

Abstracts

A Balancing Act: Minority Religious Communities and Processes of Transformation

Panel Chair: Thorsten Wettich

In this panel we want to discuss different kinds of transformation processes in religious (migrant) communities in Switzerland, Germany and Austria with regard to their embedment in the host society. Minority religious communities are more involved in a constant series of “dialectic tensions” (Lincoln/Mamiya 1990, 10–16) than other religious institutions of host societies. The diversification of religious and social engagement turns out to be a balancing act between divergent tendencies of objectivation and alienation, elaboration and effectiveness (O’Dea/Yinger 1961). The gist of the hypothesis is that transformations of religious and social practices must be seen in an overall context including questions of transmission of religious knowledge, generational change, transnationalism, social tensions and discourses of the host society. Our papers deal with re-invention of traditions in Yezidi communities, networks of engaged (Neo-)Muslims, Korean-Christian ways of glocal engagement, and the formation of mosque communities as spaces of action.

Sabrina Weiß: Glocalization of Korean migrant churches in West Germany
At the present time around 30,000 Koreans live in Germany. Since the 1970s, some of them established up to thirty immigrant churches in North-Rhine Westphalia alone. These immigrant churches changed over time into diaspora churches, which no longer serve as sanctuaries for the first generation of Korean migrants. One reason for processes of change was internal diversification due to further immigration of Korean students and businessmen and intergenerational conflicts. A “glocal perspective” is considering the Korean diaspora churches in their social field, stretched out between their place of residence, countries of origin and the globally connected communities as the starting point of analysis. The paper focuses upon three specific glocal religious activities: the exchange of guest preachers, passion for foreign mission and civic engagement, and donation behavior. It concludes by noting that globalization facilitates the growth of glocal networks of religious actors.

Veronika Rückamp: Creating community through action: Mosque associations in Switzerland and Austria

Since the 1970s immigrant Muslims have been establishing places for prayer in Switzerland and Austria. Being provisional in the beginning, these mosques

have mainly been frequented by a certain ethnic community not only as a place for prayer but also to create a “home away from home”. Since then some major changes have happened, two of which I want to analyze more closely: a toughening in the public discourse on Muslims, and the transmission from first to second generation immigrants. In this paper I want to ask how mosque associations are responding to these changes through action and what this means for the configuration and institutionalization of mosques in Switzerland and Austria. First insights from the analysis of my qualitative research point to a shift away from immigration related services towards religious services, the tendency to organize and take part in public events, the evolving of de-ethnicized mosques and forms of professionalization.

Thorsten Wettich: (Re-)Invention of tradition: Negotiating Yezidi theology in the German diaspora

In the 1990s, German historian of religion, Gernot Wießner, instrumental in the asylum seeking-process of thousands of Yezidis originating from the Eastern Anatolian provinces of the Turkish Republic, spoke of the “need of a consistent theology” that Yezidis would have to develop after their arrival in Germany. The emerging diaspora allowed for religious freedom for the first time in the Yezidi history and caused both a reformulation and a negotiation of the divergent strains of oral tradition that shaped religious knowledge production in the past. The paper investigates the reinvention of Yezidi tradition by focusing on four factors: (1) the ongoing literalization of Yezidi theology; (2) an increasing move towards the usage of new media; (3) new strains in religious pedagogy; and (4) the role of the newly founded religious associations and their specialists in Germany.

Karin Mykytjuk-Hitz: Networks of engaged (neo-)Muslims in Germany

In the past ten years the establishment of new forms of Muslim associations can be observed in Germany. The pioneers of these new networks, the Neo-Muslims, are active in social, civic and political fields as for example environmental protection and sustainability, social and charitable work, intercultural training programs, media representation and others. They aim to improve the life situation of not just other Muslims (as usually mosque associations do), but of society as a whole. Therefore they are involved in Muslim and non-Muslim structures and concerns at the same time. This balancing act of the engaged (neo-)Muslims is one aspect of the transformation process among young Muslims who are socialized in Germany. The (neo-)Muslims and their networks provide diverse civic potential for the whole society, which can be specified in the fields of public discourse, demographic change, social ethics and theology, migrant history, politics and organizational fields.

A Study-of-Religions Approach to Textbook Research

Panel Chair: Jenny Berglund

This panel presents different study-of-religions approaches to textbook research related to education about religion in Norway, Italy, England and Japan. The papers relate to the study of different aspects of textbooks for religious education, including the way that the representation of religions is influenced by the general framework for religious education or by religious concepts about the use of images. Furthermore, more general issues relating to textbook-research related methodology are raised.

Satoko Fujiwara: A critical reflection on the “communitarian turn” in Religious Education

It was in 2007 that the UK government issued a guidance which made it a duty for schools to promote “community cohesion.” Since then, RE in England has been directed to contribute to the new duty more explicitly, and teaching materials with reference to the term have started to be published. This shift can be called “communitarian” (à la Sandel and Taylor) or “post-secular” (à la Habermas). It has concurred with the “religion in the public sphere” discussions within the study of religion as well as with the development of citizenship education. This paper examines the benefits and dangers of this shift, which is not confessional but normative nonetheless. Examples will be taken from RE textbooks in England to show how the representations and applications of religion(s) have changed. They will be compared with Japanese textbooks, which have established a virtual “civil religion” (à la Bellah), as I have argued elsewhere.

Sissel Undheim: Aniconism and images in Norwegian RE-textbooks: representations and historical change

The paper will investigate representations and interpretations of aniconism in Norwegian RE-textbooks in the period from 1997 to 2014. By studying changes in visual representation of Islam and Judaism in two “generations” of textbooks, namely those published in connection with the Norwegian curriculum revisions of 1997 and 2008, the paper will discuss different interpretations of Islamic aniconism as it is expressed in textbooks from the four major Norwegian publishers. The analytical approach will rely on critical and cultural perspectives from the academic study of religion, in addition to theories on multimodality and media. Both the cartoon controversy of 2005 as well as the increasing religious plurality that is to be found in Norwegian society and classrooms will be among the factors considered in order to explain the palpable changes that are found in the material.

