in the case of the Duwamish people of Seattle, who seek federal recognition. What is the place of ecology, environmental ethics and protection in the native identity? How is it connected
Display Cabinet of the Exile: A Discourse Analysis of the Tibet Museum in Dharamshala
Martin Špirk
Masaryk University (Department for the Study of Religions), Brno, Czech Republic

Abstract

While in exile, the Tibetan elites have been trying to shape their new identity for decades. These identities are often constructed and expressed through various discourses that include, but are not limited to, motives such as nonviolence, emphasis on human rights, territorial and state independence, or the preservation of a unique culture and religious tradition. The paper analyses specific expressions of these identities and political rhetorics that the CTA (Central Tibetan Administration) puts at work through visual and textual materials. These are exhibited in the Tibet Museum located near the main temple of His Holiness, the Dalai Lama in Dharamsala, India. This institution’s self-presentation and agenda are based on themes such as oppression and violence, sacrifice and self-immolation, long-awaited independence, and a rich Tibetan history and religious traditions, mostly linked to the Dalai Lama. The paper demonstrates that this self-presentation seeks to create a suitable instrument and strategy for survival on the battlefield between two dueling political rhetorics: Chinese and exiled Tibetan propaganda.

The paper explores key topics, complexity, contradictions, and blind spots of interpretative repertoires through discourse analysis. In short, it shows the power/knowledge relations within the mentioned institution that works with visual display. As sources for this pilot study, materials from field research in Himachal Pradesh (2017, 2019) and other collected materials, including over 28 exhibitions and other audiovisual materials, exhibited in the Tibet Museum since its inauguration in 2000, are used.

Resistance through Music: Ambedkarite Buddhism as a Counterculture against Nationalist Discourse in India
Tereza Menšíková
Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic

Abstract

Dalits’ mass conversions to Buddhism in India are considered a part of a socio-political protest against discrimination and a strategy of emancipation. Since the first mass conversion in Nagpur in 1956, globalisation, modernity, and access to education, step by step, help to amplify their voice and provide them with more opportunities to express their feelings, opinions, and needs. The paper focuses on the Ambedkarite Buddhist community and its mobilization strategies through musical performances. Topics regarding the role of Dalit/Buddhist music in India, art as a resistance strategy against nationalist discourse domination, and practices of resistance in everyday life are explored. Specific parts of the research focus on
the representation of figures like Buddha and B. R. Ambedkar in Ambedkarist's songs and the practices of using folk musical instruments and transformations of their cultural meaning.

719 From the Ashes
11:50 - 13:20 Friday, 3rd September, 2021
Tancredi Marrone

Our session will enquire about the contemporary reinterpretations of magic. The transformations of occult practices in this sense are a consequence of resilience against times of crisis. Magic has often been used as a means to overcome obstacles and provide advantages to practitioners. The capacity to adapt to new obstacles on the basis of past experience and the study of both magical traditions but also scientific culture. A testimony to the evolution of the culture of spirituality for problem-solving. We will explore the ways in which contemporary practitioners have adapted the principles of magical ritual and its philosophy to fortify against the odds.

870 Tending to the Psychedelic Fire
Tancredi Marrone
Masaryk Univeristy, Brno, Czech Republic

Abstract

In this very instant, we are living through what can be defined as a psychedelic renaissance. Experts from various fields are now turning their attention towards the effects of psychedelic substances and their surrounding culture. Psychedelics have, in fact, been proven to be beneficial for mental health therapy and are now being investigated from their properties. Those who cultivated their knowledge and founded their life around the study of psychedelics are beginning to be recognized for their efforts in previous decades. However, the very nature of the study of psychedelics is steeped in controversy and issues which address both the political, social, and cultural spheres. Although supported by various voices inside and outside the academy, the study of psychedelics and their usage has been fraught with misunderstanding and relegation to fringe cultural expressions. Prominent examples are found in Terence Mckenna, Ram Dass, John C. Lilly among others. Hailed by the psychedelic community as charismatic leaders of a new era however viewed with suspicion by institutions and establishments. In this presentation, I will analyze the features that have allowed the psychedelic community to survive in various times of crisis. These will include medical, cultural but also spiritual components which combined have allowed the formation of a strong current and the belief in the value of psychedelic spirituality and therapy.

871 Art Magic: Audiovisual Expression in Contemporary Society as a Ritual Practice
Andrej Kapcar
Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic

Abstract

Any artistic expression, representing the introspective intention of the author, can be understood as a form of communication between the creator and the audience. At the same time, the art piece takes up a life of its own, where the original intention does not necessarily correlate with the received message, leading sometimes to a certain ambiguity of meaning and the feeling of mystery. As a way of expressing abstract ideas, thoughts, dreams or wishes, art has unsurprisingly become a suitable vessel for magical practices as well. The persona of the artist-magician can be followed at least to the late 19th century with the rise of Symbolism, later culminating in the various styles of abstract art, and is present up to today. Different art pieces, or performances, intensively infused with a multitude of syncretic, occult practices, have often been a centrepiece in contemporary magical practice. Prominent artists, such as the occult painter Austin Osman Spare, the comic book author Grant Morrison, or the recently deceased Genesis P-Orridge advocated an art-magic combination, intended to change reality. This intention is replicated by an increasing number of artists and performers, for whom the line between an art piece and the occult intention ceases to exist - art becomes magic, and magic becomes art. Especially while facing the problems of the contemporary society, this magical practice becomes one possible way of dealing with the uncertainty and chaos, aiming, therefore, at achieving as individuals, global goals. This presentation will analyze several examples of how occult art, presented through audiovisual means in the artistic scene, or even pop-culture, was intended as a way of dealing with society-wide issues and problems.

872 Energetic Resistance? Kuṇḍalinī’s Oscillation between Spiritual Chance and Emergency
Marleen Thaler
Vienna University, Vienna, Austria

Abstract

In 1937 an Indian pandit had a deeply disturbing mystical experience. The talk is of Gopi Krishna, who witnessed the rising of the so-called kuṇḍalinī energy. He would suffer badly for many years from this unexpected and traumatic awakening of his kuṇḍalinī energy. When he published his autobiographical book “Kundalini. The Evolutionary Energy in Man” (1967), he had at last overcome his life-changing crisis. Within the book, Krishna expounds on the mystical experience of the kuṇḍalinī awakening and its dangerous implications. Ever since this publication, untold fellow sufferers and other interested parties have consulted Krishna’s account. Many of those interested in awakening their own kuṇḍalinī energy have disobeyed Krishna’s warning nonetheless, resulting in likewise severe crises. Others, on the contrary, have derived benefit from Krishna’s suffering and have accomplished means of resilience as a reaction to kuṇḍalinī’s dangerous effects. In general, myriad of approaches and interpretations have permeated alternative religion in the second half of the twentieth century, encompassing spiritual emergency and chance.

In this talk, I am going to discuss resilient strategies among alternative religious devotees, who perceive kuṇḍalinī not as a bearer of crisis, yet as its resolution. A special focus shall be laid upon kuṇḍalinī’s entanglement with contemporary occulture.

Matous Mokry
Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic

Abstract

Through the 1970s and 1980s, there was a massive growth in the occult publishing industry, with companies such as Feral House, Llewellyn, and Weiser publishing mass-market, financially undemanding editions of magical and other esoteric texts by both older, and contemporary authors. The wide dissemination of esoteric knowledge and practices was further accelerated in the 1990s by the Internet which provides, even more, free and unrestricted possibilities of sharing occult information. As one of the results, for some esotericists this development, causing a constant flux of esoteric information, could be seen as a possible devaluation of esoteric knowledge and loss of magical value and potency of the books. As Egil Asprem in his text *Contemporary Ritual Magic* (2015) notes, starting from the 1990s, we can observe a counter-development of small-scale publishing houses putting out limited editions of well-crafted esoteric books, with special “deluxe” editions from precious materials (such as e. g. snakeskin binding) with prices up to 999 USD on top of that. In this small field of luxurious esoteric publishers such as Fulgur Press, Scarlet Imprint, Anathema Publishing Ltd., Fall of Man, Aeon Sophia Press, Ixaxaar, Primal Craft, Xoanon, Theion Publishing etc. (often connected to the Left-Hand Path and “Traditional Witchcraft” milieus), the value of a book might be further enhanced by ritual consecration, making it (as it is often in this field designated) “talismanic”. In my contribution, I would like to map this field of publishing houses and explore the ways through which occult books (re)gain their (magical) value and potency.

185-II Resilient Visual Mosaics: Transformation Processes in Arts and Religions ONLINE
11:50 - 13:20 Friday, 3rd September, 2021

Cristina Exposito de Vicente

The Book of Ruth in Nazarene Painters

Guadalupe Seijas
Complutense University, Madrid, Spain

Abstract

The biblical Book of Ruth is a clear example of how resilience makes it possible to face conflicts and inequalities. Ruth’s affection for her mother-in-law, Naomi, turned a childless, widowed Moabite into an
ancestor of the Davidic lineage. Nineteenth century history painting underwent a notable development that included biblical themes and the Book of Ruth, which had attracted little interest from artists since the Middle Ages, was once again the subject of attention in iconographic representations. This paper will discuss how scenes from the Book of Ruth, especially the encounter between Ruth and Boaz in the fields (Ruth 2:3-15), became particularly important for Nazarene painters. Ruth was a foreigner who became part of the people of Israel, a woman who abandoned her religious beliefs and made her mother-in-law's her own. The story of this character is interwoven with the personal experience of some of the painters of the Nazarene artistic movement who converted to Catholicism and underwent the same experience of change.

743 Translating the Mysticism into the Image: Film Rewriting and Intertextuality in the Poetic Cinema of Abbas Kiarostami

José María Toro Piqueras

Universidad de Sevilla, Sevilla, Spain

Abstract

Intertextuality is a palimpsest according to the concept proposed by Gérard Genette in his homonymous book from 1982. This methodological approach enables us to look into the problematic translation of mystical poetry into the moving image.

Filmmakers such as Abbas Kiarostami or Majid Majidi, just to mention two of them, have found different ways to puzzle out this apparently irresolvable conundrum.

The present article aims at capturing the filmic procedures deployed by the Iranian director of “Taste of Cherry” (1997) and the subtleties he employed in order to express such contradictory sensations as those suggested by the Mystical poets.

To quote his own words, “Philosophers tend to advise us directly and to prescribe things and naturally we tend to resist that kind of instruction coming from above, but our poets, the Iranian poets, have a much more delicate and indirect way of showing the ways of the world and telling us how to approach life”.

Which subtle and indirect ways did Kiarostami traverse to show us how to look at life? Somewhere in the suburbs of Tehran we may find the answer.

9-I Religious Minorities and Covid-19 ONLINE
11:50 - 13:20 Friday, 3rd September, 2021

Adelaide Madera, Kerstin Wonisch

Covid-19 affected particularly the collective dimension of freedom of religion and serves as an excuse for states to use rhetoric that scapegoats certain minorities, exacerbates tensions between religious groups and
justifies further suppressions of already marginalized communities. For instance, religious groups deviating from mainstream Sunni Islam in certain countries in the MENA region are still denied any sort of formal (legal) recognition but are faced with discriminatory practices almost on a daily basis and are even blamed for spreading the virus. Also in the European context, where religion has been a central element for othering and discriminating minority communities for centuries, a rise of anti-Semitic and Islamophobic trends partially fueled by the pandemic, endanger not only Jewish or Muslim communities but society as a whole.

The pandemic thus sheds light on how the concept of minorities is framed in a certain socio-geographical context and how it relates to historical developments in a given region. Moreover, constantly changing power-relations in connection with a politicization of religion serve as a pretext for Covid-19-related policies to target religious minorities. Frictions and divisions within and between religious communities serve as an additional excuse for states to limit rights of minority communities, discriminating against, and ultimately persecuting, groups deviating from mainstream religion. Covid-19 highlights blind spots neglected by policy makers and legislators concerning the meaningful protection of rights of religious minority communities.

Therefore, this panel seeks to reflect on the impact of the pandemic on rights of religious minorities and aims to address rising discriminations and prejudices against religious groups as well as future scenarios for a comprehensive protection and promotion of religious minority communities.

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11:50 - 12:10

826 Covid 19 and Korea – Viral Xenophobia through a Legal Lens
Ciaran Burke
Friedrich Schiller University, Jena, Germany

Abstract

Korea’s experience with COVID-19 seems a tale of comparative success and efficiency. Armed with a bespoke legal framework, devised in the wake of the 2015 MERS outbreak, the Korean authorities were not forced to resort to ad hoc solutions in the manner experienced in many other states. Rather, the pre-existing legal apparatus was put into action, obviating the necessity for emergency powers legislation, and on the face of it, guarding against executive overreach and concomitant human rights abuses.

However, the Korean example shows a sharp divergence between theory and practice. The legal framework employed to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic was in fact employed in a flexible manner allowing for de facto human rights violations, including breaches of Korea’s obligations under the ICCPR. Notably, the pandemic provided an opportunity for the persecution of a marginalised religious community - the Shincheonji Church of Jesus - and its leader, in the name of public health protection.
The fact that what seemed on the face of it to represent a best practice legal model for dealing with crises, in a state with strong democratic and human rights credentials, ultimately resulted in xenophobia and religious persecution, raises significant questions. Not least amongst these are how the flexibility necessary to deal with emerging and unpredictable crises may be balanced against human rights protections in order to ensure that unpopular communities do not become lightning rods or scapegoats for public discontent. This article proposes to treat this issue.

529 Forced Cremation of COVID Deceased and Religious Majoritarianism in Sri Lanka
Lakmali Bhagya Manamperi
Open University, Colombo, Sri Lanka

Abstract

The confounding stance adopted by the Government of Sri Lanka with regard to the last rites of COVID victims is a heated contemporary discourse. The Government’s decision to make cremation of COVID - 19 victims compulsory, justifying it on scientific grounds ignited inter-communal tensions. The idea was vehemently objected to by the religious minority groups in Sri Lanka, especially the Muslims. For Muslims; cremation is forbidden by their religion. They have been supported by sections of the Christian community to whom burial is the traditional way of farewell to the dead. The United Nations Human Rights Commissioner through its recently published report highlights the matter and accuses the government of inciting hatred and violence through such discriminatory policies.

The research taking the approach of a qualitative analysis intended to evaluate critically this policy affixed with the legal architecture of Sri Lanka related to religious rights and freedom. The thesis revolved on two questions: first, is the Sri Lankan non-secular model a high hurdle to accomplish religious rights and second, has COVID - 19 become a tool used by the state to practise discrimination in the society. The two propositions are analyzed intertwined and followed to the conclusion that states which identify themselves strongly with a single religious denomination create less scope for human rights compliance. Therefore, hostilities towards minorities during COVID-19 is in consequence of the dominance of religious majoritarianism in Sri Lanka.

841 The Effect of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Sikhs in Britain
Jaskiran Kaur Bhogal

Abstract
Family and the impact of mental health have been a central focus of the covid-19 pandemic especially in Britain. Building on research I conducted as part of the London School of Economics' Covid and Care research team, in this paper, I will discuss some of the real-life impacts of the pandemic on Sikhs in the West Midlands. The pandemic resulted in a material and somewhat spiritual disruption for Sikhs in Britain both in terms of their well-being and ability to practise their faith authentically.

Based on rapid ethnographic insights, I will describe some of the challenges that Sikhs faced as a result of government policy and the 'invisibility' of the household and the domestic economy. I highlight the specific role that households and Gurdwaras (Sikh places of worship) play in the daily lives and the actual lived realities of my interlocutors. There was a failure to recognise the significance of places of worship at the inception of the Covid pandemic in Britain. Covid-19 affected particularly the freedom to practise Sikh at the Gurdwara whilst still allowing the functionality of these spaces and mechanisms to fill gaps in state welfare provision.

The beginning of the pandemic saw the handling of death as a risk of labelling certain groups as scapegoats, exacerbating tensions between religious groups and justification of further marginalising some communities. The Covid pandemic and policy guidelines have illuminated the treatment of religious minorities in Britain. My paper will spotlight in specifically on the impact of these policies on Sikhs primarily in the West Midlands.

920 Rohingya Refugee in Aceh, Indonesia: Human Solidarity or Religious Solidarity?

Manotar Tampubolon
Faculty of Law, Christian University of Indonesia, Jakarta, Indonesia

Abstract

The primary goal of this qualitative study is to determine whether acquiescence is motivated solely by humanistic concerns or by a sense of belonging. It also looks into whether the perceived religious similarity between the victim and the recipient influences the decision to change the fate of the Rohingya refugee. In this context, I define social solidarity as how Indonesian Acehnese perceive those who practise the same religion as the Rohingya. This paper investigates the concept of solidarity for refugees based on the same religion, which has been heavily influenced by the theory of solidarity for refugees. Throughout this paper, I will discuss the relationship between Rohingya refugees’ problems and religious solidarity. According to this study, Acehnese people in Indonesia tolerate Rohingya refugees because they share a religion, rather than because they have a fundamental human responsibility. These findings suggest that the receiving community sees Rohingya refugees as victims who are exactly like themselves. As a result, I believe the concept of religious solidarity is more relevant than ever.
286-II Negotiating the Crisis: The Role of Sanctuaries as Places of Resilient Religious Experiences
11:50 - 13:20 Friday, 3rd September, 2021
Angela Laghezza, Laura Carnevale, Ada Campione

347 Sacred Places, Economic Risk and the Moral Economy of the Peasant in Late Antique Hispania
Antón Alvar Nuño, Rocío Suárez Vallejo
University of Málaga, Málaga, Spain

Abstract

Our contribution aims at analysing the role of sacred places in rural areas of Late Antique Hispania to cope with perceived economic risk. Loosely following the track of De Martino’s concept “crisis of the presence”, this panel is focused, among other key questions, on how sanctuaries and sacred places acted as netdoms in which daily-life crisis situations intermingled with other sets of religious experience, with consolidated and “in the making” religious narratives related to that particular place, the rituals that took place there and the sacred objects stored there, or with social encounters that reproduced, reinforced or contested the hegemonic dynamics of local power relations.

These ideas, beautifully outlined by the panel chairs in the panel abstract, invite us to reframe the study of religious practices in the rural areas of Late Antique Hispania not in terms of conflict between competing religious options (be it “pagan survivals”, “magic”, religious “heresies” or charismatic holy men/women) but in terms of the individual strategic choices that took part in the processes of decision-making to deal with uncertainty and risk-reduction, and to explore how sacred places were local points of reference to deal with and “objectify” uncertainty. Our methodological framework is based on the concept of the “moral economy of the peasant” defined by, e.g., Polanyi 1957, Thompson 1971 or Scott 1976. Living close to the subsistence margin, small landowners, tenants, day labourers, or agricultural slaves (tenues, inopis, coloni adscripticii or servi rustici) tended to base their economy on a “safety-first” principle, that is, their behaviour was risk-averse and tried to minimise the subjective probability of economic loss instead of opting for profit maximisation. In this regard, there were socio-religious arrangements that operated to offer risk-reduction informal insurances in which sacred places had an important role. Small chapels, churches funded by potentores and domini, or other loci of religious action in rural areas (such as sacralised springs, groves or trees) were locally-available resources in which the factors and circumstances that were considered of risk were defined, and the strategies for managing the collectively shared situations of risk were regulated.

Our sources will consist mainly of the study of the legislation pertaining to rural religion scattered in the Hispanic and Visigothic councils, and the epigraphic evidence related to the protection of crops against meteorological harm but, considering the limited number of sources that describe self-interests, personal reasons, or motives for resorting to religious practices whose aim is to reduce substantially the perception of risk, we will also resort to examples from other areas of the Western Mediterranean for comparative purposes.
Construction and Meaning of a Gaul Sanctuary during Fifth Century Attacks against Paris: Some Hagiographic Evidences

Esther Sánchez-Medina

Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Madrid, Spain

Abstract

The principal source on Genevieve of Paris (Nanterre 420 CE–500 CE) is a hagiographic writing, the *Vita Genovefae* (The Life of Genevieve = *VSG*), dated 520 CE, not without being an issue of discussion among scholars since the 19th century to the present.

*VSG* relates some noteworthy aspects of the barbarian invasions of Romanized Gaul amidst the collapse of the Late Roman Empire. According to the *Vita*, Genevieve played an important role in the various military sieges suffered by Paris during the fifth century, specifically the one of the Huns of Attila in 451 and that of the Frankish king Childeric I between 465-475. Somehow, the actions of this young woman seem to have occurred in the conjuration of the different crises. Foremost she acted as an intermediary between the different groups in conflict and, later, during the siege, provided physical protection to the community and its basic supplies, for which, she performed as a true military leader: requisitioning a fleet, going up the Seine, breaking the military blockade, providing food for the frightened and distressed community, etc.

From the Attila episode or centuries later, during the Viking attack on the city (886), in which a religious ceremony - a *processio* - with the relic of Saint Genevieve made the conqueror retreat, she will be frequently considered in the prayers preceding military operations. Her memory and cult also played a role in the liberation of Meaux from the English army in the 15th century and even in 1914 during the Great War against the Germans. However, the historical significance that this paper aims to analyze mainly depends on her role as builder, or rather, her patronage over the construction of Saint Denis in Catulliacum, an ancient necropolis and the remains of a *martyrium*-probably of the first Christian missionary- and later, the mausoleum of French monarchs and a key pilgrimage site during the Middle Ages.

The process of sponsoring and constructing this building is related in detail and thanks to it we can identify some of the main problems that the people of Paris had: shortage of raw materials, especially stone and wood, but also water, etc., but overall the miracles attributed to the Saint which helped the community to overcome difficulties in the context of the military blockade and to create a strong collective identity. Precisely these miracles gave the shrine of Saint Denis a prominent position in the collective imagination and importance in the sacred topography of the landscape of Late Gaul, becoming soon in a large economic network and in the heart of Paris sacral sites, together with the *Ecclesia* and the Baptistry (Île de la Cité), the Holy Apostles Basilica -called later Saint Genevieve-, Saint Vincent, etc. In time, this would become one of the legitimizing bases of the Frankish monarchy.

Crisis and Rituals of the Pilgrims: The Learning of the Miracula Written in the Diocese of Rouen (Xth-XIIth Centuries)

Lucile Trân-Duc
Abstract

From the Xth century, after the Viking invasions, the foundation of the Norman principality (911) and the monastic restoration, many sanctuaries grew in the diocese of Rouen. Their activity was supported through an intense hagiographical production which was mainly composed of Miracula. They were intended to highlight the efficiency of the relics which were retained there. They inform us about the pilgrimage centres with varying degrees of success. Some have a great influence in Christendom (Saint-Ouen of Rouen) and others a regional (Fécamp, Fontenelle) or local (Duclair) influence. These texts, which present extremely detailed information, show pilgrims who tried to overcome individual or collective crisis through the use of sacred images. They enable us to establish a typology of pilgrims’ motivations, to study the practised rituals through the manipulation of holy remains and through the mediation of the monks who served these religious houses. However, we should question the hagiographers’ intentions. We should ask if these Miracula were an accurate reflection of pilgrims’ practices or if they tried to indicate a specialization of sanctuaries to direct the flows of pilgrims.

470 Resilient Pilgrimage
11:50 - 13:20 Friday, 3rd September, 2021

Dirk Johanssen, Marion Bowman

In the late 20th century/ early 21st century, pilgrimage appeared to be booming in Europe. Greater mobility, enhanced transnational border crossing and the availability of affordable travel; the reframing of traditional pilgrimage routes; the developing interest in ‘storied’ places and pasts; changes in political and religious regimes which allowed a return to certain sites and the revival of religious activity there, all seemed to encourage an ongoing exponential growth in pilgrimage activities. Many different agencies and individuals were and continue to be heavily supportive of and convinced about the spiritual, social, political, economic and personal benefits to be derived from pilgrimage.

Covid 19, with its concomitant limits on mobility and sociability, closed borders, and growing reflections on the wisdom of travel in relation to the environment as well as health has had an impact on pilgrimage in numerous ways. However, travel restrictions and personal peril are nothing new in relation to pilgrimage. Historically, there could be considerable elements of risk in pilgrimage, and diverse disincentives to journeying to specific sites, whether the physical trials of pilgrimage in the middle ages, post-Reformation strictures on pilgrimage praxis and places, or Soviet era restrictions on religious observance of various sorts.

The abrupt disruption and physical discontinuation of much pilgrimage activity in 2020/21 provides a suitable backdrop for considering resilience in relation to pilgrimage. This Open Session examines practical and conceptual aspects of Resilient Pilgrimage, as both historical and contemporary phenomenon. What is resilient about pilgrimage? Can there be a model of resilient pilgrimage? What determines or contributes to resilience in relation to pilgrimage: place, praxis, personality, adaptivity, narratives? From the virtual pilgrimages to Jerusalem made by medieval nuns to the current plethora of online virtual pilgrimage, what is resilient, what remains, when the physical reality of the focus of pilgrimage is threatened, off-limits or absent? We welcome recent historic and fieldwork-based examples of pilgrimage which actively engage
with Resilient Pilgrimage as a systematic focus, enabling exploration of these and other issues in relation to resilient pilgrimage and resilience in relation to pilgrimage.

470 Resilient Pilgrimage - Open Workshop Session
Marion Bowman¹, Dirk Johannsen²

¹The Open University, Milton Keynes, United Kingdom. ²IKOS, University of Oslo, Oslo, Norway

Abstract

In the late 20th century/ early 21st century, pilgrimage appeared to be booming in Europe. Greater mobility, enhanced transnational border crossing and the availability of affordable travel; the reframing of traditional pilgrimages such as the Camino of Santiago de Compostela and myriad examples of ‘Caminoised’ pilgrimage routes; the developing interest in ‘storied’ places and pasts; changes in political and religious regimes which allowed a return to certain sites and the revival of religious activity there, all seemed to encourage an ongoing exponential growth in pilgrimage activities. Many different agencies and individuals were and continue to be heavily supportive of and convinced about the spiritual, social, political, economic and personal benefits to be derived from pilgrimage.

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This Open Workshop session is proposed in relation to Re-storied Sites and Routes as Inclusive Spaces and Places: Shared Imaginations and Multi-layered Heritage (https://restoriedsites.ut.ee/), a collaborative project involving researchers in Estonia, Norway, Lithuania, Latvia and the UK.

Co-chairs: Marion Bowman (marion.bowman@open.ac.uk) and Dirk Johannsen (dirk.johannsen@ikos.uio.no)
Silence as Mode of Resilience: The case of the Church of the Visitation in Trakai

Lina Leparskienė

Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, Vilnius, Lithuania

Abstract

During the period of Perestroīka and after the fall of the Soviet Union, in Lithuania Catholicism has regained its status and respect. People crowded in the churches celebrating not merely the possibility to express freedom of faith without the fear of being punished, but cultural identity as well. It is noticeable, that from 15 countries encompassed within Soviet Union, only Lithuania belongs to the cultural space of the Roman Catholic Church. Belarus, Ukraine and Latvia embody only some regions that are Catholic. That the Church, in the occupation period, should regain its former status was the conscious act of the resistance and disobedience to the regime or simply silent continuation of habitual life despite substantial changes in the outer world. Several important cult sites and pilgrimage destinations in Lithuania acquired political connotations, thus efforts were made to close or destroy them. However, the case of the church of Visitation in Trakai was different: one of the oldest churches in Lithuanian territory (1409), an important pilgrimage site, hosting one of the most venerated pictures of Mary in Lithuania, in the soviet period seemed to have vanished from the map of the cultural memory of the believers.

At that time Trakai turned into an oasis for a silent, sacred and more or less “safe” place to pray, confess or take sacraments for people from Vilnius or other towns. Local parish people from surrounding villages continued their religious practices. Yet the narrative about the previous glory and the power of the place was not communicated. From the perspective of time, such camouflage of silence can be interpreted as an unintentional mode of resilience, that helped to keep the church open.

Transformations of historical narratives, identities, social life in the course of the XXth century, when the Eastern part of contemporary Lithuania was indoctrinated by several political visions (Tsarist, Polish, Soviet, Lithuanian) are important factors to understand the reasons for the degradation of Trakai as a Catholic cult site. Only 10 years of the XXth century have passed under the influence of modern Lithuanian culture, which is still undergoing the process of revitalization of historical and cultural memory of Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which ended its political existence in 1795. This context matters, as back in the XVII century the fame of the church of Visitation in Trakai was initially intended to remind people of the most glory periods of this country.

Cultural resilience depends on the ability to survive challenges and keep the balance between change and continuity. The resilience of faith and place memory in Trakai could be analyzed separately, but a synchronic approach is better if we are dealing with the oral materials based on autobiographical stories of people. Life narratives enclose important microcontents of reality behind the facade of silence. Therefore, the Soviet epoque when it seemed that nothing important had happened, might serve as the fulcrum to explore the transformations of cultural memory not only as result of demographic and political changes, but as an intersubjective creative process too. From such perspectives, new forms of the identity of this holy place and alternative reasons of pilgrimage might be distinguished.
843 Hard Times in Aglona: How Did Latvia’s Major Pilgrimage Site Survive the Occupations?
Agita Misāne
Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art, University of Latvia, Riga, Latvia

Abstract
This paper, based on biographical, archival and media sources, will discuss the evidence for strategies of survival of the Roman Catholic community in Aglona – a village in the South-eastern part of Latvia and the site of the Basilica of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, one of the most important Catholic spiritual centers and pilgrimage destinations in Northern Europe, in particular during the Soviet times.

844 “Sacred Mount Sumeru Is Always at My Backyard!”: Symbolic and Other Forms of Pilgrimage of Contemporary Mongolian Communities
Alevtina Solovyeva
University of Tartu, Tartu, Estonia

Abstract
This paper examines traditional and new forms of pilgrimage, popular in Mongolian communities in the 21st century. Those include a diversity of individual and collective journeys with various destinations, purposes and meanings. Places of visits are represented by sacred locations such as Buddhist temples, natural worshiped objects, mountains, rocks, trees, springs, old archaeological artefacts, “spots of energy” and other loci semanticised in vernacular traditions. These places usually have multiple affiliations with different religious practices (Buddhist, shamanist, local ritual traditions, New Age religious cults, etc.). They also often have their own specialisations: some of the loci are supposed to bestow children, or to grant wishes, or to give strength and luck to win in traditional and very prestigious competitions, or to charge with a special healing radiation and so on. Practices of the pilgrimage reflect not only a specific picture of contemporary vernacular beliefs, but also deliver characteristics of communal and intercommunal relations of Mongolian groups in the past and present.

In this paper, I pay special attention to one specific form – the symbolic or “imaginary” pilgrimage. This type is popular in ritual practices and special genres as charms, and have parallels in other cultures (in a form of a symbolic journey to the holy locus). In contemporary Mongolian practices, it has much wider applications and includes a number of various situations beyond the traditional generic borders. In my presentation, I discuss features and functions of “imaginary” pilgrimage as well as its historical and social contexts in Mongolian traditions. The research is based on fieldwork materials, collected in various parts of Mongolia, Inner Mongolia (China) and Buryatia (2006-2019), digital fieldwork 2019-2021 and written sources.

Lunch
13:20 - 14:40 Friday, 3rd September, 2021
482-III Change, Order, Remembrance: Crisis and Religion in the Ancient Near East ONLINE
14:40 - 16:20 Friday, 3rd September, 2021

Johannes Bach

458 A Temple Collapses – How to Deal with a Religious Crisis in Neo-Babylonian Sippar
Frauke Weiershäuser, Jamie Novotny
LMU, Munich, Germany

Abstract

When Nabonidus became king of Babylon in 555 BC, the temple of the sun-god Šamaš in Sippar, which went by the Sumerian ceremonial name Ebabbar, was in a lamentable state of repair and badly in need of renovation, despite the fact that his predecessor Nebuchadnezzar II (604–562 BC) had completely rebuilt it only a few years earlier. In inscriptions commemorating the reconstruction of this revered temple, Nabonidus not only describes his own achievements and the splendor of the newly-constructed building, but also points out the mistakes his predecessor had made that ultimately led to the premature ruin of Šamaš's earthly abode.

In this short presentation, we will discuss Nebuchadnezzar’s alleged construction errors, which according to Nabonidus, the last native king of Babylon, were the sole reason that Ebabbar, one of Babylonia’s most important temples, collapsed unexpectedly, as well as the manifold and meticulous measures taken by him in order to address this religious crisis. Moreover, we will talk about the manner in which Nabonidus blames Nebuchadnezzar II for this disaster, which could have been avoided, and presents himself as the only pious king who could resolve this perceived catastrophe.

558 Aftermath: Damage Control and Recovery in Neo-Babylonian Temples
Shana Zaja
University of Vienna, Vienna, Austria

Abstract

Temples were important institutions in the Neo-Babylonian Empire (626-539 BCE), generally acting as liaisons between the king and their local communities. Some members of the temple personnel had roles in the state apparatus as well, providing organizational or administrative support. Cultic staff of many temples were also expected to take part in national festivals, routinely traveling up to the capital at Babylon. Moreover, temples could act as repositories of wealth and resources and provide these assets in times of need. As a result, temples were not simply places of worship but were often embroiled in state-level affairs, either directly participating in or being affected by larger issues in the Empire. In addition, temples could experience local or regional problems. No matter what crisis the temple was facing, however, temples had a
responsibility to continue the daily cult, observe special festival days, and care for its personnel and local community. Thus, the questions are: how did temples cope with crises, both those occurring locally and in the Empire at large? In particular, how did the temple and its community recover and rebuild afterwards? Were there differences depending on whether the crisis was long or short term, local or Empire-wide? This paper will address these questions to better understand the role of religion, particularly institutionalized religion, in the aftermath of crisis.

324 Crisis in Camouflage: 484 BCE and Its Impact on Cult and Religion in Babylon
Céline Debourse
University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland

Abstract

The year 484 BCE marks one of Babylonia’s worst moments of crisis during the first millennium BCE. The extent of its impact is still not fully probed, and especially its consequences for matters of religion and cult remain ambiguous. While the drastic changes in the religious landscape of Uruk following the events of 484 BCE have been the subject of much scholarly attention, very few have acknowledged the effects of this crisis on the religion and cult in the city of Babylon. Claims of religious continuity are the norm, both in the modern academic discourse and – perhaps surprisingly – in some of the cuneiform sources of the period. Verily, Late Babylonian ritual texts as well as other documents, such as chronicles and Astronomical Diaries, seem to present an image of an undisturbed religious life in Babylon’s temples. However, elements of change are hidden in plain sight in many of those documents, if one endeavors to look for them. In this paper, a more nuanced picture of the cult and religion in Babylon after 484 BCE is painted, one that takes into account change as well as continuity.

370-I Recovering from Crises – Forging Resilience: The Role of Religious Narratives in Fashioning Socio-Political Stability in Antiquity ONLINE
14:40 - 16:20 Friday, 3rd September, 2021

Marika Rauhala
Since religion was a key element of communal identity in Greco-Roman world, its role in crisis recovery is crucial for understanding the mechanisms of resilience and recovery preparedness. Religious considerations permeated all social and political structures, they shaped the interpretation of various events and informed all actions. A crisis indicated a rupture in the relationship with the gods that threatened the continued prosperity of the community. Therefore, the underlying religious causes needed to be expounded and corrected by performing due ritual actions. As serious disasters potentially threatened the core values and defining beliefs of the community, religious responses created a sense of control over the situation, while religious narratives would construct meaning.

The approaches developed in disaster and crisis research ascertain that crises ultimately arise from social, historical, and cultural processes that render communities vulnerable to the hazards in their natural and social environments. Thus, crises are a matter of perception and socially constructed events. Furthermore, cultural turn in disaster studies has established that certain situations are framed as crises through communicative acts and that communal resilience requires understanding the role of religion in generating and preventing crises. For instance, the commemoration of crises in narratives, rituals, and other cultural products fosters communal recovery and serves as a source of resilience. On the other hand, crises generally open up opportunities for social and political change, because they create contexts in which power arrangements are put to the test. By definition, crises are events that expose the vulnerability of a society, as it fails to provide for the basic needs of its members. Therefore, religious means of crisis management may strengthen as well as destabilize existing power structures.

This workshop aims at examining the manifold role of religious narratives as a source of resilience in the Greco-Roman world. The assumption is that the ruling powers sought to restore socio-political balance during and after a crisis and, thus, maintain the status quo. Accordingly, it is assumed that the official communication sought to represent the ruling powers as a stabilizing force, which also affected the way in which chosen actions were rationalized in public discourse. Yet, this does not mean to say that official narrative would have been the only one or that the framing of a crisis and its religious interpretation would have remained the same at all times and in different quarters. Therefore, the individual papers of the workshop aim at shedding light at the variegated representations of the religious causes and consequences of crises in written sources. What religious meanings various authors offered for crises and how did it affect their interpretation of appropriate religious measures? Did literary narratives of different authors support chosen courses of action or did they voice criticism of the establishment and thus encourage social and political change? Equally, the role of religious narratives in the post-crisis recovery will be assessed: Which religious actions did ancient authors represent as fostering communal resilience?

397 Xerxes’ Campaign and the Shifting Modes of Religious Meaning: Narrating Communal Resilience in Ancient Greece
Marika Rauhala
University of Oulu, Oulu, Finland

Abstract

In 480 BCE, the Persian Great King Xerxes embarked on a military expedition against the Greek city states, demanding their complete submission. Thus, ten years after weathering the invasion by Xerxes’ father Darius I, the disunited and discordant Greeks again faced an overwhelming number of invading troops in their struggle for autonomy. However, under the leadership of the Spartan King Leonidas, a small number of Greeks heroically delayed the advance of Xerxes’ land forces at Thermopylae, while the naval battle in the
straits of Salamis, manoeuvred by the Athenian general Themistocles, and the final land battle at Plataea secured the Greek victory over the Persians. Many reports testified to divine support to the Greek war efforts, and the gods’ contribution to the victory was duly recognized in various forms of commemoration. As a result, this unlikely triumph became etched on the Greek collective memory as a proof of the blessings of divine providence they enjoyed.