Maria Chiara Giorda: Religion and school textbooks: methodological assessment and empirical examples

Textbook controversies involving religion are part of a larger cultural debate; they reflect to a large extent the social, cultural and political imaginaries that are dominant in a particular national context in a given moment in time. This endeavor requires a sound theoretical and methodological reflection. Up until now, the different efforts to scrutinize the representation of religions in school textbooks have followed numerous, sometimes divergent, paths. The aim of this paper is to offer a critical tour d’horizon of the methods currently employed in this field in order to discuss their strengths and their weaknesses and foster a debate between different approaches. Despite the fact it’s often (unjustly) considered to be a quite boring subject, the focus on methodology should offer a thread permitting to bound and organize different texts of different subjects (not only RE, but also literature, philosophy, history...) and dealing with different religious traditions. The goal is to elaborate a schedule of analysis to collect data, based on qualitative analytical techniques, content and didactic analysis, aiming at a general model for Religious Studies-based analyses of textbooks.

Academic Approaches to G. I. Gurdjieff and the “Work”

Panel Chair: Carole Cusack

George Ivanovitch Gurdjieff (c. 1866–1949) is often spoken of as one of the three foundational figures of both new religious movements (NRMs) and modern “secularized” esotericism. His teachings have been accorded significant influence on the “New Age”, yet he is far less studied than the two other foundational figures, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831–1891), co-founder of Theosophy, and Rudolf Steiner (1851–1925), founder of Anthroposophy. Much of Gurdjieff’s biography is speculative, and his teaching (termed the “Fourth Way”, or the “Work”) is contested in terms of its sources (Christian, Sufi, original stand-alone system) and its proper scholarly classification (religion, spirituality, esotericism). The academic study of the Gurdjieff tradition has been slow to develop, and insider, sui generis accounts still dominate publications about Gurdjieff. This panel considers issues including Gurdjieff’s sources and teaching techniques, the proper scholarly placement of Gurdjieff in Religious Studies, and orthodox and heterodox continuations of the Gurdjieff teaching.

Carole Cusack: Intentional communities in the Gurdjieff teaching

G. I. Gurdjieff (c. 1866–1949) claimed that individuals could not advance spiritually but that in a group progress was possible. He founded the Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man, first in Tiflis in 1919, and for a second

time at the Prieuré des Basses Loges in Fontainebleau-Avon, south of Paris, in 1922. At the Prieuré Gurdjieff's pupils pursued tasks as part of a program of spiritual exercises he devised to lead them from false personality to true self, from a multitude of "I"s to a "real I". These activities included Movements (the "sacred dances"), physical labor, ritualized eating, drinking, and bathing in the Turkish bath, and "inner exercises". Key pupils of Gurdjieff established similar live-in venues for pursuit of the "Work": P.D. Ouspensky at Lyne Place, Surrey; J. G. Bennett at Coombe Springs, Surrey; Sophia Ouspensky at Franklin Farms, Mendham, NJ; and others. The Work or the "Fourth Way" did not mandate retreat from everyday life, but was compatible with family and childrearing, and work. This paper uses examples of scholarly literature on intentional communities and social history of other groups attempting the same types of experiments in living contemporaneously, to illuminate a previously-unstudied aspect of the Gurdjieff tradition.

Steven Sutcliffe: Gurdjieff as bricoleur

Several titles have been given to the teaching of G. I. Gurdjieff ("esoteric Christianity", heralding the "new age movement", a stand-alone system called "the Work"). Scholars have qualified their accounts by noting Gurdjieff's exposure to Theosophy and/or to his background in a patriarchal folk culture. Nevertheless, Gurdjieffian practitioners have tended to stress a complex unity of ideas and structure effectively underpinning a "canon", the particular fascination and mystique of which is represented as derived from a "quest" for (never fully) fathoming its sources. Gurdjieff's teaching is thus presented as a largely sui generis "movement" evolving from a complex but self-contained dynamic. Adapting Levi-Strauss's structuralism, I argue that Gurdjieff is better understood not as launching a new "system", but as pulling together "a heterogenous repertoire which, even if extensive, is nevertheless limited" and which is based on "elements ... collected or retained on the principle that 'they may always come in handy'" (pp. 17–18). I argue that Gurdjieff's bricolage is typical of the "western guru", an authority figure from the mid-twentieth century formed by the intensified cultural hybridity of the modern period, and who is better examined within social and cultural history rather than within "new religions" or "esotericism".

Michael Pittman: Exploring Gurdjieff's roots in contemporary Anatolia and the Caucasus

G. I. Gurdjieff (1877?-1949) was born in Gyumri, Armenia and raised in the Caucasus and eastern Asia Minor. As a polyglot and liminal figure, between East and West, his work has had a decisive influence in contemporary culture in diverse areas (philosophy, religion, literature, psychology and ecology). In his semi-autobiographical work, *Meetings with Remarkable Men*, Gurdjieff cites the forma-

tive influence of traditions present in the Caucasus, including a variety of forms of Eastern Orthodox Christianity, Sufism, and the role of the ashok, or bard, in the region. This paper provides a renewed assessment of Gurdjieff's early explorations of Sufism and Early Christianity in Anatolia and the Caucasus by investigating contemporary contexts, teachers, and teachings. Gurdjieff's work is based on a range of disciplines, especially inner ones, which might be best described as contemplative. This inner, or contemplative, work continues to be pursued and practiced in contemporary Sufi and, to some extent, Christian settings. Based on interviews and site visits in Turkey and Armenia, this paper will explore the continuing significance of these practices and traditions and seek to understand the ways that these forms remain relevant in shaping the contemporary trends in spirituality, particularly in the U.S. and North America.