Nonetheless, authors writing in different historical contexts offered their own interpretations of the religious meaning of the events surrounding Xerxes’ expedition. In my paper, I will discuss the varying ways of representing the religious rationales and implications of Xerxes’ defeat in the accounts of Aeschylus, an Athenian playwright and a veteran of the Persian wars, the Carian historian Herodotus, writing in the shadow of the Peloponnesian war, and the Sicilian historian Diodorus, a Greek writer under Roman dominion. In his tragedy *The Persians*, Aeschylus portrays the Greek victory from the Persian perspective. This unusual viewpoint allows Aeschylus to subtly examine the religious failings of the Persians that had led to their impudent attack and subsequent collapse. Herodotus, in his turn, clearly attributes Xerxes’ defeat to his presumptuousness, which was a serious religious error, but he also cautions the Greeks from repeating this mistake. Even though Diodorus is often scolded for his alleged unoriginality, he introduces to this historical episode a conspicuously parochial outlook that emphasizes the significance of local piety in the wider Mediterranean context.

Certain momentous historical events develop into the reference points of society’s collective memory, reproduced in writings, monuments, and rituals, and interpreted and utilized in a way that is meaningful at each point in time. This kind of transmitted cultural knowledge functions as the guiding principle for the community’s performance and experiences, forming the basis for their perception of unity and continuity. Empowering narratives about divine support that helped overcome the potentially calamitous crisis brought on by the Greco-Persian conflict inspired the Greeks with conviction that, by following the commands of traditional piety, seemingly insurmountable difficulties could be conquered. By focusing on the renderings of three different authors representing different viewpoints, I will consider, first, how religious motifs were employed in crisis narratives to construct meaning and, second, how these narratives helped build communal resilience in different historical settings.

481 Narratives of Mistrust: ‘Scapegoat Rituals’ in Ancient Greek Religion

Esther Eidinow

University of Bristol, Bristol, United Kingdom

Abstract

This paper builds on our panel’s proposals, first, that ‘crises are a matter of perception and socially constructed events’, and secondly, that ‘certain situations are framed as crises through communicative acts, and that communal resilience requires understanding the role of religion in generating and preventing crises’. This paper examines the role of mistrust in ancient Greek relations with the gods, arguing that in the context of ancient Greek religion, trust was far from easy. The unknowability of the gods meant that there were no securely positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of the divine. Instead, mistrust—both of the gods, but also of other members of one’s community with relation to the gods—was a crucial dynamic, shaping social forms, including ritual actions.

To illustrate this argument, this paper looks at the wide range of narratives from which we learn about so-called ‘scapegoat rituals’ in different ancient Greek communities. Moving away from the traditional scholarly approach to these rituals as alluding to counterparts of mythical sacrificial ‘deaths’ or demonic
expulsions, it argues that these rituals were a community’s embodied response to mortal mistrust both of the gods and of one’s fellow mortals. It argues that this ritual asserted certainty by creating division: mortal/divine, self/other, responsible/innocent, pure/impure, citizen/stranger. But even as it did so, it provided a constant reminder of the spiritual insecurity, the mistrust and ambiguity, on which those fragile divisions depended.

410 Prodigies and Expiatory Rites during the Second Punic War: Religious Crisis Management in Livy’s Third Decade
Maria-Leena Hänninen
University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland

Abstract

The Romans tried to maintain the pax deorum, the peace between humans and gods with the help of regular festivals. Sometimes, however, the city of Rome was struck by some kind of crisis and the crisis was interpreted as caused by the anger of the gods. In addition to such crisis as epidemics, e.g., various natural phenomena could be considered signs of divine disfavour. Some of these signs got the status of prodigia publica, portents concerning the whole state, by the Roman senate. Rituals needed to placate gods were also ordered by the senate. Prayers, sacrifices, processions, new cult statues and completely new cults were among the ritual methods of placating the divine forces. When needed, the entire people of Rome was engaged in expiatory rituals.

Lists of prodigies and expiatory rites are given by several ancient historians, most regularly by Livy, especially in the third decade of his Ab urbe condita. From the beginning of the Second Punic war Livy mentions prodigy reports and expiatory measures every year. My paper deals with expiatory rituals performed during the Second Punic War as depicted by Livy. I’m interested in the role of the prodigy lists and descriptions of the rituals in the historical narrative of the times of crisis. Furthermore, I’m interested in the various actors in the process of announcing and expiating prodigies. Some of the expiatory rites appear to have been gender specific. Thirdly, I’m also interested in the nature of the various rituals carried out to placate the gods. The focus of the paper will be in considering the interpretation of the expiatory rituals as a sort of religious crisis management increasing the resilience of a people in war.

662-I Dinamiche Ritali e Strategie di Resilienza nella Tardoantichità ONLINE
14:40 - 16:20 Friday, 3rd September, 2021
Emanuele Castelli, Mariangela Monaca
“Resilienza”: capacità di ogni uomo di ripensare se stesso di fronte alle avversità dell’esistenza, capacità di ogni ethnos di risemantizzare se stesso dinanzi a cambiamenti storici e sociali di ampia portata, orientandosi tra persistenze e mutazioni.

In un’epoca, come quella tardoantica, che ha visto il Mediterraneo farsi crocevia di popoli e culture, capaci di coabitare tra le medesime sponde e di integrarsi rimodellandosi a vicenda – pur mantenendo ciascuna salda la propria specifica identità etnica, sociale e, dunque, religiosa - parlare di “strategie di resilienza” significa a nostro avviso “ripartire” dalle religioni, con i loro culti e i loro riti (e con i luoghi che ne sono lo scenario), per intenderle come espressione viva e pulsante di tutto il portato culturale di quegli stessi popoli che in esse si ri-conoscono.

I “fatti” religiosi -letti secondo una prospettiva storico-comparativa nelle loro forme insieme diverse ed analoghe- si profilano, infatti, con la loro connaturata e spiccata attitudine alla resilienza, come gli “strumenti” più idonei a facilitare operazioni di adattamento, attivabili dall’individuo e dalla società “al bisogno”, ovvero in risposta e come argine ad un processo di “crisi” e di trasformazione che li vede coinvolti.

Antiche e nuove “saggezze” entrano a confronto in questa realtà storico-religiosa per diverse ragioni frastagliata e multiforme, i cui tratti emergono chiaramente dalle fonti, tra cerimonie religiose e prassi mitico-rituali, operazioni magiche e culti taumaturgici, tra luoghi condivisi e spazi rielaborati e contesi, tra parole e testi, tra oggetti e simboli.

Sono questi i testimoni delle strategie individuali o collettive messe in atto per trasformarsi in risorse, proprio attraverso il ripensamento ed il rimodellamento di quei riti antichi che sembrano aver assunto colori sbiaditi. Essi -come un “fiume carsico” che scorre sotterraneo per riemergere con forza in superficie- si ripresentano ora diversamente vitali, ciascuno portavoce, più o meno evidente, di un processo di adattamento “resiliente” vissuto dagli stessi praticanti del rito.

Tale complessa operazione di adattamento lascia di certo un segno indelebile nel tessuto religioso di questi mondi, ciascuno capace di presentarsi all’individuo come una nuova proposta di salvezza dai pathemata dell’esistenza, che sia essa utopica o locativa, concessa dai molti dèi dei politeismi o dall’unico e vero Dio delle religioni abramitiche.

Dalla Grecia all’Oriente, dall’Egitto alla Sicilia, dalla Palestina a Roma, da Roma ai confini dell’Impero … e ritorno, come in flusso ininterrotto d’eventi.

Proporre un viaggio attraverso queste mutazioni e mutuazioni storiche, con lo sguardo fisso su alcune dinamiche scelte come case studies, è dunque lo scopo dei contributi proposti in questo Panel.

Alla stregua di piccole tessere di un mosaico più ampio e cangiante essi offriranno allo studioso un quadro complessivo di questo milieus culturale, con tutti i suoi processi di trasformazione e resistenza, in una mescolanza difficilmente districabile tra tradizione e innovazione, continuità e cambiamento.

560 Resilienza e riti magici. Si può parlare di resilienza nelle pratiche magiche?
La testimonianza dei PGM

Emilio Suárez de la Torre

Pompeu Fabra University, Barcelona, Spain
Abstract

L’attività magica e il lavoro del professionista della magia sono un chiaro esempio di adattamento resiliente alle più diverse circostanze storiche e sociali. Il caso dell’Egitto greco-romano è decisivo da questo punto di vista: in generale, si può dire che qui il professionista della magia è passato attraverso un’evoluzione radicale, partendo da un momento storico nel quale non c’era una netta differenza tra magia e religione e le pratiche magiche si sviluppavano all’interno del tempio, per arrivare (dopo molti adattamenti) a essere un personaggio quasi marginale in possesso di conoscenze considerate pericolose.

Se voleva sopravvivere ai cambiamenti, il professionista della magia doveva essere in possesso di conoscenze molto diverse che dovevano combinare elementi tradizionali imprescindibili con novità e innovazioni non meno necessarie. Pensiamo alla varietà di questi elementi:

1. La persistenza di formule adeguate, sostanze, animali, onomata barbara, voces magicae, componenti visuali (disposizioni di lettere e formule in formazioni diverse, disegni), ecc.
2. Componenti letterarie e poetiche riadattate e combinate con finalità varie.

Inoltre, questi strumenti sono condizionati sincronicamente e diacronicamente da contesti diversi, tra i quali è fondamentale quello religioso, tanto per quel che riguarda la prospettiva delle tradizioni religiose quanto quella del momento storico, con i suoi condizionamenti religiosi, politici e sociali.

Tutto questo ci permette di parlare di un adattamento resiliente, assai “creativo”, e a questo proposito abbiamo scelto alcuni esempi che illustrano bene queste idee.

604 Riti Sacrificali e Ingredienti nei Papiri Magici: Un Braccio di Ferro tra Resilienza e Adattamento
Eleni Chronopoulou
University of Zaragoza, Zaragoza, Spain

Abstract

I riti sacrificali nei papiri magici hanno attirato l’attenzione degli studiosi e finora sull’argomento sono state elaborate varie teorie, con le quali si stanno cercando di spiegare le divergenze dalle pratiche sacrificiali tradizionali della religione ufficiale: le più importanti sono la teoria della miniaturizzazione e la teoria della distorsione-reversione. Tuttavia, è stata prestata meno attenzione alle offerte non animali, che hanno una tradizione molto lunga nella religione greca ed egiziana. Nonostante i loro prezzi elevati e l’uso talvolta poco pratico al di fuori dei templi e dei santuari, questi particolari ingredienti resistono e sono attestati nel corpus dei Papiri Magici Greci come parte dei sacrifici. In questo intervento, mi concentrerò su di essi ed esplorerò la loro tradizione, che può spiegare la loro resilienza e le ragioni della loro presenza in un contesto così diverso.
Strategie di Adattamento e Innovazione nel Rituale Magico: Il Caso degli Inni

Miriam Blanco Cesteros
Universidad Complutense, Madrid, Spain

Abstract

Gli studiosi concordano sul fatto che i cosiddetti maghi greco-egiziani facevano ampio uso di varie forme di espressione rituale impiegate anche nei riti religiosi, a tal punto che, sotto molti aspetti, la magia greco-egiziana non è diversa dalle forme di espressione rituale considerate religiose. Questo articolo si propone di esplorare l’eccezionale capacità di questi ritualisti di adattare elementi del campo religioso a contesti rituali diversi attraverso l’analisi di un particolare tipo di logos magico, l’inno. Sarà quindi interessante vedere quali strategie e meccanismi sono stati adottati per rendere possibile l’adattamento di una forma di espressione nata da e per un contesto religioso – il cui modello è preso in particolare dagli inni religioso-letterari greci – all’ambiente rituale della magia per soddisfare un pubblico multicultural e multireligioso.

Quale Filosofia Trarre dagli Oracoli? “Inquietudini Barbare” in Porfirio

Michela Zago
Università degli Studi di Padova, Padova, Italy

Abstract

Il trattato *De philosophia ex oraculis haurienda* è un’opera complessa e sfuggente, a noi nota solo da citazioni di autori cristiani. In essa si avverte il senso di smarrimento vissuto dal filosofo Porfirio di Tiro (233-305 d.C. circa) così come la sua ricerca di un baricentro che dia senso a un’intera tradizione culturale che sta vacillando. L’orientamento in senso monoteista e universalista che egli dà agli oracoli testimonia lo sforzo di riscattare una cultura tradizionale e di individuare nel metodo filosofico una forma di salvezza personale. All’interno di questo quadro generale si ragionerà sulla posizione di Porfirio rispetto alle cosiddette “saggezze barbare”.

The Resilience of Religious Minorities: Examples from the Middle Ages

14:40 - 16:20 Friday, 3rd September, 2021

Ilias Nesseris

In many regions of Europe and the Middle East throughout the Middle Ages, religion was the most accessible framework in which resilience could be practiced, experienced and theorized. This panel explores the resilience of religious minorities in the context of their environment, with a focus on the Christian Orthodox communities in Southern Italy, against the background of Catholic Christianity, and in the Levant, against the background of both Islam and miaphysite Christianity. The strategies pursued by
these minority groups in order to secure their long-term existence center around their devotional practices. What is distinctive about the way they celebrate the liturgy (Treiger)? How do they structure the year through feasts in commemoration of saints (Galadza)? How is the endurance of these practices supported through the creation of books (Rossetto)?

288 Melkite Liturgical Practices: New Evidence from Christian Arabic Sources

Alexander Treiger

Dalhousie University, Halifax, NS, Canada

Abstract

Christian Arabic Studies is a burgeoning field. Its significance lies in the fact that hundreds of texts of first-rate importance (theological treatises, historical chronicles, archival documents etc.) still lie unedited and poorly investigated in medieval manuscripts dispersed across the globe. Several of these texts shed new light on the liturgical practices of the Melkite Church, i.e., the Middle-Eastern branch of the Chalcedonian Orthodox Church comprising the patriarchates of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem. The purpose of the proposed contribution is to investigate what new information about Melkite liturgical practices can be gleaned from Christian Arabic literature. Among the sources to be examined are the following: Elias of Nisibis' Book of Demonstration (Kitāb al-Burhān), Mark of Alexandria's Epistle to Abbot George of Damietta, Macarius of Sinai's Responsum on Cheesefare Week, the Copto-Arabic treatise Arrangement of Priesthood (Tartīb al-kahanūt), and several others.

456 Book Production as an Affirmation of Religious Identity: The Case of the Greek Communities of Southern Italy in the Middle Ages

Giulia Rossetto

Division of Byzantine Research/IMAFO, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna, Austria

Abstract

Southern Italy has always been a crossroads of people and cultures. Among these are the Byzantine Greeks, whose presence has left tangible traces until today. During the Middle Ages, Greek-speaking communities were present in strictly delimited zones of Southern Italy, the main centres being Calabria, Salento, and specific areas of Sicily.

In these regions, aspects of Byzantine culture permeated society. Religion was one of the strongest and most distinctive. Indeed, the customs and the ecclesiastical organization attest true distinctions between the Byzantine Greeks of Southern Italy and the rest of the population: bearded monks and married priests were not common in the West; liturgical practices and calendars of saints were different. How were these practices preserved and continued over the centuries?

In this paper, I will deal with book production as a way to perpetuate and affirm religious identity. Italo-Greek handwritten documentation emerged in the 8th-9th centuries and lasted until the 13th century. I will
focus on liturgical manuscripts such as *euchologia* (prayerbooks), since such books were created for daily use. While aiming to maintain the distinct cultural and religious tradition of Byzantium, they also show evidence of modifications and adaptations to local practices.

My contribution aims at demonstrating how the endurance of specific Byzantine liturgical practices otherwise unknown to Latin-speaking medieval Italy were supported through the creation of liturgical books in the region. Moreover, it aims at showing how local western uses slowly entered Byzantine liturgical books, giving rise to a unique fusion which is typical of Southern Italy.

533 Resilient Traditions and the Clash of Calendars: Greek and Melkite Communities in Southern Italy and Palestine

*Daniel Galadza*

*University of Regensburg, Centre for Advanced Study “Beyond Canon”, Regensburg, Germany*

**Abstract**

Working, resting, and celebrating according to a common rhythm is an important sign of cohesive communities and societies. Celebrations of holy days and holidays in liturgical calendars form traditions that help resist and survive wars, overcome natural disasters, and endure pandemics. For the Byzantine Rite Eastern Christian communities of the Eastern Mediterranean, religious rites and rituals were crucial to survive and maintain identities distinct from other religious groups—whether among indigenous churches present for centuries or among newly-arrived immigrants in the wake of political or military occupation.

This paper examines the liturgical calendars of two Eastern Christian groups that became minorities in their respective regions during the Middle Ages: the Melkites of Palestine, whose status changed from dominant church to a minority under the early Abbasid Caliphate, and the Greek-praying communities of Southern Italy in close contact with neighbouring Latin Christians. Manuscript sources reveal that Melkites in Jerusalem and Palestine preserved their local traditions until c.1000 ce but, finding themselves to be a minority in a Muslim majority society, eventually discarded their own traditions and adopted the liturgical practices of coreligionists in Constantinople and the Byzantine Empire. In the case of Southern Italy, rather than abandoning local traditions to align themselves with coreligionists in the Byzantine capital, the Greek-praying Christians fused local Greek and Latin practices from liturgical calendars in their community celebrations.

The primary sources for this examination of resilient and clashing traditions are the calendars in manuscripts of *euchologia* (prayer books) and lectionaries today preserved in the libraries of Grottaferrata, Mount Sinai, and the Vatican.
340 Studying Soundscapes in the Study of Religion: Textual Analysis of Popular Hymnodies

Kinga Povedák

MTA-SZTE ‘Convivince’ Religious Pluralism Research Group, Szeged, Hungary

Abstract

With the material turn in the study of religion, there is growing attention being paid to material and embodied practices, sensational forms, and the mediation of religion (Morgan 2010, Meyer 2009). While more and more scholars engage with the “lived religion” approach (Ammerman 2006, Primiano 1995) and elevate attention to lived practices, sound is rarely privileged as a means of interrogation or methodological practice in the study of religion (Muir 2019). In the past decade, the emergent interdisciplinary field of Christian Congregational Music Studies (Porter 2014) started to fill the void with a focus on mostly Pentecostal-charismatic and Evangelical congregational musicking. However, there is still scarce literature discussing Catholic musical practices and little attention has been paid to the musicality and musical practices of Christianity in general in Central and Eastern Europe, and Catholicism in particular (Povedák 2019). I argue that the soundscapes of Catholicism and its material forms provide a deeper understanding of CEE lifeworlds, therefore, the role of sound in methodological epistemologies (Muir 2019) should be taken seriously in order to address the “disciplinary deafness” (Weiner 2009) in the study of religions. In this paper, I look at the Catholic popular hymnody produced in the past 50 years in Hungary as a performative way of knowledge production. Through a textual approach, I analyze the hymnody as an informal, bottom-up and vernacular body of text. I focus on my research findings regarding the inherent meanings related to memory, past and historical trauma reflected in the affective expressions in this unique corpus of religious songs. I look at how popular hymnody not only engenders and performs vernacular theologies but can also become a point of connection enabling individuals to locate themselves in the social and cultural space and reflect on social experiences. Finally, I show how the application of a narrative approach on the soundscapes of Catholicism can shed light on the meaning-making processes of communities through their religious musical expression.

New Religious Movements in the Post-Soviet Space: From a “Destructive” Sect to a “Respectable” Church (Reflections, Problems, and Prospects After Thirty Years of History)
Abstract

It was not easy for new religious movements (NRM) to fit into the religious life of post-Soviet countries. Over the years of their existence, they have become an element of religious landscape, however, the history of NRMs in the post-Soviet space can be qualified as contradictory, determined both by successes and defeats. As a whole, post-communist societies of the former USSR have largely not yet accepted the NRMs as being native and natural.

It is believed that new religious movements are not ready to adapt to the surrounding socio-political circumstances and to compromise with the social majority, because they have a firm conviction that only they possess the ultimate truth. Is that really so? How have NRMs in the post-Soviet space changed in almost 30 years of operation? What was the path of NRMs from sect to Church? And whether they have undertaken it successfully?

Does joining non-traditional religious groups end in social collapse, or can it help to find meaning of life and a self-realization? Is there really a different culture behind each non-traditional religion, that doesn’t coincide with the local one? Does plurality really create the conditions for free choice of religions, but are these conditions the same for traditional and new religions? What is the relationship between the NRMs and local or state authorities? Have the NRMs affirmed respect for the human right to personal choice? Does the experience based on the idea of equality of all religions before the law work in the post-USSR countries?

The analysis of not only statistical data, but first of all the results of surveys conducted by the authors with representatives of new religious communities and of the expert community, will reflect the real processes in the neo-religious environment and give us the answers about their real situation, problems and prospects in the post-Soviet space after their thirty-year history.
the people of Ukraine. By historical traumas we mean, for example, the totalitarian regime that took place in history of modern Ukraine, Stalinist repressions, genocide of the Ukrainian people - Holodomor, lack of the right to self-identification in the past (for example, Ukrainian language suppression) and so on. Historical traumas related to the lack of the right to self-identification could naturally affect the desire of the Ukrainian people to have a National Church. Ukrainians could identify their historical traumas and sufferings with the central government of the political entity in which they lived. Due to the Eastern Christian tradition of the relationship between the religious and power branches, citizens could associate a religious organization (whose governing bodies were located in the same place as the governing bodies of oppression) with the above-mentioned authorities.

The results of surveys and the method of historical research is used to study the possible impact on the religious preferences of a population impacted by hybrid war against Ukraine, an attempt of taking over gained sovereignty. Suggesting that the Church has a meaningful impact on political preferences and the worldview of its worshipers, a large proportion of the population believes it is rational for the religious organization to act as a stabilizing factor countering Russian hybrid war against Ukraine. "Political dependence of the nation" due to the location of religious centres of the largest religious organizations in Ukraine outside the sovereign country [Л.О. Рощина. (2009). Держава і церква в умовах формування громадянського суспільства в Україні. Наука. Релігія. Суспільство, № 3 с. 68] in the circumstances of the current Russo-Ukrainian War may seem unacceptable to the majority of the population who supported the creation of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine. At the same time, believers may involuntarily face internal dissonance when attending churches because they may feel their actual belonging to one ethnic community along with a sense of need (according to the paradigm of church self-determination) to be part of another ethnic community. At the subconscious level, this can distract from the most important and almost the only purpose of attending church - to meet purely religious needs.

711 Wounded Collective Identity. Towards an autopoietic approach to Central and Eastern Europe

András Máté-Tóth

University of Szeged, Szeged, Hungary

Abstract

The region called Central and Eastern Europe is interpreted from very different viewpoints: as the post-communist region of Europe, as the second historical area of Europe, as the region of the new democracies, etc. In my understanding, the appropriate hermeneutic should start with the in-between status of the region between the two cultural, political, and military hegemonies of the East and of the West. In my approach, I focus, first of all, on the historical and contemporary social experiences of the societies of the region. After authoring many theoretical and analytical works on it, I have come to believe that the key characteristic of the region is its wounded collective identity. The main narrative in the region is backward-looking and nostalgic, also characterized by a feeling of victimhood and revenge feelings. Nationalism and xenophobia in the region are consequences of this traumatized self-understanding. To understand Central and Eastern Europe one must understand the wounds of history and the role of the trauma-centred narratives of today.

From this type of understanding of the region, I try to analyze the role of religions, churches, and religious worldviews. I argue for the interpretation of religion inclusive of its many dimensions from the viewpoint of
wounded collective identity. First, the behaviour of the churches and other religious institutions is stability-concentrated because of the heritage of instability. The often criticized traditionalism, conservatism, and the higher preference of institutions rather than of charisma are the consequences of the wounded collective identity. Second, the appropriate question for the analysis of religion is, what kind of function religious worldviews and institutions have concerning the challenges of societal cohesion in the societies of wounded collective identity.

395-II The Voices from the Outskirts: Discourses on Religion and Resilience in Modern Context
14:40 - 16:20 Friday, 3rd September, 2021

Jana Valtrová

503 International Catholic Community, Friendship, and Homemaking among Expatriates in Brno

Milan Fujda, Michaela Ondrašinová, Miroslav Vrzal

Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic

Abstract

I will present the results of our qualitative study of the quality of life of highly skilled migrants in Brno. I will thematize the issue of homemaking in the new socio-space and its relation to social integration. Particularly I will focus on answering the question, why and how the Brno international Catholic community is able to facilitate the quick homemaking of its members while, at the same time, it does not mediate their integration into the wider society. The crucial role of community, friendship, and shared experience of relocation among international Catholics, along with the significance of the language barrier and the uncertainty concerning the attitude of the majority towards Catholicism will be demonstrated.

419 “It Is Not about What They Say, but How They Say It!”: Language Use within One Expatriate Sports Club

Michaela Žáková

Department for the Study of Religions, Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic

Abstract

The Orange Cricket Club is a sports club whose members are expatriates of different races, religions, habits, identities. Its members are individuals originating from traditional cricket countries (most of them are
Indians, then Pakistanis, Australians, South Africans, New Zealanders) who share experiences with migration and are interested in playing their favourite sport in the “hosting” context of the Czech Republic. The paper explores the specificity of language use in shaping the club members’ social relationships in this multicultural environment. It explains how language as a discursive practice represents a way to collective self-presentation, building bonding social nets and resilience (adapting to new conditions and overcoming crises caused by relocation). Thus, through discursive analysis of interview transcripts and fieldnotes, the paper focuses on ways the language is used (not only) as a means of communication in a specific social/cultural context.

821 From Pathological Symptoms to Meaningful Life Experiences
Matej Paulík
Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic

Abstract

In my presentation, I analyze the role of alternative spiritualities in the reinterpretation of unusual psychosomatic experiences as meaningful life experiences. By unusual experiences I mean experiences on the border between psychiatric disorders and spiritual vision like hearing voices or changes in sensory perception. In the context of everyday life such experiences often result in a variety of existential problems and crises disrupting normal structures of everyday life of my interviewees by bringing disorientation into a normal course of life and, hence, the search for assistance and help, including psychiatric intervention. There is always uncertainty about the nature of these experiences, but in the end, all of my interviewees began to look for other than psychiatric explanations for them due to a stigma related with their pathologization. Alternative, non-pathologic, interpretations open new possibilities of handling these critical moments of life. My goal is to show how alternative spiritualities help practically to gain control of these disrupting situations.

135 Soka Gakkai: Resilience and Solidarity in a Global Buddhist Movement
14:40 - 16:20 Friday, 3rd September, 2021
Massimo Introvigne

This proposal is for a session that would examine different aspects of the category of resilience as applied to the global Buddhist movement Soka Gakkai. The first paper will examine the notion of resilience in the philosophy and theology of Soka Gakkai. The second will discuss how this notion was applied by Soka Gakkai during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. The third paper will examine the resilience of Soka Gakkai in Italy, when it was confronted with internal divisions and external criticism. The fourth and fifth papers will deal with France. One will deal with Soka Gakkai’s special interest for Victor Hugo, what the Buddhist movement learned from the French writer about resilience, particularly through the novel Les misérables, and how Hugo remains a significant presence in contemporary Soka Gakkai discourse about resilience. The second paper about France will discuss Soka Gakkai’s resilience in front of criticism by other Buddhist groups and the strategies it adopted to overcome such criticism.
136 The Active Dynamic of Resilience in Soka Philosophy
Vinicio Busacchi
University of Cagliari, Cagliari, Italy

Abstract

This contribution aims at comprehensively examining the phenomenon of resilience from the point of view of the Soka humanistic philosophy of action. This is a general line of interest that intertwines theoretical and practical aspects, and requires examination at different levels of discourse: (1) resilience and religious practical experience; (2) resilience under the doctrinal-theoretical plan; (3) resilience under the philosophical plan; (4) resilience under the psychological plan; (5) resilience under the pedagogical plan; and (6) resilience under the sociological plan. The paper will be particularly focused on analyzing philosophical and sociological aspects connected with resilience. On the philosophical level, the discourse takes a broader reflective direction, intertwining with the themes of lifestyle, values, human dignity, civic commitment, and humanism. In this regard, contemporary Buddhist literature offers a vast range of examples of ethical-practical and speculative analysis and reflections on resilience. A close comparison with some Western thinkers will also be developed. On the sociological level, I will examine some key aspects related to Soka Gakkai’s activities and the commitment of its members within the community and the social sphere. On this point, a dialectic between personal emancipation effort and altruistic commitment is revealed. The empowerment of the members contributes to the flowering of the community life of the Soka Gakkai and of society as a whole; and, vice versa, the support of the community of practitioners and society allows and fosters the strengthening of the resilience capacities of individuals (both of the people who actively receive support and of the people who actively exercise it).

15:00 - 15:20

137 Soka Gakkai in COVID-19 Crisis Mode and Global Solidarity
Anne-Mette Fisker-Nielsen
Soka University, Tokyo, Japan

Abstract

This paper discusses some of the COVID-19 responses from the Nichiren Buddhist organization Soka Gakkai. Amidst national and global uncertainty, organizational and individual responses to the COVID-19 pandemic illuminate, on the one hand the resilience of long-established organizational infrastructures situated in local communities, and on the other Soka Gakkai’s growing awareness of itself as a global civil society organization of practicing Buddhists. In 2020, Buddhist practice was invigorated both in terms of societal responses and at the spiritual level, and Soka Gakkai witnessed an increase in membership participation occurring in many places. Based on the examination of organizational responses, Soka Gakkai news materials published in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic including in the Seikyo Shimbun, and fieldwork and interviews (from February 2020 until the present), I discuss two ongoing processes that, on one level
focus on practical responses such as providing accurate information and ensuring safety precautions and the transitioning to digital communication and online meetings; and on the other, focus on using Buddhist study and practice to transform fear and anxiety into hope at the spiritual level. The use of new communication technology coupled with maintaining a global outlook has enhanced the existing sensibility of seeing “hope as a decision” (Daisaku Ikeda), which I argue, is being propelled into an attitude of “optimism of the will” (Romain Rolland), as a way to challenge both practically and spiritually the current situation locally and globally. This has worked to enhance local resilience and increase a sense of global connectivity and solidarity amongst Soka Gakkai youth members and beyond.

15:20 - 15:40

138 Soka Gakkai in Italy: Controversies, Resilience, and Success
Massimo Introvigne
CESNUR, Torino, Italy

Abstract

Soka Gakkai started operating in Italy in 1961, and was formally established there in 1963, but the first members were expatriate Japanese. The first Italian member joined in 1966. From then on, the growth has been almost unique among Eastern religious movements that came to Western Europe. In 1993, the members were 13,000, and they reached 90,000 in 2019. Success also generated opposition, and vocal ex-members joined a pre-existing anti-cult movement that depicted Soka Gakkai as a stereotypical “cult.” The movement’s resilience in the face of criticism was considerable. While trying to explain to Italians its brand of Buddhism, it achieved a broader political and cultural legitimacy through its peace activities. In 2015, it signed an “Intesa” with the Italian government, that was ratified by Parliament in 2016. Although still existing, opposition appears to have been marginalized by Soka Gakkai’s resilience, and the movement continues to grow.

15:40 - 16:00

139 La Maison littéraire de Victor Hugo: Daisaku Ikeda and Victor Hugo as the Explorer of Social and Intimate Resilience
Bemadette Rigal-Cellard
University of Bordeaux Montaigne, Bordeaux, France

Abstract

This presentation will address the profound interest Soka Gakkai president Daisaku Ikeda has exhibited in Victor Hugo (1802-1885), which led him to purchase a château near Paris and turn it into a rich museum to display and preserve the famous writer’s works, *La Maison littéraire de Victor Hugo*. The major theorist of resilience Boris Cyrulnik has analyzed the workings of resilience and explained that trauma victims had to be able to form “bonds and meaning” in order to be healed. Before the term resilience existed, the phenomenon itself was explored at length by several 19th-century novelists, and probably best by Victor
Hugo in *Les misérables* (1862). It so happens that it was the novel that fascinated readers in Japan most. Hugo demonstrates how the power of resistance (that we would now call “resilience”) of the people of Paris led to their political, social, and finally intimate liberation. This probably explains the interest of Daisaku Ikeda for Hugo whose values (humanism, universalism) correspond exactly with his own project to promote world peace and the union of free citizens who could resist hardships thanks to the bonds they could create through education and culture. It is within this framework that one must see the utility of Hugo’s museum. A survey of Hugo’s reception in Japan will be presented first. Then the fallout from the *Maison littéraire* will be analyzed. The trove of manuscripts and rare works patiently collected and housed by the museum is held in high esteem by Hugo specialists as well as by political authorities and it led Jack Lang the then Minister of Culture to grant him the title of “Officier du mérite des Arts et des Lettres” (Officer in the order of Merit for Arts and Literature) in 1990. The dedication in time and money Daisaku Ikeda has invested in the Maison to demonstrate his admiration for Victor Hugo has thus been fully rewarded since he is himself now held as a major patron of French culture in one of its most universalist expressions and can in turn help society to find meaning in life.

16:00 - 16:20

140 Too Secularized for French Secularism: Testing the Resilience of Soka Gakkai as a Religious Institution

Yanis Ben Hammouda

University of Bordeaux Montaigne, Bordeaux, France

Abstract

This paper will not look at the teachings of Soka Gakkai but will explore the hurdles it has had to triumph over in France in its quest to be accepted as a *bona fide* Buddhist movement. Indeed, when compared to other national branches of the group, it appears that SGI-France has had a particularly ambiguous status in the country of laïcité, the French version of secularism. Some media outlets, anticult groups and even some government agencies as well as members of Parliament have categorized Soka Gakkai as a “cult.” On the other hand, a few years ago it acquired the legal status of a religious association, making it officially a religion in its own right, at least legally speaking. After reviewing the arguments put forward by the people who consider Soka Gakkai as a “cult,” and building on previous scholarly work on Buddhism in France, this paper will argue that one of the main reasons why this new religious movement has been labelled as such may be that it does not match the archetypal image of Buddhism held by most French people. This Buddhist archetype is built primarily on Tibetan and Zen monastic traditions, which are obviously quite different from the secular and engaged Buddhist organization that Soka Gakkai is. This may explain why the group has had trouble being recognized as a Buddhist group: paradoxically, French secularism does not seem ready to accept a secular religious organization, and is more comfortable with more “traditional”, clerical Buddhist groups. In this perspective, it is significant that SGI-France is not part of the French Buddhist Union, a national federation of Buddhist associations composed mainly of Vajrayana, Zen, and Theravada congregations. However, in the past two decades, SGI-France has undertaken a major overhaul, both in its structure and its public image, for instance by taking on a new official name in 2007, that is *Le movement bouddhiste Soka* (the Soka Buddhist Movement). These changes might be viewed as evidence of the religious group’s resilience and capacity to adapt to new political and social environments.
Learning to Live After Drugs. Rehabilitation as Spiritual Exercise

Lorenzo Urbano
Università di Pisa, Pisa, Italy

Abstract

Even if psychiatry has moved away from defining addiction and other “substance-related disorders” in relation to character, personality, or culture, and toward a narrower focus on the neurological effects of psychotropic drugs, a distinctly moral dimension of what is considered “addiction” still remains. Especially outside public health institutions, subjects like self-help groups or therapeutic communities tend to represent drug abuse in explicitly moral terms, connecting it to flaws of character or an inherent inability to “face real life”. Consequently, in this perspective rehabilitation is not simply detox: it’s a long process of conquering one’s flaws, of “stepping over oneself” and remaking one’s moral subjectivity.

This contribution aims to reflect on rehabilitation as an everyday practice through the concept of spiritual exercise. If, as Pierre Hadot argues, spiritual exercises are the way we learn to live fully and freely, a conscious, reflexive freedom, then rehabilitation as envisioned by, for example, the 12 Steps is a form of exercise, as it involves constant work on oneself to re-learn how to conduct one’s life in a moment of personal crisis. It also invites people to commune with a transcendent (even if vaguely defined) god, as a way to acknowledge one’s impotence against addiction. Drawing on ethnographic research on self-help groups, I wish to explore both how these “programs” focus on specific forms of spirituality as the main path to rehabilitation, and how people reappropriate and redefine these forms as they “practise” rehabilitation in everyday life.

Paradoxes of Ritual Life in the Anthropocene: Late Capitalist Self-Centeredness and the Ecological Self

Henrik Ohlsson
Södertörn University, Stockholm, Sweden

Abstract

Scholars in the field of contemporary spirituality have observed a transition over the decades from the 1960s to the 1990s “from New Age to Next Age”, i.e., from foretelling - or actively pushing for - a radically different cultural paradigm, to adjusting to a late capitalist culture of self-improvement and
entrepreneurship (Introvigne 2001; Hornborg 2012a; 2012b). More recent societal developments include a rising awareness of the ecological crisis as well as concern over the stability of democratic institutions. The end of history is over, as it were. There is thus good reason to study how contemporary spiritual subcultures reflect as well as respond to these developments.

In this paper, I will discuss ethnographic examples of ritual and ritual-like practice taken from what I have called the nature connection movement, a movement that stands right on the junction between some of the principal conflicting tendencies of our current era: on the one hand a movement of entrepreneurs providing a self-oriented culture with commodified nature experience, and, on the other, a movement of activists promoting new animistic ways of relating to the more-than-human world.

I will make two postulates: 1) that any social order, as well as any undercurrent or subculture within it, not only reproduces itself, but also revises, readjusts, and re-coordinates itself to adjust to changing circumstances, a process that may be termed systemic autopoiesis (Luhmann 1995; Faubion 2001; 2013); and 2) that all spiritual subcultures and movements are to varying degrees both shaped by and posing a challenge to, the social order of their time, whether they position themselves principally in resistance to, or in agreement with, that order. This means that at any given historical moment, and within any area of culture, the processes of maintenance and change are entangled to the point where even a specific practice may point in different and contradictory directions.