Johanna Petsche: Gurdjieffian overtones in Leon MacLaren's School of Economic Science

After Gurdjieff died in 1949, Gurdjieff-based groups emerged, including a colorful assortment of fringe groups. These groups were established by individuals who never met Gurdjieff but who, in some way or another, assimilated elements of his teaching into new religio-spiritual systems. One of the most noteworthy yet little understood of these groups is the School of Economic Science (SES), founded by Leon MacLaren (1910 – 1994) in London in 1937. The SES was initially inspired by the work of nineteenth-century American economist Henry George. However, in the early 1950s when MacLaren studied with Dr Francis Roles, who was P. D. Ouspensky's personal physician and one of his earliest pupils, he gradually integrated into SES teachings concepts and practices of Ouspensky and Gurdjieff. This paper will examine the substantial influence of the work of Gurdjieff and Ouspensky on the SES, particularly in regards to MacLaren's emphasis on residential living and working, the significance of the Laws of Three and Seven in his cosmology, and his use of the "natural octave" in his large-scale musical compositions. This paper draws on firsthand accounts, original materials and unpublished music manuscripts thanks to the generosity of a number of members and ex-members of the movement.

The Academic Study of Religion in India Today: Its Particular Challenges

Organizers: Asha Mukherjee, Åke Sander

Ibrahim Khan, Gregory D. Alles: The academic study of religion in India today: its particular challenges

India, the area of origin for Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism, is generally considered a very religious country, with a vibrant religious landscape. There is, however, as Joseph O'Connell points out, a striking disparity between the richness of human phenomena in the region that may be deemed religious and the paucity of departments, centers or even programs for academic (as distinguished from confessional) study of religion in Indian universities. This session will discuss reasons for this absence and the challenges faced in contemporary India with respect to institutionalizing departments for the academic study of religion. Why is such study apparently weak? Is the epistemological distinction, made by the University Education Commission (also known as the Radhakrishnan Commission) (1948–1949) and the Kothari Commission (1964–1966), between teaching of religion and teaching about religion untenable institutionally given the socio-political imaginary defining India? Or is the relation between the sacred and secular conceived differently compared to that in the West, taking specific cases, representative thinkers and cultural icons, as exemplars?

Ferdinando Sardella: “Transcendence” in twentieth century continental philosophy and modern Vaishnavism in Bengal: similar or different?

The concept of “transcendence”, a key notion in Western philosophy, appears in literature on and about religion and is discussed in the academic study of religion. Over time, however, it has undergone a number of changes. This paper compares that notion from an epistemological perspective to understand three views offered by western and eastern intellectuals. In particular Kierkegaard's (Postscript) and Heidegger's writings on transcendence and metaphysics are compared with the thought of a prominent Bengali intellectual of the modern Gaudiya Vaisnava movement, i.e., Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati (1874–1937) (Vedānta: Morphology and Ontology). The comparison will shed light on whether the relation between the sacred and the secular and between the real and the personal are epistemologically conceived in similar or different ways. The paper will then discuss to what degree the study of “religion” in India has historically been regarded as a subset of Indian philosophy.

Joseph Prabhu: The relative absence of the academic study of religion in contemporary India: an investigation

This paper argues that the relative absence of the academic study of religion in contemporary India is an enigma, given the widespread religiosity and religious

diversity of Indians, and the historical precedents of public discussion about religion going back to the emperor Asoka and extending to Akbar. There are at least three sets of causes: historical, legal and constitutional. This paper will look at these causes and their interaction within the setting of the democratic secular state that India sees itself to be, spelling out some of the implications of the particular understandings of secularism at play. Some of the recent controversies over publications will also be examined in this context. Finally, we will look at some attempts to breach this absence in departments of religion set up in Patiala, Delhi and elsewhere.

Asha Mukherjee: Tagore's education program in secular India: a personalist philosophy or religious politics as part of the university curriculum in the humanities

Religious politics were practiced by Hindus as well as by Islamic thinkers in pre-independence India. Religious differences continue to play a crucial role in Indian society today. Some politically minded groups are using religion for political hegemony and possibly to create communal violence as a means to political power or gains. This paper advances Tagore's educational program at the university level as holding out the possibility of a mechanism in assisting. But in what way? Is his educational program a personalist philosophy or at bottom subtly a form of religious politics serving to dampen communal violence by holding together even incompatible religious differences, and thus a reason for having religion in the university curriculum?

Aesthetics of Civil Religion: On Brand Cults, Martyrs and National Media Production

Panel Chair: Anne Koch

This panel enquires into aesthetic ways of newly creating or re-shaping and representing civil religion and its central characters, symbols or figures. Normally, civil religion addresses value-orientation and social integration. In addition to these features, the papers make the aesthetic performance of civil religion the subject of discussion. The reason to take this path are altered aesthetic circumstances of highly mediatized and consumerist societies. Before this backdrop, images, literary figurations, movie sequences, and brands in media, public and national discourse are examined in various case studies from Italy, Finland, and Switzerland. At the same time the negotiation and aesthetic plausibility of aesthetic styles, pragmatic power and particular (new) media logics are evaluated. The concept of civil religion deserves this closer re-defining also with respect to past and recent (post)secularization and non-religion discourses. Hopefully,

this multi-layered analysis of aesthetics and aesthetic pragmatics of civil religion will shed some light on the persistent appropriateness of the civil religion concept and its capacity to be introduced into various methodological contexts in combination with the aesthetic perspective.

Baldassare Scolari: Martyrs in public space: aesthetics and performativity of political violence

The paper analyzes medial representations of the assassination of the leader of the Christian Democratic Party in Italy, Aldo Moro, in 1978 by the Red Brigades, with the aim of highlighting a two-fold moment: the presentation of Moro as a martyr of the State and of the Church. In the past 35 years, Moro has been staged in different media both as a victim in the war of the sovereign State against terrorism and as a Christian victim in the war against unbelievers. This double meaning reveals an overlapping of profane and sacral representation. The investigation postulates a connection between procedures of legitimization of political authority and martyr figurations, considering martyr representations of Aldo Moro's death as performances through which the event acquires a metaphysical meaning. It is assumed that through the use of statements and images iterating the Christian semiotics of martyrdom, the death of Moro is constructed as an act of self-sacrifice for an ahistorical and absolute cause or principle.