By viewing ritual elements of contemporary nature connection practice in light of these postulates, the paper aims to contribute to the discussion of different notions of selfhood in contemporary spirituality (Taylor 1992; Heelas 1993; 1996; Ivakhiv 2003; Heelas & Woodhead 2004; Aupers & Houtman 2006), and to that of what some scholars have defined as a new ritual paradigm, characterised by an emphasis on inner experience (Bell 1997; Hornborg 2010; 2012a; 2012b).

552 Pandemic Resilience in Virtual Space: How Does Practicing Via Zoom Affect Aesthetics of the Neo-spiritual Movement Practice Gaga?
Lina Aschenbrenner
Paris-Lodron University, Salzburg, Austria

Abstract

Political measures like lockdowns, social distancing, and restriction of group meetings, but also a popularly growing knowledge about the spreading of Sars-CoV-2 via aerosols in badly ventilated rooms have actively and passively forced religious and non-religious practices to retreat to virtual space – YouTube and Zoom in particular. Focusing on online sessions of the Israeli dance improvisation technique Gaga held by teachers in Tel Aviv and New York via Zoom, the paper seeks to understand the change of the Gaga’s aesthetics, thus the change of sensory stimulation and effect of practising Gaga, which comes with “going virtual”: What is it that defines the new online-setting – a different individual geographical space, privileged appeal to visual and auditory sensory receptors, no tactile sensory contact? In consequence, it elaborates: Is the change of the setting of significant aesthetic effects and is the embodied effect on individuals practising online significantly different from practising offline? In short: How does the embodied experience change with the format? The paper assumes, that practising online introduces aesthetic changes, which are sustainable beyond the pandemic situation and therefore important to investigate. It provides an outlook on how
practising in virtual space leads to a globalization and unification of aesthetics, but also a secularization and normalization of neo-spiritual practices due to their global online 24/7 accessibility. Research data stems from ethnographic field research carried out virtually from home in the form of participants observation and qualitative interviews, set in comparison with results from a research project on the prior-pandemic aesthetics of Gaga.

898 Gods Don’t Die, but Is Exhumation by Archive Worth it?
Mara Livermore
University of Liverpool, Liverpool, United Kingdom

Abstract

This paper combines practitioner-led narratives of ancestral work and embodied practice with analysis of the archive to evaluate the frameworks on offer for reaching the ancestors, the implications of their increasing deification and what that means for researchers looking to the archive to make sense of an embodied connection to the long dead.

Contrasting the likes of Toni Morrison, Zora Neale Hurston, M Jacqui Alexander and Saidiya Hartman with Foucaultian narratives on themes of power, memory, community knowledge and sacred embodiment this paper explores the extent to which academia can facilitate ancestral work.

As increasing numbers of Diaspora seek to understand their heritage through the religious and spiritual principles of their forebears. This paper takes a grounded constructivist approach to placing colonial and imperial bodies of data within the framework of modern ancestral elevation. To what extent do archives support or hinder ancestral work? How does knowledge produced for the archive match and contrast with embodied, oral or ancestral knowledges? With limited options, are colonial and imperial archives better than nothing, or better left alone.

656 Encountering Humanoids in the Game with the Supernatural: Experience, Discussion and Theories
Kristel Kivari
University of Tartu, department of Estonian and comparative folklore, Tartu, Estonia

Abstract

Supernatural experiences have always been considered situations in which individuals submit to extraordinary powers, where realms of belief and the life world blend in bizarre and puzzling moments and memories. Meeting with a humanoid in a familiar environment is usually vague in meaning, but can also be seen against a background of wider UFO contacts and theories as a clue to the fundamentals of known reality, especially in the context of the struggle for authority between scientific and objective truth.
The game metaphor in a ufological literature bridges the struggle into a broader perspective where multiple actors find their place in the moral framework in facing the unknown. The on-going open-ended game, with indistinct players serves as a creative background against which to seek for, and theorize about, the nature of reality.

The presentation analyzes first-hand supernatural experiences in the background of ufological theories of abductions, and the game metaphor, which creates the framework for seeking ultimate truth.

9-II Religious Minorities and Covid-19 ONLINE
14:40 - 16:20 Friday, 3rd September, 2021

Kerstin Wonisch, Adelaide Madera

14:40 - 15:00

859 The “Responsible Minority” among the ”Responsible Minority”: The discourse of the Jamāʿat-i islāmī Hind during the COVID-19 crisis

Martin Rieaxinger
Aarhus Universitet, Aarhus, Denmark

Abstract

COVID-19 pandemic reached India at a point of time when relation between the Muslim majority and the Hindu nationalist government and its supporters were already strained. The tensions were exacerbated as a meeting of the Tablīghī Jamāʿat developed in March 2020 developed into a “super-spreader event” which contributed to the dispersion of the pandemic in the country. As expected the event was exploited by Hindu Nationalist agitators for a campaign targeting Muslims in general. In this situation many other Muslim organizations in India saw themselves forced to demonstrate that Muslims in their majority are responsible citizens complying to all rules if not doing more than expected. In most cases the focus was on the cancellation of communal prayer, adaption of burial rites to hygiene measures and charitable activities.

A particular voice in this process was the Jamāʿat-i islāmī Hind. Founded as a political party by the Islamist ideologue Abū l-Aʿlā Mawdūdī (1903-1979), the organization changed its character after the founder had left for Pakistan. In stead of working for the implementation a comprehensive “Islamic system” like the Jamāʿat-i islāmī in Pakistan, the Indian branch developed a positive approach to India’s pluralist society and became the main Muslim institutional agent in interreligious discourse in India. This is reflected in its activities during the COVID-19 crisis when the Jamāʿat - in addition to the common suggestions concerning rituals - adopted many positions, which frequently appear in Hindu as well as secular, left wing discourses but which are rarely addressed in Muslim discourses in India or elsewhere. Examples for this is the interpretation of COVID-19 as the result of ecological problems, in particular the climate crisis, and economic globalization. On the practical level the Jamāʿat propagated the cooperation of religious groups to overcome the deeper problems underlying the COVID-a9 crisis and organized webseminars on this issues,
in which participants of many religious traditions in India, but no other Muslims, participated. Without
doubting the sincere intention of the activists to contribute to the combat against the pandemic, their
approach can also be interpreted as positioning the Jamāʿat as a particularly responsible group among the
in general responsible Muslims. Therefore the Jamāʿat provides an example for how organization among
religious minorities are able to maneuver strategically in order to enhance their position as responsible
interlocutors.

15:00 - 15:20

280 More than Resilience to the Pandemic: Being Shiʿi Online in the Absence of Mosque
Minoo Mirshahvalad
Independent Researcher, Turin, Italy

Abstract

Online Shiʿi communities existed also before the COVID-19 outbreak in Italy and worked as a support to the
offline communities that faced various problems in the peninsula such as the absence of Shiʿi mosques.
During the pandemic as a sign of resilience to the challenging life condition, new applications started to be
adopted, the online bonds became stronger and online gatherings became livelier. As time passes the
online communities become more than a substitute for offline gatherings or a resilience to the challenging
situation, because they provide the communities with new possibilities. Among the benefits of the online
sphere one can mention the more active presence of women, the more affordable communal life, the fluid
presence of participants in religious ceremonies and the possibility to customize one’s relations with the
religion.

This paper is a result of participant observation within online Shiʿi communities both before and during the
Pandemic. The fieldwork conducted before the pandemic (2016-2019) among Shiʿi communities in Italy,
provided the opportunity to join a few online communities via Telegram and WhatsApp whose
administrators had allowed the virtual presence of the author. The communities before the pandemic
existed only on WhatsApp and Telegram and were created by Iranians, Pakistanis, Lebanese and converts
who were mainly Italian-based. During the pandemic the new applications enriched the online communal
life.

15:40 - 16:00

326 Distanziamento sociale e fede religiosa ai tempi del Covid-19. Uno sguardo alla città di Padova
Giuseppe Paternicò
Corso di Laurea Magistrale in Scienze Storiche, DISSGeA - Università degli Studi di Padova, Padova, Italy
Abstract

Le esperienze di socialità religiosa sfuggono all’attenzione dei giornali e dell’opinione pubblica di consueto e non di meno in questi tragici tempi di pandemia da COVID-19 in cui, a conti fatti, potrebbero fornire un supporto ed ‘un servizio alla persona’, già più che aggravata dalla sofferenza. Ciò è valido tanto per le religioni più largamente praticate, che per le minoranze. Dunque, un pranzo al ristorante o l’aperitivo con gli amici sembrerebbero così appuntamenti sociali più importanti, assolutamente irrinunciabili, rispetto ad una sacra adunanza in cui ci si sforza di plasmare l’animo secondo dei valori etici e morali come «l’amarsi gli uni gli altri» (Gv 15, 12) o il «non dire falsa testimonianza», il porre un freno all’invidia o ancora il rispetto della vita altrui (Es 20, 13, 16-17). Dal momento che «tutti hanno diritto di professare liberamente la propria fede religiosa in qualsiasi forma, individuale o associata, di farne propaganda e di esercitarne in privato o in pubblico il culto, purché non si tratti di riti contrari al buon costume» (Costituzione della Repubblica Italiana, art. 19) ed avendo appurato che «la libertà di manifestare la propria religione o il proprio credo può essere sottoposta unicamente alle restrizioni previste dalla legge [...] che siano necessarie per la tutela della sicurezza pubblica, dell’ordine pubblico e della sanità pubblica» (Patto internazionale dei diritti civili e politici, art. 18, comm. 3), ci sarebbe da chiedersi: in che modo hanno vissuto e praticato la fede religiosa le varie chiese, confessioni o comunità in seguito al distanziamento sociale causato dalla pandemia tutt’ora in atto? Secondo quali metodi, espedienti, strumenti hanno garantito il proprio servizio-supporto alla persona? Quali cambiamenti sostanziali sono stati avvertiti? Provando a rispondere a tali quesiti, risulta ragionevole affermare che la fede religiosa, quale «complesso esperienziale delle narrazioni, delle norme etiche e salvifiche e dei comportamenti culturali esprimenti il rapporto dell’essere umano con il Divino» (Zanichelli 2000), ha da sempre trovato i suoi attori/soggetti ed il suo spazio in un dato territorio. Pertanto, l’indagine che si intende proporre concentra la propria analisi sulla città Padova e tenta di rappresentare un campione del pluralismo religioso locale attraverso i seguenti soggetti religiosi, rispettivamente per il Cattolicesimo, il Protestantesimo e l’Ebraismo: l’Ufficio la Pastorale dei Giovani della Diocesi di Padova; la Chiesa Cristiana Avventista del 7° Giorno e la sezione locale di ADRA ITALIA (Adventist Development Relief Agency); la Comunità Ebraica. Il risultato finale dell’indagine è stato perciò quello di aver dato ad ognuno di essi libera facoltà di raccontarsi, «analizzandosi» a propria volta secondo il territorio operativo di riferimento, i tempi e gli spazi liturgici caratteristici del proprio culto e servizio, la possibilità di spostamento, il ruolo/posizione dei propri leaders, l’utilizzo dei social ecc., elencandone e riconoscendone però i cambiamenti sostanziali legati al Covid-19 e al conseguente distanziamento sociale.

286-III Negotiating the Crisis: The Role of Sanctuaries as Places of Resilient Religious Experiences

14:40 - 16:20 Friday, 3rd September, 2021
Suspending the Death: The Rite of the “Return to Life” in the Sanctuaries à répit
Ada Campione
Università degli Studi di Bari Aldo Moro, Bari, Italy

Abstract

During late antiquity and until the theological invention of limbo in the Middle Ages, children who died without baptism were condemned to eternal damnation because of original sin. From the Middle Ages on, these children were believed to stay in limbo, a space without pain, but excluded from eternal life. In addition to the drama of death, although in times when infant mortality reached high percentages, there was the tragedy of the eternal damnation and the impossibility for the families to bury these children in sacred ground. Such a context should also include the phenomenon of the sanctuaries à répit, also known as sanctuaries of a “double life” or “double death” or “suspended death”. Widespread throughout Europe, these particular loca sancta became places of resilient religious experiences, where the ritual practice of répit represented the extreme attempt to overcome the most difficult challenge: to defeat death, suspending it for a few moments. The ritual consisted in exposing the child in front of a holy image / statue - sometimes placing a feather between the child’s lips to catch his vital breath - and in begging for the miracle of a temporary resurrection, as short as a breath: during this miraculous time, the baptism was administered to the child, guaranteeing to him the eternal life and a burial in sacred ground. Despite the prohibitions, the threats of excommunication, and the papal decrees, the ritual of répit was practiced for six centuries.

Rituals, Relics, Propaganda: The Revival of St. Fara's Cult to Overcome the Faremoutiers' Crisis (17th century)
Angela Laghezza
Università di Bari Aldo Moro, Bari, Italy

Abstract

According to the Vitae Columbani abbatis discipulorumque eius by Jonah of Bobbio (first half of the 7th century), Fara founded the monastery of Notre-Dame et Saint-Pierre at Eboriac, which was later called Faremoutiers - the same name tributed to the village in which it is located (Seine-et-Marne, Île-de-France). Initially, Fara was known as the abbess of Faremoutiers, and a disciple of Columbanus (7th century); later, as a saint of the Carolingian dynasty (9th century); from the 17th century onwards, and until today, she is the saint of the ears of corn or of the providence, venerated in some regions of North-Eastern France and Southern Italy. In the 17th century, in fact, after a long period of oblivion and decadence, the cult of Fara and the sanctuary of Faremuotiers experienced their most extraordinary splendour thanks to the religious and political strategy implemented by abbess Françoise de la Châtre (1605-1643). In the dramatic context of the Wars of Religion, the abbess decided to revitalize the foundress's figure and devotion to overcome the community’s spiritual and moral crisis. She promoted many successful actions (translation of relics, devotional rites and practices, commissioning of literary and iconographic works), thus concluding the long
process of constructing the hagiographic model personified by Fara. Saint Fara’s cult is a significant example of a “resilient religion”, due to its different phases of persistence and innovations, its remarkable diachrony, and the mobility of the boundaries of its diffusion. All these features are to be connected with the pressure exerted - over the centuries - by specific groups (ruling dynasties, religious communities, religious orders) to respond to new/varying political, economic, social and religious needs.

350 Sanctuaries as Markers of Resilience Between the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: Reflections on the Italian Press
Paolo Cozzo
Università degli Studi di Torino, Torino, Italy

Abstract
Focusing on the period between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the paper asks whether and to what extent the devotional phenomena arising or developing around sanctuaries in Italy can be understood as markers of resilience in a particularly complex and dynamic socio-political context. The analysis uses the periodical press as its main source: not only the vast quantity of bulletins and periodicals produced by the sanctuaries themselves, but also the substantial coverage dedicated to these places of worship (often from a very divergent ideological perspective) in the major Italian newspapers.

389 Mont-Saint-Michel as a Sheltered Place during the Pandemic
Vincent Juhel
Association Les Chemins du Mont-Saint-Michel, Caen, France

Abstract
During the Middle Ages, pilgrims used to flow to the sanctuary of Mont-Saint-Michel in Normandy, coming from all over Europe to ask for the protection of the Archangel. The therapeutic purpose of the pilgrimage to the Mount is confirmed by the sources: in fact, the collections of miracula report various episodes of healings, although the Archangel is neither a healer saint nor a specialist in curing particular diseases. Nonetheless, he has a specific role in protecting the faithful against the Devil.

In 2020, with the COVID pandemic, the abbey was closed in the spring for three months. During the two months of lockdown, the rector of the sanctuary - installed in the parish church since the end of the 19th century - celebrated his services in front of an empty church, ringing the bells at various times of the day, notably at 8 pm for the caretakers and those who continued to work, and also ringing the death knell for the victims of the epidemic every day. After the lockdown, despite the gradual return of the visitors and the pilgrims, the sanctuary attendance has not been completely reestablished, due to the absence of group-pilgrimages and to the agoraphobia of some of the faithful. On the contrary, new pilgrims come to the Mount, seeking the protection of Saint Michael, to comfort themselves in their moral (and health) struggle, to look for an invisible strength, to deliver their prayers. Although there are fewer visitors to the Mount, attendance at the liturgical services has increased. The Rector declares: “Saint Michael is there to fight the
virus, this evil with us. He accompanies us in this time of epidemic. This evil is also our anguish... our fear... our solitudes... our worry”.

61-I Russian Old Believers (in Russian with English summary) ONLINE
14:40 - 16:20 Friday, 3rd September, 2021

Danila Rygovskiy

Compared to other Christian denominations, Russian Old Belief could not claim to be numerous. Its strict rules and rigid group structure does not seem to be suitable for a changing, globalizing world, especially regarding the countries where Russian is not commonly spoken. However, Old Believer communities exist in many countries, either traditionally (as in the Baltic states, Romania, Poland, etc.) or due to relatively recent migrations (Canada, USA, England, etc.). Moreover, new communities have been founded in Uganda and Pakistan out of a context of migrations. This allows posing a question about the resilience of Old Belief and its adaptive capacities.

This panel considers Russian Old Belief as a network. Firstly, in a direct sociological sense, as a network of communities spread out worldwide. But secondly, in terms of ANT, the network is regarded as a means of a series of translations. In this case, translation means reproduction and change. It is very similar to the concept of [Langer et al., “Journal of Ritual Studies”, 2006], transfer of rituals, which address the issue through the focus on transformations of context. That means, religion is highly dependent on things, which are usually considered as derivative, contextual. Like numerous material objects that are used at rituals - vessels, books, buildings, means of transport, et. Nevertheless, they force religion to be reassembled. For example, [Meyer, “Material Religion”, 2008] shows that some Christian denominations cannot imagine public ceremonies without speakers, boosters, and microphones. Regarding Old Believers, a Siberian cultural anthropologist, Galina Lyubimova, in her turn pays attention to how religious practices of Old Believer communities have been affected by the ways in which they provide for themselves. She concludes that local variations in religious practices between Old Believers in taiga villages and settlements in lightly urbanized areas are based on the differences in lifestyles [Lyubimova, “Uralskiy istoricheskiy vestnik”, 2017]. That is a crucial moment because it reveals how changes allow Old Believers to establish each time a new version of the same religion. Of course, examples of that can be continued further.

This theoretical framework anticipates the following questions, which facilitate, but do not limit, the discussion of the current panel:

Old Believer identity: what is it to be an Old Believer nowadays?

Reflections on conversions to Old Belief

Old Believers and the media in the post-truth world

Russian and Church Slavic languages in Old Believer communities
Local variations in ritual practices

(Self) Representation of Old Believers in the media

Connections and disruptions in communication between Old Believer communities.

Russian Old Belief without the Russian Language? Linguistic Challenges of Orthodox Minority in Global Context

Danila Rygovskiy

University of Tartu, Tartu, Estonia

Abstract

The Russian Old Belief is a religious minority that appeared after the 17th century split in the Russian Orthodox Church. The Old Believers were standing against reforms in rituals and correction of liturgical books applied by patriarch Nikon. Highly engaged with the old ways of performing religion, the Old Believers were at the same time focused on preserving uncorrected liturgical texts written in Church Slavonic. Despite this language not very much related to Russian (it is based on one of the dialects of Southern Slavic languages), knowledge of the latter allowed reading, writing, and relative understanding of Church Slavonic texts. Therefore, Church Slavonic became crucial for maintaining the identity of the Russian speakers belonging to the Old Belief.

However, the Russian Old Belief has not remained only as a closed, Russian-centred community. Recently, a community in Uganda and another community in Pakistan converted to the Russian Old Belief. Those Uganda and Pakistani natives had to switch liturgy into English. My case, however, comes from another region, the United States of America, where several communities of the Russian Old Believers were established in the diaspora. These communities in Alaska and Oregon are experiencing language shifts, which makes them anxious about the future of their faith. Vanishing knowledge of Russian jeopardizes younger generations’ abilities to read and understand liturgical texts in Church Slavonic. Further in this paper, I am going to discuss one of their attempts to reproduce religious practices in the English language environment.

Invisible Presence: Tuvan Old Believers on the Pages of Soviet Newspapers

Elena Danilko

The Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, RAS, Moscow, Russian Federation

Abstract

The report will analyze materials on the Old Believers of Tuva and published in periodicals published in Tuva during the Soviet period. The analysis will be carried out according to quantitative (the frequency of
mentions of Old Believers in the press in different years) and qualitative (content of materials, identification of stereotypes, ideological orientation, rhetorical techniques, visual content, etc.) parameters. This will allow us to present the option of external representation of one of the confessional groups of Tuva, its interaction with the surrounding population.

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341 Negotiating New Normality: Old Believers on Social Media
Natalia Dushakova

Russian Presidential Academy for National Economy and Public Administration, Moscow, Russian Federation

Abstract

Creating the space for a new visibility of their religion on social media, Old Believers are constantly negotiating the limits and rules of self-representation in public space as well as ways of approaching Internet. If usually non-Old Believers can only observe worship service from the porch of the church and it is often prohibited to take pictures, on a Facebook page there are no such limitations: every follower can see professional photos, watch videos of religious service. Is there a way to protect group boundaries in such cases and do Old Believers need that? Is it normal to post on Facebook during religious holidays? Isn’t it sinful to post anything at all?

In this paper I’m approaching online and offline practices as complementing each other, examining Facebook pages of those Old Believer communities and settlements where I previously conducted field anthropological studies (Republic of Moldova). Based on Heidi Campbell’s theoretical elaborations [Campbell H., When religion meets new media, Abingdon: Routledge, 2010] and using materials from online observations and field research as sources, I’m analyzing how Old Believers of the Belokrinitskaya hierarchy create new norms of using Internet and social media in particular. On the other hand, I’m taking into consideration the fact that the increasing visibility of religion in its turn also affects Old Believer communities, their rules and everyday practices which seemed rather stable before.

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510 Between Alms and Goods: Old Believer Skete in the Rural Landscape of Taiga Siberia
Elena Dutchak

Tomsk State University, Tomsk, Russian Federation

Abstract

The Old Believer Skete culture of Siberia, the study of which was begun in the 1960s [Pokrovskii 1984], remains an extremely difficult phenomenon to analyze. The limited possibilities of observing the daily life of Taiga monastic communities force researchers to concentrate more on their eschatological beliefs and rituals than on the processes of integration into regional economic systems. The report shows how the
interaction of desert dwellers with their rural communities has transformed economic interactions into religious relations.

The report follows the theoretical concepts of the political sociology of the peasantry [Scott 2009, Shanin 2019], gift and donation in traditional societies studies [Moss 2011, Ssorin-Chaikov 2001], and the results of studying Siberian Old Believers economic characteristics and communication practices [Bardina 2009, The New Research of Tuva 2019 etc]. The report materials are polemical writings and diaries of Taiga sketes’ inhabitants, the author’s expedition materials, and reports of officials who inspected Siberian villages and Old Believer sketes. The historical data created during the period from the 1920s to 2020.

The report is focused on proving the following theses:

1. The transition of Taiga monasteries from an agrarian to a craft economy was caused by external factors (“Sovietization” of the village and the industrial development of the Siberian outskirts in the 1930s-1940s), but it was legitimized by the Old Believer polemics about money and the “laical” / “cloistral” ways of managing the finances of Taiga sketes;

2. The analysis of the discursive practices of using the concepts “alms” and “goods” opens up the opportunities for studying the exchange operations of the Old Believers’ sketes in the context of their solution to the “triune task” – maintaining the group cohesion of monks, forming “the Old Believer identity” of their laical co-religionists, and ensuring the secular authorities’ benevolent attitude towards the settlements forbidden (or disapproved of) by law.

References


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The New Research of Tuva, 2019, no 1, open access - http://nit.tuva.asia, doi.org/10.25178/nit (in Russian)
Boundaries and Barriers in the Life of an Individual and a Community in Modern Urban Old Believer Parishes

Natalia Litvina

Lomonosov Moscow State University, Moscow, Russian Federation

Abstract

From the point of view of an outside observer, modern urban Old Believers live almost like any other townspeople: the same housing, social sphere - schools, kindergartens, medical facilities, work. That is, they, at least until retirement, are fully integrated in ordinary city life. What is the difference, what external and internal mechanisms at the individual level and in the community allow them to maintain the concept of isolation and uniqueness?

First of all, it is something that does not depend on external factors, a spiritual life organized as a system of prayers, rules and prohibitions. And in addition, the idea of the Old Believers' history as well as the persecution and suffering experienced by the Old Believers for 350 years. It is something that gives them not only hope for the salvation of their souls, but the conviction that non-Old Believers will not be saved.

The talk is based on field studies in the urban communities of Kostroma (Russia) and Chisinau (Moldova). In addition to the outlined issues, the positions of the individual / community in relation to different categories of external interest and information that go beyond the internal boundaries will also be considered.

Coffee break
16:20 - 16:40 Friday, 3rd September, 2021

482-IV Change, Order, Remembrance: Crisis and Religion in the Ancient Near East ONLINE
16:40 - 18:20 Friday, 3rd September, 2021

Marta Pallavidini
Coping with the New: Resilience in Cultural Identity Between the Late Bronze and the Iron Age in Northern Mesopotamia

Costanza Coppini

Freie Universität Berlin, Berlin, Germany

Abstract

The period between the end of the Late Bronze Age and the beginning of the Iron Age is characterized in the whole Near East by dramatic political changes, which manifested on a bigger scale with the abrupt end of empires and territorial states. Referring to northern Mesopotamia and south-eastern Anatolia specifically, i.e. encompassing the territory that was part of the Middle Assyrian state in the Late Bronze Age and was included in the Neo-Assyrian empire during the Iron Age, the aforementioned dramatic changes did not impact the territories abruptly, rather they succeeded in a crisis that brought to the set of new political agents in the territory of the Tigris Valley and the Upper Khabur basin. Such crisis resulted in a resilience in the everyday life, as it can be seen in burial customs and religious practices in general, in which local people preserved their social identity despite the change of the political order. In the proposed paper the evidence of resilience in religious practices in local communities will be examined in archaeological contexts, in order to delineate the response of the communities to the crisis.

A Goddess in a Man's World: Developments in the Religious and Political Ideology of the Lady of Arbela

Cinzia Pappi

KFG 2615, Freie Universität Berlin, Berlin, Germany

Abstract

The hegemonic power of Assyria developed in different grades within a network of material and non-material infrastructures. Assyria, by establishing networks of communication, by developing systems of production, and defensive infrastructures, enabled a material presence within its political space, expressed in different grades. This material infrastructural system entwined a number of non-material infrastructures, e.g. administrative system, religion, and technologies, originally developed within the cultural exposure of Assyria to other cultures, e.g. Babylonia, Mittani, Anatolia, and the Levante. Cult and religion played a major role within the such a cultural network, representing one of the possible codes with which we can read the political ideology of the imperial state. Ištar of Arbela embodied in her divine character the main elements of the political propaganda, mixing aggression against the enemy and maternal protection for the royal crown. This paper will discuss the nature of Ištar of Arbela, discussing the development of this divine actress within the cultural discourse of Assyria. The critical analysis of written sources and the investigation of iconographic evidence will contribute to a better understanding of how the goddess defined her political character among the other manifestations of Ištar, furthermore, how such a local goddess, her dwelling place, and her divine entourage became crucial elements of the imperial agency of Assyria.
Religion as a Form of Resilience: The Upper Tigris Region between the
End of the Third and the Beginning of the Second Millennia BCE
Nicola Laneri
University of Catania, Catania, Italy

Abstract

The end of the Third Millennium BCE in northern Mesopotamia has been envisioned as a period of dramatic climate changes that brought to a halt urbanization. In southeastern Anatolia, it is instead possible to notice a continuity between the late Third and the beginning of the Second Millennia BCE in settlement patterns that can represent from of resilience to the dramatic changes occurred during this crucial historical period. In particular, along the upper Tigris river valley, the presence of ceremonial centers (as is the case of Hirkimerdon Tepe) might have been used as locales for gatherings of the members local communities and, thus, strengthening social bonds in moments of difficulties through the enactment of religious practices.

Ritual, Social Reorganization, and Memory from Early to Middle Bronze Age Syria
Glenn Schwartz
Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, USA

Abstract

Urban societies in Syria and northern Mesopotamia are understood to have experienced a crisis at the end of the third millennium BC, a development manifested by political decentralization, urban diminishment, and in some cases a decline in sedentary occupation. After a period of “collapse,” socio-political complexity and urban florescence reappeared in the early second millennium BC. This paper will discuss the evidence for the crisis, the means by which complexity was restored in processes of regeneration, and the role that ritual and social memory played in such processes. A particular focus will be placed on the evidence from Tell Umm el-Marra in northern Syria, which was abandoned in the period of crisis but reoccupied as part of the regeneration episode.

Recovering from Crises – Forging Resilience: The Role of Religious Narratives in Fashioning Socio-Political Stability in Antiquity ONLINE
16:40 - 18:20 Friday, 3rd September, 2021
Marika Rauhala
357 Crisis and Interpretation of Divine Signs in Narratives about Roman Emperors

Darja Šterbenc Erker

Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany. University of Ljubljana, Ljubljana, Slovenia

Abstract

By sending signs gods were thought to announce their favourable view on human activities or their anger. Negative signs (prodigia) demonstrated divine anger that was perceived as a crisis and a rupture of the pax deorum, peace with the gods. In the Republic, the consultation of Sibylline oracles provided means of appeasing the divine anger. The members of the priestly colleague of Decemviri chose suitable action from the Sibylline oracle verses prescribing religious measures such as performance of sacrifices, supplications and other rituals appropriate to appease the divine anger and to solve the crisis by re-establishing a good relationship with gods.

In the Empire, the consultation of these ritualistic mechanisms of crisis resolution was much less important than in the Republic, because eyes of the citizens were set both on the emperor and the gods' reactions to crises. The question was not about signs demonstrating that the res publica was in danger, but whether the gods still support the ruling emperor or not. The detection and interpretation of imperial omens transmitted ideas about divine support to emperors. Similarly, dreaming about gods and their messages and other imperial omens could indicate that an emperor is to obtain, use or abuse power. There were twofold narratives relating to imperial power or its crisis: first, Roman emperors having seen gods declaring their support or the withdrawal of it, and second, omens that predicted an emperor's ascension to the rule or his loss of power and life. Recently, scholars have argued that epiphanies of gods to Roman emperors are parallel to evocatio, a ritual in which a statue of a god or a goddess was called out of a besieged town and transferred to Rome. However, in my paper I will explore how imperial narrations about divine support build on the mentality related to republican mechanisms of perception and interpretation of signs sent by the gods and subsequent responses to communal crises. When narrations about the withdrawal of divine support to the ruling emperor circulated in Rome it meant that a new emperor would have been backed by the gods. Therefore, such rumours encouraged potential usurpers to assassinate the emperor, seize the imperial power themselves and restore the peace with the gods.

I will explore how Suetonius in his Lives of the Caesars discusses divine signs that expressed divine approval to an emperor's ascension to the rule, as well as divine signs signifying that the gods withdrew their support. In these imperial biographies an emperor's fall from grace of gods signifies an imminent political crisis and the fall of the emperor. I will explore how Suetonius represents divine signs that legitimised or delegitimised the exceptional rule of one person in the allegedly Republican political system. Also, I will address the question whether Suetonius viewed narrations about divine signs as a source of resilience for the Roman society or not.

530 Persistence Amidst Crisis: The Vestal Virgins and Communal Resilience

Morgan Palmer

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Abstract
As guardians of the fire symbolizing Rome’s eternity, the Vestal Virgins played a crucial role in fostering resilience. Accusations of incestum (unchastity) occurred during periods of instability, including warfare and plagues, as the Romans sought solutions to perceived ruptures of the pax deorum (Staples 1998; Wildfang 2006; DiLuzio 2016). Plutarch emphasizes the impact of incestum convictions upon Rome, observing that no other day brings more gloom to the city (Plut. Vit. Num. 10.6). Religious narratives featuring the burial alive of unchaste Vestals reflect anxieties underlying the perceived failure of the priestesses to perform their religious duties. Conversely, narratives emphasizing the Vestals’ diligent work fostered Roman resilience (cf. Palmer 2020). After demonstrating that Livy incorporated the Vestals into religious narratives emphasizing crises, I will argue that during the crisis of the third century emperors and members of the wider community created more positive and inspiring religious narratives featuring the Vestals. Amidst a period of unprecedented crisis, third-century rituals and monuments portrayed the Vestals as symbols of communal resilience.

Livy crafts religious narratives surrounding the convictions of Vestals during the republic, associating their deaths with attempts to restore stability through religious rituals. His account of the death of Oppia is the culmination of failed attempts to interpret divine prodigies through public and private augury (Livy 2.42.9-11). Similarly, Livy situates the convictions of the Vestals Opimia and Floronia within the larger context of attempts to respond to the disastrous defeat at Cannae through consultation of prophetic books and the Oracle of Delphi (Livy 22.57.1-6). These narratives highlight the pressures placed upon the Roman community, with details about the anxieties accompanying the crises and the failed attempts to restore the pax deorum through religious procedures.

In contrast, portrayals of the Vestals during the third century, a period of unprecedented crisis, contribute to a narrative of resilience. Both the Severan ludi saeculares, which featured two chief Vestals as participants (Rantala 2017), and inscriptions from the atrium Vestae emphasize communal participation in fostering resilience. The Vestals joined Septimius Severus, Julia Domna, and other members of the community including Roman matrons for the ludi saeculares, a ritual occasion emphasizing the continual stability of Rome. In the atrium Vestae a diverse group of dedicators, including Roman soldiers, family members, fellow priests, and protégés from the wider community, continued to reinforced this message of resilience through inscriptions honoring the persistent service of the Vestals. The natal sister of a Vestal creates a religious narrative emphasizing persistent service, “praying that through so many ages the gods would allow her to serve” (CIL VI 2139). Soldiers remark on how “the state happily experiences day by day” a Vestal’s “most skilled operation in religious rites” (CIL VI 32415). These rituals and monuments reflect imperial and communal attempts to rewrite religious narratives featuring the Vestals, emphasizing persistence and resilience rather than the threat of incestum amidst crisis.

444 Resilience through Reinterpretation: Divine Intervention in Cassius Dio
Lindsay G. Driediger-Murphy
University of Calgary, Calgary, Canada

Abstract

Cassius Dio experienced personally the crises of civil war and despotism under the Severans. His immense Roman History also reflects on earlier periods of crisis at Rome. This paper will explore how Dio’s process of interpreting Roman history through a religious lens builds resilience in himself and his readers.
Dio credits the divine with guiding his own career as a historian (72[73].23.2; 73.23.4; 80[80].5.2-3). He also shows the gods or to daimonion as intervening in the events he records from Roman history. It has been suggested that Dio’s narrative shows the divine working towards the long-term good of Rome (Swan 2004), often by sending divinatory signs (Freyburger-Galland 1999; Osgood 2019).

Yet signs seldom have much impact in Dio (Santangelo 2019). Indeed, Dio often asserts that his characters failed even to understand the signs they received. Time and again, Dio’s divine ‘shows in advance’ through divination what disasters lie ahead, and time and again Dio’s Romans run headlong into those disasters.

The reader of Dio is thus confronted by some uncomfortable questions. Do the gods really care about Rome if they allow these things to happen? Do the gods have any real impact on Roman history? How can they help Rome recover from crisis, if past Romans proved incapable of following their advice?

I suggest that Dio addresses these questions by portraying the divine as an active agent in his own work. His claims to divine inspiration, sometimes dismissed as a literary device (Millar 1964; Murison 1999), can be read as a strategy for coming to terms with, and redeeming, the crises and failures of the Roman past and his own present. Religious (re)interpretation builds resilience by enabling Dio to find meaning in chaos, thereby restoring his readers’ confidence in the guidance of the gods.

References:


662-II Dinamiche Rituali e Strategie di Resilienza nella Tardoantichità ONLINE
16:40 - 18:20 Friday, 3rd September, 2021
Emanuele Castelli, Mariangela Monaca

665 Alle Querce di Mamre: Forme di Resilienza tra Riti Taumaturgici e Luoghi di Culto Condivisi. Casi Studio dal Passato per Comprendere il Presente
Emanuele Castelli, Mariangela Monaca, Mauro Mormino
DICAM - Università di Messina, Messina, Italy

Abstract
Da sempre nel tema delle guarigioni miracolose e della taumaturgia, e dei riti ad esse connessi, oscillanti tra modalità mantiche e prassi magiche, i diversi popoli e i diversi mondi religiosi che si sono affacciati sulle sponde del Mediterraneo, in un flusso ininterrotto da Oriente verso Occidente e ritorno, hanno cercato la risposta ai bisogni di una salvezza che fosse insieme locativa ed utopica.

Particolari luoghi, originariamente legati a specifiche comunità e gruppi religiosi, si profilano quali centri resilienti e condivisi perché portatori di una dynamis divina, riconosciuta sia dai semplici fedeli che dalle autorità religiose, in uno spazio temporale che al suo interno accoglie profondi mutamenti di tipo non solo politico-sociale ma anche (se non soprattutto) religioso.

Un caso studio di particolare interesse dal punto di vista dell’indagine storica e storico-religiosa è rappresentato dal santuario delle Querce di Mamre.

Sito biblico di antica tradizione giudaica, benché soggetto a diverse variazioni geografiche legate a necessità politico-religiose, esso si attesta fin dal I sec. a.C. presso la località di Haram Ramet el-Khalil (Hebron). La costituzione di una nuova topografia sacra ne permise l’inserimento nel tessuto religioso-cultuale non più esclusivamente giudaico ma anche greco-romano. La varietà dell’esperienza religiosa di Mamre sarà analizzata integrando, con un approccio storico-comparativo, i più recenti dati archeologici alle diverse fonti letterarie ed agiografiche (tra IV e VIII sec.) al fine di individuare e definire tra mutazione e continuità la compresenza, nel medesimo sito ed allo stesso momento, di forme religiose e culturali di diversa matrice, giudaica, greco-romana, cristiana e - a partire dal VII sec. - anche islamica.