Jenny Ponzo: The intersection of religious and national symbolism: the motif of the procession in Italian contemporary novels (1948–2011)

One of the five types of civil religion identified in modern Italy by Robert Bellah (1974) is a pre-Christian substrate called "basso continuo". To explain this system of beliefs and loyalties deeply rooted in the Italian mentality, Bellah cited a novel by Carlo Levi, *Cristo si è fermato ad Eboli*, and in particular the religious procession episode. As shown by a lively academic and media debate started in the 1990s, the notion of civil religion as applied to Italy remains controversial. However, the study of literary texts can help to reflect on its expression in Italian culture. This research focuses on the representations of some symbols and rituals in a corpus of Italian novels written between 1948 and 2011 and set during the national unification period (*Risorgimento*). The analyses of the recurring theme of the procession shows how sub-Christian, Catholic and civil motifs interact and overlap: the national symbolism often borrows religious rituals and symbols in order to solve revolutionary tensions and to foster people's identification with the institutions.

Michael Ulrich: The impact of religious symbolism on marketing: an enquiry into analogies between religious motivation and consumers' brand loyalty
This research focuses on strategies driving some of the most successful recent marketing campaigns. Market shares of 20% and more, successfully built and defended by using religious symbolism, are exceptional and need an explana-

tion that goes beyond marketing-budgets and brand-identification. The project asks how some of these extremely successful marketing strategies operate within a framework of visual semiotics that charge a seemingly profane commodity with religious symbolic attributes. The theoretical frame is based on the ideas of Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum concerning capabilities for self-realization and common welfare, and on James M. Buchanan's club good theory, introducing the insider-outsider pattern as a prerequisite for any notion of doing "the right thing". Enquiring into the potential appropriation and high performativity of religious symbolism for the business community in a civil religion setting, this research also outlines the often-overlooked economic dimension within the study of religion.

Jerre Kyyrö: Aesthetic strategies of mediatized civil religion: the case of the Marshal of Finland

In the first decade of this century, the figure of Field Marshal Carl Gustav Emil Mannerheim (1867–1951) gained much attention, aesthetic transposition and visibility in Finnish art and media. One example is the cross-media production *The Marshal of Finland*, 2012, including a film of Mannerheim's life made by a Kenyan production crew. The paper examines different strategies adopted by media actors (authors of the project, representatives of the media) to relate audiences to the concentration of national symbols, of which Mannerheim is a central part, which are often presented in the media because of their ability to evoke emotional responses. The paper examines how in mediatized environments social and cultural fields are subsumed to media logics. It is hypothesized that aesthetics plays a prominent role in this process of mediatized civil religion, in which (ritualized or non-ritualized) practices are invented to represent national symbols. Part of this is also a meta-discourse about how symbols should be represented.

Aesthetics of Religion: Images and Sounds

Anastasia Serghidou: The invention of religious monumentality and the challenge of thaumasiourgia within the ancient body-culture

R. Schuman introduces the concept of the "soma-aesthetic" in order to formulate his arguments on the ethico-political challenge and its image as a "site" of sensorial apprehension (aesthesia) reflecting a metaphor of architectural construction. This epistemological approach helps us to designate the function of the body as a "signifier" of aesthetic usages and a stylization of the self within a monumental world. This recalls M. Merleau-Ponty's concepts, notably in relation with the body as an epicenter of aesthetic combinations of gestures and a topos of the metaphorical expression of geomorphy. By taking these epistemological

approaches we examine the conceptualizations of physis, morphè, ousia and the way they interfere with place, monumentality and miraculous events. I first examine monuments or places that persisted as generators of thaumata (miracles). I mainly insist on the impact body movement presented through the formulation of what F. Barker calls “corporeal history”. In a second place I insist on the way some authors such as Theophrastus or Epictetus underline, through metaphorical symmetries, the image of the body-self and the strategies of monumentalization. I also insist on the way transgression of self-control resulting from hybriatic behavior puts in question religious and political monumentality. At this point we may refer to the way Epictetus treats the Akropolis as a continuum of the self (Epictetus, *Entretiens*, 1 V). To go further we take the example of the suffering body, the thaumaturgic issues and the toponymics related to the connection of disease, miraculous healings and local rituals.

Hubert Mohr: Religion and the nuclear waste dump: notes on the stability and perdurability of sacred signs and their aesthetics

Departing from the debate on the semiotics of nuclear waste disposal sites during the 1980s and 1990s (Thomas A. Sebeok; Roland Posner) the paper discusses the dynamics of signs (e. g. sign usage or significations processes) in which religions are involved to produce cultural and social stability and sustainability. Comparing different types of religion (complex Western religion as Christianity; Aborigine religion) the presentation will try to establish a model for communications into the future through materials, rituals, body relics or symbolizing oral and visual techniques. The approach will center on aesthetics of religion as an integrative theory of cultural semiotics, communication theory, social design and aesthetization.

Marian Caulfield: Rupturing epistemologies through aural explorations in the study of religions

Whilst there is no doubt that in Western academia important methodological foundations for the study of religions have been set, in this paper, I will highlight how recent research in the area of religion and sonic worldviews has been shaking up methodological mores within the discipline. I will state why development in and attention to this field of research should be regarded as essential to the future development of the discipline if it is to stay relevant, up to date and attractive to young and innovative scholars. I will highlight how modern scholars have been pushing the boundaries in this field and I will particularly focus on how research pertaining to the aural and sonic aspect of worldviews has been rupturing epistemologies in the study of religions with some suggestions as to a way forward through interdisciplinary endeavors.

African Sacred Space? Establishing Sacred Places in Africa and Beyond

Panel Chair: Magnus Ehtler

The African religious landscape has certainly been dynamic as suggested by this conference. However, with sacred space often conceptualized as trans-human, as removed from the vagrancies of social change, we ask how sacred space is imagined, established and maintained. The panel is concerned with both the poetics and politics of sacred space, with the ways in which sacred space is constructed, shared or contested. We also invite reflection on sacred space beyond the religious realm. How are real places turned into heterotopias, how are they set apart to belong to another order of space that reflects, contests and inverts hegemonic spatial structures? Finally, based on the various papers discussing these questions in their specific contexts, we ask whether it is possible to discern something “African” in the construction of sacred space in Africa and the African Diaspora, something that would distinguish our panel from others on Asia or Europe.