680 La Spettacolarità Resiliente del Culto in Giovanni Crisostomo: La Strategia delle Processioni ai Martyria
Arianna Rotondo
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Abstract
La predicazione del Crisostomo si muove sul doppio canale della competizione e della polemica contro i culti non cristiani e insieme della costruzione di una concreta alternativa ad essi. Su quest’ultimo aspetto le
argomentazioni di Crisostomo fanno leva su una rappresentazione degli spazi e dei luoghi religiosamente e culturalmente determinata. In questa prospettiva nei discorsi di Crisostomo i luoghi santi diventano teatri di contese fra ideologie religiose in conflitto; in particolare emerge la complessità culturale dell’ambiente antiocheno, attraverso le diversità dei gruppi che vi coabitano: cristiani, ebrei, pagani. Proprio l’attrazione da parte cristiana per altri rituali, il ruolo importante svolto dalla comunità ebraica con le sue cerimonie coinvolgenti, il carisma dei suoi rabbini e il fascino delle sinagoge impongono l’elaborazione di un piano di rilancio della ritualità cristiana che esibisse maggiori elementi di coinvolgimento e di aggregazione. Di fronte alla crisi di partecipazione alla sinassi eucaristica Crisostomo promuove la spettacolarità di rituali come la processione nelle feste in onore dei santi, nel culto delle reliquie: ciò che era stato oggetto di biasimo diventa risorsa per attuare una strategia volta ad un sempre maggiore controllo dello spazio urbano e perurbano, sia attraverso la costruzione di martyria, sia attraverso la transitio di reliquie, sia infine attraverso una risignificazione in chiave cristiana dei luoghi religiosi esistenti.

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746 Culti e Riti in Sicilia. Elementi al Femminile di Continuità e Trasformazione dalla Religione Egizia al Cristianesimo
Teresa Sardella
Università di Catania, catania, Italy

Abstract

Al concetto di resilienza, applicato a fenomeni storici, possiamo attribuire il significato ‘minimo’ di interscambio culturale che, preferibilmente in situazioni di crisi, determina e modella nuove realtà secondo molteplici forme di adattamento. Una lettura in chiave di resilienza, nell’ambito religioso, nel quale si incrociano praticamente tutte le dinamiche storico-sociali, in particolare in Sicilia, terra di confini e incroci culturali, evidenzia lo scarto e allo stesso tempo gli intrecci tra una società tradizionale di tipo patriarcale e l’evidenza di importanti presenze femminili tra le divinità, la cui linea di continuità si presenta ininterrotta da età arcaica a età cristiana.

Il panorama delle colonie siciliane di età arcaica è relativamente omogeneo: vi dominano la Grande Madre asiatica e rituali magico-apotropaiici attestati da forme decorative. Questi sono assorbiti nell’ambito di culti storici quale quello greco di Demetra: con Catania quale più importante centro di culto oltre che di una divinità femminile anche per una sacralità rituale centrata su donne e vergini. Anche in età cristiana culto dei santi e agiografia in Sicilia, tra IV e V secolo, hanno una netta connotazione al femminile. Nella Sicilia orientale il culto di Agata e quello di Lucia -con una precisa linea di continuità tra culti e racconti agiografici-testimoniano una netta propensione, sia da parte della devozione popolare sia da parte delle gerarchie ecclesiastiche, dai cui ambienti promanano i racconti delle passioni, a sostenere e stimolare il culto della santità femminile. Permangono gli interrogativi sulle dinamiche tra una società patriarcale e l’emergenza di culti rivolti a figure femminili, oggetto del lavoro che ci si propone di fare.

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675 Identità, Alterità e Resilienze nella Gallia Tardoantica: Cerimonie Religiose, Oggetti Cultuali, Travestimento Animale
Rossana Barcellona
Abstract

La Gallia del VI secolo è un’area dalla realtà storico-religiosa frastagliata e multiforme, i cui tratti emergono variamente dalle fonti. In particolare, nei sermoni di Cesario di Arles come in alcune pagine di Gregorio di Tours e in diversi provvedimenti conciliari, è possibile registrare riferimenti a riti e culti “altri”, osteggiati dalle autorità ecclesiastiche (con ricorrenti riferimenti all’uso di maschere animali, oltre che di amuleti e filatteri), ma praticati da porzioni importanti della popolazione gallica.

Il quadro storico e le fonti scelte per valutarne le dinamiche religiose in termini di “resilienza” offrono spunti di riflessione a diversi livelli: sulle religioni come “strumenti” e “fattori” di resilienza; sulle religioni come “fatti culturali” con spiccatà attitudine alla resilienza; sul concetto di resilienza come “categoria dell’indagine storica” atta a rinnovare prospettive di lettura.

Applicando ai dati emergenti - solitamente letti come forme di “sopravvivenza pagana” - la lettura suggerita dal concetto di resilienza, si intende riconsiderare la dialettica identità/alterità con rinnovata attenzione alle spinte sociali attivate dal basso. Ciò è a pratiche talora liquidate come consuetudini mantenute in vita per forza di inerzia e destinate a estinguersi naturalmente.

La categoria di resilienza appare particolarmente idonea a valorizzare il modo in cui l’azione dall’alto (figure e strutture istituzionali) cerchi di incontrare (gestire e direzionare) il movimento dal basso (le persone): “azione” e “movimento” sono entrambi ingredienti irrinunciabili delle dinamiche storiche: nel leggere come la prima si combini con il secondo, il quadro si allarga e si completa.

608 Cujus Regio, Ejus Religio? Glimpses of Resiliences in and from Ancient Times and the Middle Ages ONLINE
16:40 - 18:20 Friday, 3rd September, 2021

Marcus Baccega

The ancient Roman aphorism ascribed to Ulpianus (D. 33.7.12) and much drawn on by the time of the Protestant Reformation (Peace of Augsburg, 1555), *cujus regio, ejus religio*, may as well provide us with a provocative, metaphorical motto for thinking that hegemonic ways of religious or canonical beliefs are simply an outer layer overlapping a much deeper palimpsest. Much as canonical creeds may even be official or compulsory in a certain institution or social formation, they are never able to ostracize entirely pagan traditions, heretical and outlaw appropriations by their own clergy, as well as mythical reminiscences from different creeds. Therefore, in accordance with our main thematic and research lines, *Brathair* should like to invite scholars to assemble with us and come up with a wide range of reflections and topics for discussing the resilience of religious and mythological ways of thinking and experiencing faith, spiritual bonds and liturgical celebrations.
769 King Arthur and Sebastian of Portugal: Between the Symbolism of the Dragon, the Bear and the Bull. Medieval Resilience in Present-Day Maranhão
Adriana Zierer
Universidade Estadual do Maranhão, São Luís, Brazil. Brathair - Celtic and Germanic Studies, Sao Luís, Brazil

Abstract

This paper aims to study the relationship between two models of ideal kings (Arthur and Sebastian of Portugal) and the symbolism of the dragon, the bear and the bull respectively. Both associated with the figure of Christ, these sovereigns were thought capable of bringing peace, justice and prosperity to people, at different times. For example, Arthur would bring abundance through the Holy Grail, the chalice that Christ used in the Last Supper and that contained his blood. Sebastian of Portugal, for his part, would conquer Alcácer Quibir from the Muslims, in Morocco. Furthermore, through their representation, messianic character and relationship with the afore-mentioned animal symbolism, we can also reflect on the political and religious imaginary in general and its medieval reminiscences. Finally, we think that the myth of perfect rulers with magical powers is resilient, as it occurs in Maranhão nowadays about the belief that Sebastian of Portugal is alive, as an enchanted bull, and one day will be back as king to rule with justice and abundance.

783 The Search for Incinerated Bones by the Beguini of South France (14th Century)
Ana Magalhães
Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil

Abstract

We should take Medieval Christianity as a work in progress. Even in the 14th century, when the Papacy could be considered as a hegemonic power towards souls, popular religiosity was still attached to ancient beliefs and practices. Despite the alleged defence of reformist values, the heresies of the Late Middle Ages were keepers of a large ensemble of secular remains. We can observe some “pagan” values among the Beguini from South France, who, by the first decades of 14th century, collected their companion’s burned bones right after the Inquisition’s executions. Since the increase in Inquisition activity at Narbonne, Béziers, Lodève, Lunel and Marseille, the appropriation of portions of dead bodies became a current practice among religious groups. It seems to be a proclamation of devotion, in which the devotion towards the individual is intertwined with the devotion towards the Christian faith itself.

308 Religious Security as a Factor of Resilience in a Pandemic Situation in Ukraine ONLINE
16:40 - 18:20 Friday, 3rd September, 2021
The Orthodox Church of Ukraine in the Crisis Period: Its Role in the Fight against the Pandemic and the Response to Restrictions

Yevhen Kharkovschenko
Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Kyiv, Ukraine

Abstract

The coronavirus pandemic, “distorted” today’s civilization and changing interstate and interpersonal relations, introduced unprecedented restrictive measures and, restricting the constitutional human right to freedom of religion and movement, reformatted its activities in the information and virtual space. It actualized the traditionally tragic discourse of the crisis era. Rationality (often manipulative, affective rhetoric displaces criticism and argumentation) and morality (the emergence of an ethical problem - when it comes to the different “value” of human life) also came under pandemic influence.

Undoubtedly, these changes, reflected in religious security, have catalyzed several problems inherent in the modern religious space (for example, in the Ukraine, the reformatting of the Orthodox “landscape”, the military conflict in the East, lack of constructive partnership between religious organizations and the state, politicization of religion and denominations), increased influence of religion on public authorities, unregulated regulations in the field of interfaith and state-religious relations, etc.).

The result is a rather multivariate reaction of denominations to the relevant bans during the coronavirus pandemic in ritual and cult practice - from understanding and assisting the authorities to showing disobedience and deliberate violation of the quarantine regime. Among religious movements such as Al Qaeda and Islamic State, COVID-19 is even seen as an additional weapon against infidels (RISU, 2020).

Some strange events were observed in the regions of Ukraine. For example, in Vinnytsia in early March, when the spread of the coronavirus in Ukraine had already begun, some denominations organized a march against the coronavirus, flying in a helicopter, reciting a prayer for salvation from the disease (Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate).

As history shows, religion, both in ideological and institutional terms, quite successfully performs an instrumental function, consolidating and activating society. At the same time, the mobilizing ability of religion enables it to trigger potential conflict in the sociopolitical sphere, which not only exacerbates contradictions in the field of religious (in)security but also provokes the emergence of destructive eschatological mindsets, promotes new strategies for interaction between humanity and society, between religious denominations and the state. What is religious security, what are its main essential characteristics?

Thus, the conceptual model of religious security is an interconnected multilevel system of relations of the practice of a new format of communication, which is possible only in the system of dialogue - “religious organizations-person-state-society” in the face of internal and external pandemic threats and heuristic opportunities that are able to influence new trends in the context of the coronavirus pandemic. Therefore, when determining the content of religious security, the following aspects must be taken into account: first, it is the protection, preservation and dissemination of those communities that spiritually develop and improve modern man, form in him a human-centred consciousness that is responsible for itself, the state, humanity, the world; secondly - it is a state of stable functioning and original development of the system “religion-person-state”, which can have both constructive and destructive manifestations; thirdly, it is a person’s assessment of the situation in the system “performance-economy-humanity”.
In March 2020, the World Health Organization declared a pandemic. This was the first time - at least in the last 100 years - that humanity has taken unprecedented measures to impose total restrictions on a global scale. To be more precise, it was not humanity itself that announced these restrictions, because the population of the states did not consent to the restriction of their rights. Public authorities have resorted to prohibitive initiatives through the imposition of emergency measures. Thus, among other inalienable human rights, violations of the right to freedom of religion can be recorded.

First, let’s talk about the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 - one of the great achievements of World War II. This document became the basis for concluding provisions, including the Constitution of Ukraine of 1996. Thus, according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, a person has a number of rights and freedoms that cannot be infringed upon. Let’s comment on the problems that arose during the corona viral pandemic:

- Article 2: “Everyone shall have all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or another opinion, national or social origin, property, status or another status”. Not the virus itself or the fact of the presence of a certain disease, but quarantine restrictions revealed the difference between people. Thus, freedom of movement, access to services (especially medical) became possible only for people with a high level of material security. This violates the very principle of social justice, proclaimed, inter alia, by the Constitution of Ukraine of 1996;

- Article 3: “Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person”. The closure of borders was an encroachment on the freedom of the people, including freedom of religion and conscience. Thus, it is a well-known fact that Jews were not able to come to the celebration of Rosh Hashanah in Uman in 2020 - precisely because of the actions of public authorities;

- Article 13, Part 1: “Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each State“. This right was also violated due to the closure of borders;

Article 18: “Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance“.
Prohibition of worship or attendance is a violation of this right.

The list of violated rights and freedoms can be continued. Thus, the legal framework of the Ukraine provides for the conditions and procedure when restrictions may be imposed. Moreover, there is a clear definition of the restrictions that can be imposed and under what conditions. Currently, experts have no questions about the unconstitutionality of such restrictions. However, the question arises: if this became possible once, will it not become a precedent in the future?
Religious Security as a Factor of Resilience in a Pandemic Situation in Ukraine

Yevhen Kharkovshchenko, Bohdana Nosenok, Maria Nesterova, Kateryna Kozar, Olena Predko

Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Kyiv, Ukraine

Abstract

The coronavirus pandemic has led to a reform of religious security in the Ukraine. Existing studies of this problem are mostly based on informational and non-systemic approaches, which limits the possibilities of understanding this problem in the context of “civilization-man-environment”. The current pandemic situation is connected to resilient religion - the topic of the present conference.

The proposed methodological tools make it possible to substantiate fully the criteria of both destructive and constructive scenarios of religious security and its historical genesis in the context of the meaning-forming axis “sacred-profane”, “health-disease”, “life-death”, the disclosure of rite and cult practice; assessment of the mechanism of interaction between religious organizations and the state in the system of the triple complex “effectiveness-economy-humanity” and construction of a flexible, adaptive, open model of religious security, which would take into account regulatory, institutional, resource, informational, mental features of the Ukraine. This research is based on a set of different interdisciplinary methods.

As we saw, during the pandemic, the values of consolidation and tolerance came to the fore. “Hate language” faded into the background, because such powerful world religions as Christianity and Islam began to act hand-in-hand. The fact is that in the coronavirus these religions found a common enemy for themselves. Therefore, the “hate language”, including that displayed through the media and the media, was directed not at each other, but at a common enemy - a virus, a pandemic.

Our research group is calling for the workshop (symposia) session dedicated to this very topical subject. Our aim is to develop a conceptual model of religious security in the Ukraine as an interconnected multilevel system of relations (personal, religious, state-level) in the context of internal and external threats of a pandemic nature and to identify its heuristic capabilities.

We also have to discover the main objectives of the project:

1) to consider the methodological foundations of the research project through the conceptual definition of the following terminological systems: religious process, religious event and situation; religious epidemic and pandemic and on this basis to justify the conceptualization of religious security;

2) to reveal the algorithm of manifestations of religious security as a component of various pandemics and to investigate the experience of their approbation in today’s global and domestic challenges;

3) to identify changes that occur in the religious practices of religious organizations during pandemic hazards;

4) to substantiate the mechanism of interaction between public authorities and religious institutions in developing measures to counter the spread of the pandemic, taking into account quantitative and qualitative ways to assess their effectiveness;
5) to outline a scenario for the implementation of a strategy for ensuring religious security and identifying the factors that make it possible to adjust both interfaith and state-religious relations and the impact on religious life in general.

The novelty of the research is a comprehensive study of religious security as a component of the Ukraine’s national security in a coronavirus pandemic, the development of its conceptual model in the unity of both its structural components and functional characteristics.

108 Life, Death, and Esoteric Resilience: A Case Study of Archeosophy
16:40 - 18:20 Friday, 3rd September, 2021

Massimo Introvigne

Archeosophy is an esoteric doctrine and movement based on the teachings of Italian spiritual master Tommaso Palamidessi (1915-1983). In the late 1930s and 1940s, Palamidessi explored astrology, Egyptology, alchemy, and yoga, and published several books. He evolved around the Rosicrucian, Masonic, Martinist, and Theosophical circles that flourished in the Italian city of Torino. On May 4, 1948, he founded there the Ordine Iniziatico Loto+Croce (Initiatic Order Lotus+Cross), which he led under the name of Grand Master Rajkunda until his death. In 1953, he moved to Rome, and increasingly devoted its time to the study of both Eastern Orthodox and Catholic Christianity. His later works and his project of Archeosophy, an esoteric school he established in 1988, which became one of the largest esoteric movements in Italy with groups in several other countries, propose an esoteric interpretation of Christianity. Among the tools for spiritual and esoteric self-realization proposed by Archeosophy, some may rightly be called resilience tools for times of crisis. They teach, inter alia, a “gnosis of the heart,” and include exercises intended as preparation for the moment of death. The session explores how these tools were historically developed by Palamidessi, and are taught and used in contemporary esoteric communities.

16:40 - 17:00

141 The Resilient Esotericism of Tommaso Palamidessi: An Introduction

PierLuigi Zoccatelli

Pontifical Salesian University, Torino, Italy

Abstract

Palamidessi’s journey is a testament to the resilience of esotericism in the 20th century. In the Archeosophy of Palamidessi, a series of doctrines and spiritual practices coming from both 20th-century and older esoteric schools find a systematization and an integration within a single doctrinal system, directed towards the inner transmutation of the individual and an evolution of the Archeosophists’ collective conscience. All this coexists in a single organic theoretical system, whose roots can be found in the multifaceted training of
Palamidessi, who during the 1940s dealt with astrology, Egyptology, Rosicrucianism, Freemasonry, Martinism, alchemy, and yoga, publishing numerous monographs. After a period of training in the masonic and Theosophical environments of Turin, and after the realization of a long project of what he believed was the recovery of Christian origins, in 1968, in Rome, Palamidessi presented his new esoteric school, Archeosophy. In order to try to understand Palamidessi’s complicated esoteric works, I will try to highlight some aspects of his life, which I will discuss in the light of the scarce biographical sources and of his numerous writings.

17:00 - 17:20

142 "Cardiognosis": Asceticism as Resilience in Difficult Times

Daniele Corradetti

University of Algarve, Faro, Portugal

Abstract

In 1969, Tommaso Palamidessi gave birth to a mystical and ascetic way that he expounded in his 11th “Notebook of Archeosophy,” entitled “Mystical Asceticism and Meditation on the Heart.” The central topic of the writing “Cardiognosis,” that is, the “knowledge of the metaphysical heart” according to the techniques and the experience of the saints of the Catholic Church and of the Orthodox hesychasm, reworked and lived in a way Palamidessi believed to be adapted to contemporary society. If ascetic and mystical techniques are generally thought of for monks isolated from the world, in his writings Palamidessi insisted on the need for an application of such methods in modern society. “Different and even dramatic, he wrote, is the situation for the mother of the family loaded with children and domestic burdens, often destroyed in health and disheartened; quite different is the condition of the daughter, the brother, the sister who provide for the needs of the family; quite different from the monk is the condition of the father of the family, whether he is a worker, farmer, employee, professional man; quite different is the condition of the students and soldiers of the modern era.” But all need spirituality. With this idea, Palamidessi presents the Archeosophical techniques for the achievement of “Cardiognosis,” “to experience, he wrote, the first edifying encounters with the ‘Inner Light.’ and the first real dialogue in the secret of one’s own heart with Wisdom,” according to an experience “so wonderful” that “it can make us suppose that we don’t need anything else anymore”. "Cardiognosis" remains now, after more than fifty years since its first formulation, a technique widely used and practiced among the Archeosophists in Italy and abroad. The paper will discuss some of their experiences.

17:20 - 17:40

143 Palamidessi’s "Christian Book of the Dead": a "Book of the Living" in Contemporary Archeosophy"

Francesco Cresti

Attorney, Rome, Italy

Abstract
The “Christian Book of the Dead” by Tommaso Palamidessi is a treatise and a liturgical breviary to accompany the soul of the deceased in the post-mortem journey, in line with the indications and precepts of Buddhist culture as presented in the so-called “Tibetan Book of the Dead.” Based also on themes of the “Ars Moriendi” manuals of the Christian Middle Ages, reworked in a modern key according to the Archeosophical doctrine, the book was proposed by Palamidessi as a valuable manual to prepare for the difficult and confusing days that follow the physical death. A large part of the indications in the book are dedicated to the help to be offered to the dying, through suggestions and prayers that according to Palamidessi can help them to overcome the most dramatic moments of agony and to prepare for the moment of passing away. In fact, in Palamidessi’s view, this book provides a guide in the travails of life in order to prepare the ideal conditions for a “good death.” In the author’s own words, “the Christian Book of the Dead is first and foremost a book for the living, i.e., a book with valid instructions for the living.” Here we will present the main instructions, prayers and liturgical ritual practices suggested in the book, along with an analysis of some of Palamidessi’s personal experiences that constituted its practical and inspirational foundation.

ISC 33 Alternative spiritualities (Individual Short Communications)
16:40 - 18:20 Friday, 3rd September, 2021

371 Religion at Home: A Space of Resilience or Change?  
Mattias Brand  
University of Zürich, Zürich, Switzerland  

Abstract  

Religion at home has frequently been deemed either extremely conservative and resilient to societal change, or the cradle of individual creativity and religious bricolage. This paper will sketch the outlines of a comparative project focused on the interpenetration of the domestic sphere with wider contextual concerns in three historical units: late antique Egypt, Victorian era USA, and contemporary Buddhist practice in the globalized West. These very distinct comparanda offer exciting comparative opportunities that can facilitate specific (mid-range) theory formation, thereby contributing to one of the core tasks (and methodologies) of the discipline of the Study of Religion.

Zooming in on a more specific historical level, this paper will examine changing domestic ideologies and their impact on the way individuals and families bring religious practices into late antique and Victorian era homes. Within the former period, a conceptual shift took place from the household as the crucible of religious socialization to a more ambiguous space of potential religious deviance. This conceptual shift led to changing “domestication strategies,” including secrecy and concealment to safeguard a variety of ritual practices from dominant Christian hegemony. Likewise, the Victorian era witnessed a changing domestic ideology characterized by a desire for comfort and an increasing demarcation of “private life”, which
affected religious practices in the context of the growing representational function of the parlor. In both units, therefore, the perceived conservative nature of domestic religion was just one feature of a larger pattern in which domestication strategies navigated the material and imaginary conditions of the home.

548 Healing through Hearing: Constructing Wellbeing through Sonic Skills in Holistic Spirituality
Linda Annunen
Åbo Akademi University, Turku, Finland

Abstract
This presentation examines sound and listening as sensory techniques for knowledge production in spiritual settings. The focus is on the usefulness of the notion sonic skills for studying entanglements of sound and health within the specific context of holistic spirituality. The topic is approached through ethnographic research data on sound healing in Finland, a spiritual practice where individuals learn new ways of interpreting and experiencing sound to promote holistic wellbeing. The presentation poses the following questions: how do practitioners of sound healing construct understandings of holistic health and wellbeing through sonic engagements? What skills related to sound do participants acquire when practicing sound healing? How do individuals utilize sonic skills learned within sound healing in other parts of their lives? Through an ethnographically grounded analysis, the presentation aims at producing deeper knowledge of sensory enskillment and discourses of holistic health within contemporary spirituality.

650 Facing Anthropocene - Dark Green Spirituality and Social Resilience
Ive Brissman
CTR, Lund University, Lund, Sweden

Abstract
What is the role of spirituality in times of Anthropocene? Dark green spirituality is not only characterised by an ecological concern, many turn to spirituality as a way to cope with the stress of living in times of climate change, and loss of biodiversity. These experiences give rise to deep emotions of grief and sorrow. Therefore, the romantic notion of the love of nature, as the basis for an ecological concern and ethos, has to be complemented with a dark side which works with both wonder and wounds in cultivating enchantment. Dark green spirituality emphasises the cultivation of community; both in social relations, and to the larger-than-human-world. It is a this-worldly spirituality that very much converge with social resilience.

655 Sensing Spirits and Other Dangerous Beings: Why Are Ghosts Inherent to Every Human Culture?
Special anthropomorphic agents – commonly described as “supernatural” beings or entities – are considered anthropologically universal traits of human cultures. But why are they so culturally resilient, existing even in secularized societies? Can the special agents’ resiliency be grounded in their inherited cognitive origin, which needs to interact with cultural learning to create an ecologically relevant agent-related experience? For a long time, the cognitive science of religion overlooked the importance of culture’s influence on personal experiences with special agents. Thanks to the neurocognitive predictive processing theory, we can now better understand how culture can interact with inherited cognitive structures. Therefore, I want to look closer at one specific example of a special agent’s encounter experience – the unpleasant feeling of sensed presence (UFoP). On the example of UFoP, I will closely describe specific cognitive and sociocultural processes whose interaction probably creates the “unseen others” experience. Even though such experiences are often related to ghosts and spirits and grounded in religious beliefs, I want to show that they can appear independently in various sociocultural contexts. Therefore, belief in ghosts and spirits is unlikely to disappear even in secular societies.

9-III Religious minorities and Covid-19 ONLINE
16:40 - 18:20 Friday, 3rd September, 2021
Adelaide Madera, Kerstin Wonisch

Although the coronavirus pandemic has been posing a grave health threat at the global level, ethnic, racial and religious minorities, as well as indigenous peoples around the world are worst affected by the disease. In countries which are characterized by ethnic, racial and religious diversity, minorities and indigenous communities have already experienced discrimination in health owing to poor access to healthcare, lack of access to essential services, sanitation, and other key preventive measures. However, after the outbreak and spread of coronavirus, evidence has shown that those vulnerable groups are not only at greater risk of contracting the virus for a variety of reasons - lifestyle, conditions of employment etc. - but can also face higher rates of mortality once infected, often due to limited access to medical services and health care. They have also been experiencing new forms of discrimination as Covid-19 is somehow exacerbating pre-existing
and deep-rooted ethnic and religious discriminations. The aim of this contribution is on the one hand to consider the impact of the epidemic in terms of lack of recognition of the right to health and access to health care of minorities and indigenous populations, and on the other hand, to highlight the existence of discriminatory practices that have been further affecting those vulnerable groups during the ongoing pandemic.

17:00 - 17:20

507 A New Approach to the Concept of Religious Minorities and the Challenges They Face in the COVID-19 Pandemic

Dennis P. Petri¹, Teresa Flores²

¹Observatory of Religious Freedom in Latin America - OLIRE, El Guarco, Costa Rica. ²Observatory of Religious Freedom in Latin America - OLIRE, Lima, Peru

Abstract

Religious minorities are usually understood in terms of their adherence to a religious creed that is different from the majority religion. At the Observatory of Religious Freedom in Latin America-OLIRE, we have identified the need to make a difference between the concepts “religious identity” and “religious behaviour”. Religious identity corresponds to the condition of belonging to a religious group that follows a certain belief system; religious behaviour refers to the notion that said identity or system of religious beliefs or convictions leads its followers to behave in a particular way. In Latin America, although a large majority identifies with Christianity, only a small number of Latin Americans practise their faith or conducts themselves according to their beliefs.

Consequently, we understand that another way to identify religious minorities is by observing whether their behaviour follows a passive (merely religious self-identification) semi-active (participation in religious events) or an active (participation in civil society or politics) religious behavior.

The importance of said differentiation is that it allows us to determine what aspects of religious identity and religious behavior can make religious minorities vulnerable depending on the context in which they find themselves. In this sense, the scenarios in which serious violations of religious freedom of religious minorities can be observed, include governments with authoritarian tendencies (Cuba, Nicaragua, Venezuela), areas controlled by organized crime (Mexico, Colombia, El Salvador, Honduras), and indigenous communities (Mexico, Colombia), not to mention other societal hostilities against religious expression.

Considering the above, the purpose of this presentation is to highlight how the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a deterioration of the aforementioned pre-existing issues against religious minorities with active or semi-active behaviour in Latin America. In addition to the unprecedented health, economic and social crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic has allowed state and non-state actors to limit civil and political rights, including the right to religious freedom.

With the objective of preventing the spread of the disease, prolonged and often unjustified restrictions on religious services were legalized unlike other types of activities mostly related to the economic sector. Similarly, there was greater control and persistence of repressive measures by local and national authorities on the evangelization or humanitarian assistance activities of religious minorities. Moreover, in failed states,
COVID-19 has contributed to increasing control of drug trafficking groups, guerrillas, paramilitary groups, and gangs, who exercise de facto power over entire communities, compounding the vulnerability of the human security of religious groups located in these territories.

Almost a year after the pandemic, it is of the utmost importance to acknowledge the multiple implications of these issues so that civil society, academia, and the public space can design strategies that allow religious communities, especially religious minorities, to develop proper resilience strategies.
Religion and Religiousness in the Time of the COVID-19 Pandemic – On the Basis of the Academic Community in Poland

Ewa Stachowska

Institute of Social Prevention and Resocialization (University of Warsaw), Warsaw, Poland

Abstract

The coronavirus pandemic has changed the previous ways of functioning of people in various spheres, also including the religious one. Restricting mobility, the recommended social distancing has influenced collective forms of religious activity, which initially was connected with a radical limitation of the number of persons participating in the liturgy in Poland, while with time it meant closing church buildings entirely. This has initiated the extension of the religious offer (e.g. liturgy, retreats) in the media. An attempt will be made in this paper to present religiousness in the academic community and Polish society in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic. This will make it possible to present a few dimensions: first of all, how religiousness is shaped in the academic community, namely to what degree it is rooted in the model of institutionalized religiousness or the individualized one as well as to what extent we can speak of distanced attitudes towards the religious sphere; secondly, how the public discourse was shaped around religion in the period of the pandemic, including the dominance of the Catholic worldview supported by the political party currently in power in Poland, while other denominations were not taken into account. The indicated dimensions will be presented on the basis of the quantitative and qualitative research conducted by the largest university in Poland (the University of Warsaw) as well as on the basis of the results of surveys and the qualitative analysis of content in the mainstream press (5 national daily newspapers).

The religious sphere in distress and uncertainty might emphasize its potential in the scope of inter alia the integration and sensegiving function. The time of the pandemic favours the intensification of the meaning of these functions. However, to what extent religion in Polish society as well as in the academic community in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic has fulfilled these functions and to what degree this time has manifested the secularization tendencies hidden behind culturally reproduced patterns - these are the questions which will complete the picture of religion and religiousness in Polish conditions.

61-II Russian Old Believers (in Russian with English summary) ONLINE

16:40 - 18:20 Friday, 3rd September, 2021

Danila Rygovskiy

554 Freedom Believers 2020: Faith-Based Activism of Oregon’s Old Believers

Dominic Martin

Oxford University, Oxford, United Kingdom
Abstract

This paper will examine recent developments in the faith-based activism of a Russian religious minority community in the contemporary United States. After fleeing persecution in the USSR to Manchuria, Turkey and Brazil, since the 1960s 10,000 Old Believers have settled in the Williamette Valley, Oregon. Based on ongoing ethnographic and online research, I will describe how and why this paradigmatically “closed” religious group, who have eschewed political engagement from their arrival in America, have suddenly made a spectacular and effective entry into Oregon politics in the past 18 months. The article situates the Old Believers' politicization at the crossroads of the “culture wars” of a fraying liberal polity and the unique historical experience of this emigrant religious community.

Initial political mobilization was provoked by Oregon State Legislature's attempt to pass a law in 2019, which would have eliminated exemptions on religious or philosophical grounds for children's vaccinations. The law was successfully overturned thanks to Old Believers making common cause with a disparate group of libertarian “antivaxxers”. Yet rather than stop at this success – such is the threat that they regard current political developments in America to their way of life – thousands of Old Believers have for the first time registered to vote in the fraught election of 2020. They are also fielding their first political candidate, a leading Old Believer woman who is standing for the State Congressional Seat in their district for the Republican Party in an attempt to “flip” a traditionally “blue” (Democrat) seat “red” (Republican). The paper argues that Old Believers' refusenik religious resistance against vaccinations has morphed into a much more general libertarian campaign against taxation, environmental legislation, and sexual education on the curriculum. By grafting libertarian American rhetoric onto Russian Orthodox religious values, the Freedom Believers (as they have named their movement) have created a powerful new conservative caucus in one of America’s most self-perceived “progressive” states.

The Role of Spiritual Verses in the Identity Construction of Modern-Day Old Believers

Elena Vorontsova

Moscow State University, Moscow, Russian Federation. St. Tykhon Orthodox University, Moscow, Russian Federation

Abstract

The significance of the factors influencing the decision to resettle remains a difficult task in understanding the Old Believers as a confessional community. Is it more important to be able to feed a family or to pray freely? If these factors are equivalent, then to what extent and how are they intertwined with each other? An attempt to answer these questions will be made in the report presented in the section: “Russian Old Believer Communities Worldwide: Changing Practices and Resilient Identity”.

Old Believers of chapel accord have always been distinguished by their increased migration potential. There are many examples, in historical retrospect and at the present time, of several dozen relocations of one family (a kindred clan of families) in a short time.

Field observations show that these resettlements, as a rule, took place and are taking place within an understandable confessional basin. They move to “their” people of the same faith. They take into account
who and how can baptize children, marry. Having the right cathedral is an important factor. But the economic conditions of the place of introduction are also an important factor.

All this does little to clarify the true reasons for such frequent migrations of Old Believers, sometimes to another continent. Several significant trends are worth noting.

The Old Believers were never stopped by state borders. Considering that in the Sayan Mountains, taking into account the terrain, the border has always been a nominal concept, this was an additional condition that allowed the Old Believers of the Tomsk and Yenisei Governorates to cross it almost without hindrance.

In Tuva, there were practically no influential political institutions of the Qing Empire until 1911. The Old Believers quickly learned to negotiate with local officials, having learned the Tuvan language.

By 1944, in general, confessional enclaves of Old Believer accords had formed. The watchmakers preferred to settle in the basin of the Small Yenisei and on the Todzha. Pomors in the more southern regions - Tes-Khemsky and Tandinsky, and “white-baked” people began to gather in Kyzyl.

The “feeding landscape” is approximately the same in different regions of Tuva. Minimal opportunities for arable farming, rich commercial land, risky gardening. This clearly reduces the significance of the actual economic intraregional reasons for resettlement.

We assume that the real reasons pushing the Old Believers to systematic resettlement are their desire to find a “desert in the world”. To be content with little, to take care of the salvation of the soul, to try to keep the commandments, to maintain the purity of the confessional space.

The confessional space that forms in this way is constantly being transformed, rebuilt. The number of members of the community is unstable, there are cases of a sudden departure of the mentor. Sometimes whole families decide to become hermits, monks, some return to the “world”, leave one village and return again. All these tendencies persist for decades and are important components of the confessional behaviour of Old Believers.

613 "If you live in one place for a long time, you will get rich, and this is a sin": to the question of the migration behavior of the Old Believers of Tuva

ALENA STOROZHENKO¹,², KONSTANTIN PASTUKHOV³

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³NATIONAL RESEARCH TOMSK STATE UNIVERSITY, TOMSK, Russian Federation

Abstract

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620 New in the Study of Old Believers of “Yenisei” Meridian
Margarita Tatarinceva
Tuvan Institute of Humanitarian and Applied Socio-Economic Research, Kyzyl, Russian Federation

Abstract
The scientific study of the Old Believers of Tuva began in the 1960s by archaeographers under the guidance of N. Pokrovsky, later continued by local scientists - A. Storozhenko and M. Tatarintseva. However, a real breakthrough in the study of Old Believers of the Yenisei region can be considered the last five years.

Scientists V. Kostrov, A. Prigarin, S. Burayeva, M. Tatarintzeva, A. Storozhenko, D. Rygovskiy, E. Bykova came to a consensus that the most unexpected finds and discoveries are possible in the poorly studied and hard-to-reach expanses of the Yenisei basin. During the expeditions the researchers visited more than 40 Old Believer settlements on the Yenisei River.

The report presented in the section “Russian Old Believer Communities Worldwide: Changing Practices and Resilient Identity” will highlight the most significant results.

The Old Believers of the “Yenisei meridian” are very heterogeneous in their confessional composition. The Chapel Accord predominates, but there are communities of Popov Accords, as well as Pomors, Titovtsy and others.

Direct experience of Old Believers’ study on Yenisei showed that active migration processes continue and take place nowadays. It was found out, that on this territory they mainly take place by waterways.

The Taiga villages and hermitage settlements remote from administrative and civilization centres are the most productive for the complex study of preservation, evolution and adaptation of traditional religious and everyday culture. It is here that relic books and icons can be found, ancient customs are preserved longer.

The ancient customs and rituals often contain the rules of religious and family life of pre-Petrine times. The study of the degree of preservation and dominance of traditional culture in each of the identified communities and their specifics in the space of the region under study provides interesting results of the evolution of such local communities in conditions of fragmentation and minimal influence from the outside, but related in many ways by common fate and religious ethics. This group of problems includes the issues of modern life support, complex attitude to the challenges of time - familiarization with the market relations, the use of technical means for conducting autonomous subsistence economy, including those “innovations”, which for a long time were considered “the tool of the Antichrist” (computers, cell phones).

An important contribution to the study of the Old Believers’ worldview and culture, based on religious foundations, was the acquaintance of archaeographers with collections of books kept in homes, churches and monasteries, the identification of handwritten works, usually theological and philosophical or polemical content, collections of religious poems written in an ordinary notebook, records of oral narratives on a variety of topics.

Thus, during the last five years a thorough attempt has been made to study the current state of culture of the Old Believers, who mainly inhabit the confined spaces of the vast Yenisei basin, based on the concepts: traditionalism and conservatism; adaptation; evolution.
Abstract

This paper considers the mobility of the Ukrainian group of Old Believers. A comparative context is employed in a historical anthropological sense: trends in historical migrations of the ethnoconfessional community alongside current migrational attitudes have been identified. Based on geographical preferences, a double focus of the process has been highlighted: when some of the groups “settle” in pursuit of the Eastern piety, others, on the contrary, for the Western vectors. Such a marginalized composition defines the lack of homogeneity in searches for ways of salvation. In addition to that, it is this characteristic that allowed the Old Believers to establish themselves in the circumstances of the permanent frontier.

Closing Ceremony
18:30 - 19:00 Friday, 3rd September, 2021