Ulrich Berner: Naturalistic worldview and/or nature religion? National parks as sacred spaces

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, national parks were founded in various countries in order to conserve nature by protecting limited spaces against economic exploitation and destruction. The arguments for establishing national parks, however, often took up elements of religious language alongside concepts of the natural sciences. Thus the question arises about the distinction between and compatibility of a naturalistic worldview and a religion of nature. Examples will be taken from the writings of John Muir and Julian Huxley, influential conservationists or biologists who were involved in the foundation of national parks in America and Africa respectively.

Kupakwashe Mtata: Contiguous modes of sacredness in the Matobo Hills of Zimbabwe

Utilizing the notion “religion” beyond its conventional limits and using it rather as a heuristic tool this paper explores sacral practices of various actors in relation to their natural environment in and around the Matobo National Park in Zimbabwe. The colonial imposition of the idea of the national park as a space to be set apart from mundane human activity in the Matobo area, a region which is the core area of the Mwali oracular cult, led to the adjacency of varied sacralities of nature. The “religions” in question pertain to nature conservation practices in the Matobo National Park and rain-seeking practices in the greater Matobo Hills area. Classification and description of these neighboring “reli-

gions” of nature and description of their interaction will lead to an appreciation of land use disputes and opportunities for cooperation.

Franz Kogelmann: Soofie Saheb and the snake

The compound of the Riverside Mosque is probably the most sacred space for many Muslims of Durban. It is the place where the shrine of Soofie Saheb was erected. According to a local oral tradition this plot of land had been chosen by Soofie Saheb to construct his first mosque. At the end of the nineteenth century this area was already inhabited by Indian horticulturists but they were terrified by a huge python living next to them. Soofie Saheb convinced the owner to sell this plot of land to plant the flag of Islam. Fearlessly he approached the place and started to talk to the python. The snake showed up, finally headed towards the lagoon area of the Umgeni River and was never seen again. The paper explores and contextualizes the founding myth of the Riverside Mosque with its implications for the establishment of the Chishtiyya Sufi-brotherhood in Durban.

Janice Desire Busingye: Sacred space, urban development and the politics of siting Pentecostal worship places in Kampala, Uganda

Pentecostalism has had a profound effect on the understanding and practice of religion in Africa because of its contemporary nature and resonance with the modern lifestyle of urban dwellers. Because of rapid growth in numbers, the demand for worship spaces puts pressure on available urban spaces. Most ritual spaces are sited on reclaimed wetland, which by law, is supposed to be free of inhabitants. Cost of land informs the choice of wetlands for the construction of sacred sites. Pentecostal churches, which have noticeable leaders within city authorities, benefit the most from the reclamation of wetlands because of their claim to sacrality. Based on fieldwork on the spatial practices of the Synagogue Church in Kampala, this paper interrogates how sacred space, as spiritually untouchable but economically viable space, affects the livelihoods of poor urban dwellers.

Magnus Echtler: African Covenant: producing sacred space in the Nazareth Baptist Church, South Africa

This paper is concerned with the production of sacred space in the Nazareth Baptist Church, one of the largest African Independent Churches in South Africa. I analyze the poetics and politics of the church’s most important sites: the holy mountain iNhlankakazi and the sacred city eKuphakameni/eBuhleni. In three steps, I consider how the sacredness of these places is imagined and conceptualized, what spatial order is established in practice during the large congregations in January and July, and, finally, how the access to the sites was contested in the church’s most recent split in 2011. In conclusion, I argue for an increasing “Africanization” in the production of sacred space in the NBC, which forms part of the traditionalization of the authority of the church leaders.

After Deconstruction: Reassembling the Study of “Religion/s” and Other Dubious Categories

Panel Chairs: Egil Asprem, Ann Taves

Many of the critical categories in Religious Studies – including “religion” itself – are problematic and unstable concepts that often mask normative, theological or ideological biases. They distort rather than aid critical scholarship, and an abundant literature since the early 1990s has aimed to deconstruct them. But after we have dismantled problematic categories, then what? This panel examines four categories, focusing on the means for, potentials of, and the problems involved with deconstructing them. Starting with an evaluation of the effects of dismantling “Gnosticism” within “Gnostic studies”, the panel examines the practical import of deconstructing categories that have constituted fields and subfields – including the new vistas of research afforded by such exercises and their less fortunate consequences. Individual papers on “religion”, “magic”, and “esotericism” take cues from the case of Gnosticism as they explore specific methods for de- and reconstructing research, and explore emerging alternatives.

Dylan M. Burns: Gnostic Studies without “Gnosticism”

In 1996, Michael Allen Williams published the influential monograph *Rethinking “Gnosticism”: Arguments for Dismantling a Dubious Category* (Princeton). Over the course of the next fifteen years, Anglophone scholarship largely abandoned “Gnosticism”, experimenting with the study of sources once dubbed “Gnostic” – particularly the Nag Hammadi Library – without recourse to the term. “Gnosticism” has survived, and for the better; many scholars define and use the term, but with greater care than before. Moreover, the post-Williams effort to describe Gnostic sources in terms of Early Christianity rightfully underscored their embeddedness in early Christian communities, rather than a hypothetical “Gnostic religion”. The experiment had unintended consequences, too: a “chilling effect” temporarily shrank the field, and the experts’ denial that there was any conversation about “Gnosticism” to be had led scholars in other fields, such as Judaic Studies, to neglect Gnostic sources entirely. Nearly twenty years after *Rethinking “Gnosticism”*, the conversation about it begins anew.

Bernd-Christian Otto: “Magic” research without “magic”?

Even though the category of “magic” has suffered severe criticism throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, we are witnessing an unprecedented boom in the study of “magic” in numerous disciplines. In fact, a thorough examination of the concept of “magic” may not lead to its mere “deconstruction” but rather to the (re-)construction of novel and promising domains of research: (1) the historicization of the concept may reveal important insights into processes of Othering and identity formation in Western history; (2) the identification of its

numerous semantic nuances may ultimately lead to its disentanglement as a second-order scholarly category, thereby arriving at a more differentiated and less fragile and ethnocentric conceptual apparatus (an approach recently dubbed “patterns of magicity”); (3) the growing research on “Western learned magic” reveals a fascinating and under-explored Western “tradition” of ritual texts and practices. This “tradition” used to belong to the domain of private, occultist historians, but has today (finally) made it into academia.

Egil Asprem: Overcoming strategic essentialism and category inflation in the study of “esotericism”: a building block approach

“Esotericism” presents conceptual problems that are parallel to, but more serious than, those encountered in the case of “Gnosticism”. Like the Messina definition of Gnosticism, “esotericism” has been problematically defined in both historical and typological terms. Unlike Gnosticism, however, its historical scope has never been clearly delimited, permitting an inflation of the category to cover highly diverse currents spanning millennia. One of the mechanisms which has permitted this “category inflation” to happen is an implicit form of “strategic essentialism”: understood as an “umbrella term” for “rejected” currents that have no definite home in the academy, “esotericism” has been strategically useful for mobilizing research efforts. This situation presents a delicate dilemma: the category is theoretically unsatisfactory, but dismantling it comes with the risk of impeding research on a practical level. This paper suggests a way out through a definitional pluralism based on a building block approach.

Ann Taves: Will a building block approach undermine the academic study of religion?

In discussing what a building block approach (BBA) might offer to the study of religion, scholars worry about its implications for departments devoted to studying religion. A BBA, however, is not merely deconstructive; it puts deconstruction in service of understanding how more basic elements are combined in various historical and cultural contexts to generate different formations, including schools of thought, traditions of practice, and academic disciplines. Recognizing that our departments – like religions – are formations need not destroy either “religion” or “the study of religion,” but allows us to view both as historically contingent formations structured and maintained by complex cultural concepts, such as religion. As insiders to the academic study of religion, we can ask if this historical formation needs to be reformed or reconstituted. I argue for reform based on a revitalization of the comparative enterprise that draws on the BBA to set up comparisons that include but are not limited to “religions”.

After World Religions

Panel Chair: Tomoko Masuzawa

The World Religions Paradigm (WRP) has been subjected to sustained and rigorous critique in the academic study of religion for many years. However, in spite of this critique becoming an established part of the Religious Studies (RS) corpus, one area in which the WRP has proven especially resilient is in pedagogy, and in particular in introductory courses on “religion”. This panel brings together the editors and three contributing authors of the forthcoming volume *After “World Religions”: Reconstructing Religious Studies* (Routledge 2015), to operationalize this critique and offer concrete, practical alternatives for use in pedagogical contexts. In addition to presenting viable approaches which avoid, problematize and subvert the WRP, these papers offer a broad range of innovative theoretical and methodological strategies, and directly address the pedagogical challenges presented in different departmental, institutional and geographical contexts.

Jack Tsonis: A different paradigm needs a different strategy of comparison: the fundamental challenge in historical perspective

The world religions paradigm has been discredited. Scholars are busy finding other ways to talk about social behavior and cultural history. But what logic of comparison is actually being advocated in this shift? If “world religions” and similar categories are unacceptable for describing variegated cultural traditions, what names, categories, and grouping strategies can be used in their place? Despite the variety of new critical work in religious studies, these broader taxonomic questions often remain out of view. While there is no simple answer, this paper puts the problem in perspective by juxtaposing the contemporary critical paradigm with the structure of three previous paradigms from the last 500 years (including most recently the WRP). By outlining things in this way, the hope is to focus researchers on key theoretical issues at stake in the critical study of human culture. The political dimensions of scholarship loom large in this challenge.

David Robertson: “Classify and conquer”: the World Religion Paradigm in Religious Studies pedagogy

I begin this introduction by outlining the colonial, theological and evolutionary assumptions inherent in the WRP, showing that it reinforces a model of religion centred on belief and evinced by texts and institutions, effectively privileging the accounts of elites, de-emphasizing variation and marginalizing constructions which do not fit into its typology. I shall then demonstrate the resilience of the WRP in pedagogy, particularly in introductory RS courses. Attempts to reconstruct these courses have either broadened the category so far as to attempt to

include everyone, or ostensibly rejected the category while continuing to use the same typology. These courses have a major impact upon public perception of the field, upon teaching throughout primary and secondary education, and upon wider policy and attitudes. Although some voices have started calling for a radical reformulation of introductory RS teaching, I conclude that there is a definite need for sustained scholarly attention toward this end.

Teemu Taira: A discursive approach in challenging the World Religions Paradigm in teaching

Despite the scholarly criticism presented against the so-called World Religions Paradigm (WRP), it has remained a persistent part of the teaching and disciplinary organization of Religious Studies departments. In order to find alternative approaches, this paper demonstrates how a discursive approach can be implemented in existing WR modules and undergraduate teaching more generally without assuming or maintaining the WRP. By providing theoretical and methodological framing for such an approach, this paper argues that the discursive approach to established “religious traditions” should start by exploring how they came to be classified as a “religion”, and that the approach should include an attempt to explain what has been “done” by the classification. The overall impact would mean that students are able to think critically about the kind of classificatory tools and socially negotiated constructs “religion” and “WR” have been, and continue to be, globally.

Christopher Cotter: Innovative pedagogies: methods and media for the introductory course

Now that we have critiqued the WRP, subverted it, and provided alternatives to it, how can we need to put these measures into practice? In this final paper, I embrace my position as co-editor of the volume, and co-founder of the influential Religious Studies Project, to present innovative pedagogical techniques which facilitate the twenty-first century introduction to “religion”, avoid and problematize the WRP, and potentially increase the transmission and internalization of this critique in the next generation of scholars. Drawing on a wide body of exemplary material – from “religious” food practices, to the archaeological data left by the Northern European Neolithic peoples – and approaches embracing “complex learning” and visual media, I argue that emergent pedagogical techniques can be utilized alongside the more tried and tested methodological approaches already explored to create new ways to introduce RS against a culturally intransigent WRP.

The Anastasia Movement in Russia and Beyond: (Trans)formations, Adaptations and Manifestations

Panel Chair: Rasa Pranskevičiūtė

The panel addresses alternative spiritualities of Russian origin, as well as their formation, spread and expressions in the context of social change. It also presents current socioreligious processes in post-Soviet and Western regions, discussing diverse manifestations and changes of religious phenomena concerning institutional and individual religiosities at (trans)national and (trans)regional levels. The panel is dedicated to one of the New Age environmentalist phenomena, the Anastasia movement, which originated around 1997 in the central part of Russia and has spread to the West. Currently, there are Anastasian groups emerging in post-Soviet regions and Western Europe, Scandinavia, North America, Australia, Africa, etc. The Anastasia movement, as an internationally widespread manifestation of nature-based spiritualities, appears as a phenomenon of a global (more precisely, Western-influenced and -formed) alternative religiosity and contemporary individualistic culture, to which local (post-Soviet/Western environmental and national) sociocultural features are characteristic.

James R. Lewis, Rasa Pranskevičiūtė: The Anastasia movement and its transformations internationally: worldviews, beliefs and attitudes

This paper focuses on the Anastasia movement, which emerged in Russia, and subsequently spread to East-Central Europe and beyond. Our research focuses on expressions of alternative spirituality in the movement. Anastasians adhere to the ideas presented in an anthology of books referred to as *The Ringing Cedars of Russia*. Humanity's relationship with nature, God and the Universe; the creation of the world, the power of thought, the ability to mold the future, the relationship between a man and a woman, the establishment of love spaces, etc. are discussed in the series. Based on data obtained from a questionnaire administered to Anastasians in Russia, Ukraine, the Baltics and Scandinavia, the paper's findings provide a demographic profile of Anastasian membership, an overview of their social and political attitudes, as well as their beliefs about select spiritual and paranormal phenomena. Our findings are compared with findings from parallel research on other alternative spiritual movements.

Julia Andreeva: The interpretations of ecovillages in the Russian New Age movement "Anastasia"

The Anastasia movement, based on the books of Vladimir Megre, which have been published since 1996, is concentrated on many different ideas including ecological lifestyle, spiritual transformation, revival of traditions, and alternative economic and healing practices. One of the key goals of the followers is moving out of the city to ecovillage communities. But here there are many points of dis-

cussion among the readers of Megre's books, for instance, how to distribute responsibilities among the participants, who can make decisions, and which rules they should have. Their ecovillages differ significantly from many other European ones and stress not so much ecological questions than kinship territory and ancient traditions. All details of co-existence need to be negotiated even though they do not have a communal life. My paper is devoted to the different versions of book-based ideas of living in harmony with nature and homeland.

Leonard van't Hul: From Russia with love: the appropriation of Anastasia's teachings in eco-based communities in the Netherlands

Inspired by the ideals presented in the books on Anastasia by the Russian author Vladimir Megre, various Dutch individuals and groups have attempted to initiate local self-sustaining, eco-based communities in the Netherlands. Unfortunately, given the country's modest size, dense population, strict construction prescription, and lack of a Taiga-like environment suitable locations are lacking, leaving only the eastern outskirts open as eligible options for the establishing of "Anastasia villages". These limitations exemplify a broader question of how spiritual communities negotiate and legitimize their position to "non-believers" and policy makers. Based on a series of in-depth interviews and written sources I assess how individuals adhering to the ideals of the Anastasia movement (discursively) shape and authenticate their ideas and beliefs: of special interest is the question how the "exotic," allegedly age-old Russian spiritual beliefs are transplanted and adopted by individuals and communities residing in different local contexts.

Natalie Wahnsiedler: Ringing Cedars movement in Germany: adaption and transformation

In this paper, I will discuss how ideas proposed within the Ringing Cedars movement are adapted and transformed amongst German spiritual seekers. Different from the post-Soviet space, where the works by Vladimir Megre have triggered a new movement of ecological settlements, there has been a long history of alternative ecological villages in Germany. The Ringing Cedars book series has not provided a new life philosophy, but offered instead a new direction in the existing spiritual milieu. Readers take up the ideas from the books, but blend them with more acquainted concepts such as anthroposophy. Couples or single persons who already have experience in living in existing ecological communes are looking for a more independent and individual variation and find it in the idea of family estates.

The Archaeology of Religion and Religious Experience

Panel Chairs: Rubina Raja, Jörg Rüpke

This session considers and reviews various approaches to the archaeology of religion and of religious experience. Through the last decade publications on religion and rituals as expressed through archaeological evidence have increasingly expanded. Central to the session is the question of how to approach religion through archaeological material, the main trends being “archaeology of religion” and “archaeology of religious experience” (among others represented by Raja and Rüpke). Today, archaeological data pertaining to religion and ritual actions are taken as seriously in Religious Studies and History of Religion as religion is taken seriously within Archaeology. In this field archaeological and religious historical research meet, even if they have two very different lines of ancestry in scholarship. For the ancient world, “archaeology of religion” has established itself as a field of interdisciplinary research that presupposes basic methodology on the part of the archaeologists and basic knowledge of the history of religion on the part of ancient historians and scholars of religion during the past decade. On the other hand “archaeology of religious experience” aims at grasping lived religion, a concept coined for modern religion, and therefore not without possible flaws when adapted to non-living societies. These sessions aim at bringing together in fruitful discussion approaches to the archaeology of religion and the archaeology of religious experience.

Luther H. Martin: Caves, rituals, and minds: the archaeology of (religious) experience and the Roman Cult of Mithras

Various species have always been drawn to caves for shelter, protection, refuge, or simply out of curiosity for what they might conceal. Homo sapiens is no exception, from the Paleolithic to the spelunkers of modernity. It is, consequently, unsurprising that religions, from their social origins, have exploited this attraction for their own purposes. In this presentation, I will exemplify this attraction with the Roman Cult of Mithras, who universally met in speleae, whether natural or constructed, for their ritual activities. I will argue that these ritual activities incorporated techniques and strategies (e. g. sensory deprivation, controlled environmental stimuli such as architectural designs, symbolic representations, and behavioral augmentations such as masks or ritual threats, etc.) that enhanced or suppressed everyday cognitive functions to deliberately induce altered (non-ordinary but predictable) states of consciousness. Such experiential responses were interpreted as “religious” from within the cult context.

Gunnel Ekroth: The terror of the text: why we need archaeology to understand the complexity of ancient Greek religion

The trust put in the written word in the exploration of ancient Greek religion tends to overshadow all other sources. Texts are seen as providing specific and accurate information, while archaeology is more imprecise due to its need for interpretation, as archaeology is “mute”. The use of archaeological evidence is often considered as requiring no particular skills or training and archaeology is seen as a vast resource to dip into for illustrating texts, often taking one particular passage and matching it with one particular archaeological situation or item. This “terror of the text” has led to some skewed perceptions of ancient Greek religion, especially ritual practices. A closer study of the archaeological evidence for a particular cult or religious element reveals that the ritual reality was vastly more complex than what our written sources tend to let us know. This paper will discuss some such examples concerning altars and sacrificial installations.

Ditte Maria Damsgaard Hiort: Lived Ancient Religion experienced through “A Companion to the Archaeology of Religion in the Ancient World”

This work is in many ways not only much needed and helpful, but also offers the reader a whole new offset, framework and perspective. “A Companion to the Archaeology of Religion in the Ancient World” enables scholars to be in the process of learning how to master their projects, to have a rare opportunity to frame the concepts of studying religious aspects of archaeology and history in a whole new mind and setting. The methodological approaches presented in this work open up for investigation both a narrow and a wider conceptualization of ancient religious practices, experiences, spaces and expressiveness. “Lived Ancient Religion” furthers and stimulates our research possibilities by not dematerializing or decontextualizing the material. My own dissertation revolves around altars from the region of the Decapolis in the Roman period. Though a thorough analysis of the typology and iconography is forming the basis of this study, it is concepts like “Lived Ancient Religion” that allow the (real) deep and full contextualization and understanding of their archaeology and history.

Artisans of Greek religion: (Re)Shaping the Gods in Poetry and Art of Ancient Greece

Panel Chair: Miguel Herrero De Jáuregui

This panel will explore the dynamic role of poets and artists in the construction of classical Greek religion. Relatively stable representations of the gods in texts and images are a consequence of the traditional character of Greek religious dis-

courses. However, depictions of divine forms and powers were embedded in multiform and open accounts constantly revisited by poets and artists, who were free, almost compelled, to innovate within the conventional frame, to shift the meanings of traditional aspects of the gods, and to create new (yet recognizable) constructions of the divine. The papers will analyze several instances of the dialectic relationship of tradition and innovation in oral, textual, and iconographic accounts of divine forms and actions, considering the active role of the expected audience in the construal of specific meanings of each particular description or narrative.

Gabriella Pironti: Dynamics of representation of the divine in archaic Greek poetry

Herodotus' statement about the founding role of Homeric and Hesiodic poems in the representation of the divine in ancient Greece has greatly influenced, and justified, a reading in a dogmatic, almost static, sense of such a role. This paper, instead, aims for an exploration of the dynamics between tradition and innovation in religious matters which departs from these archaic components, through the analysis of some cases of narrative reconfiguration (e.g. in the *Iliad*, the *Diôs Apatê*, and the *Theomachia*). The poet not only dialogues with tradition, but also collaborates, on the basis of a shared knowledge, with an audience as an active agent in the (re)construction of meaning, which is the ultimate goal of poetic representation (e.g. "Hera's wrath" in the Homeric Hymn to Apollo). Such a poetic representation of the divine has its own autonomous potentiality which deserves to be wholly appreciated under a new light.

Carminé Pisano: Hermes' *klutà érga* in the workshop of Greek poets: for an "epidemiological" analysis of ancient narratives of divine actions

This paper intends to study the dialectic between tradition and innovation in the context of the Greek narratives of divine actions and in the light of the Sperberian model of "epidemiological" analysis, considering the different versions of a myth not as variants of a hypothetical original narrative, but as reformulations related to specific cultural frameworks, at the same time individual and social. I shall focus on the case study of the *klutà érga* of the newborn Hermes: theft of Apollo's cattle, invention of the lyre, reconciliation with his brother, mutual exchange of gifts. Within this traditional narrative frame, immediately recognizable by the Greek public, the single authors change the chronological order of the events or focus on a particular segment of the story in relation to specific cultural choices, influenced by the enunciative contexts of execution and by the horizon of expectation of the recipients.

Adeline Grand-Clément: Gods in color: the variegated facets of divine powers

Colors, due to their capacity to catch attention and to convey emotions, offer a good means of expressing the powers of the gods. Hence, they are useful for poets or craftsmen, as they contribute to the shaping of the invisible entities, in both literature and visual arts. Many of the divine epithets found in archaic poetry refer to chromatism, and we know that the statues of the gods were also colorful. Yet, the chromatic aspect of each god is not fixed and may vary over time. Even though the “traditional” epithets, inherited from Homer, are still used by the poets from the archaic period to the Hellenistic era, their meaning and the images they convey can change. This paper aims at exploring several examples of this shifting of meaning, by paying attention to the way the values attached to divine colors can vary according to some specific contexts.

Vassiliki Zachari: Eros at the altar: between innovation and tradition on Attic vase-painting

Gods at the altar is a favorite subject on black-figured and red-figured Attic vases. At the turning point of the late archaic period, when the new technique is enthusiastically adopted by the Keramikos’ artisans, a new divinity timidly enters the Attic imagery: Eros. Despite the lack of prominent sanctuaries and altars for the worship of this primordial divinity, according to Plato (*Symposium*, 189C 4–8) and the archaeological realia in Attica, the visual images of Eros abound in wide variety, mostly during the second half of the fifth century and the beginning of the fourth century BCE. This paper will examine and analyze the precise contexts of Eros’ presence by an altar in this series of vases in order to understand the meaning of these scenes.

Corinne Bonnet: Response

Áskesis in the Axial Age from a Cultural Evolutionary Perspective

Panel Chair: Anders Klostergaard Petersen

In the wake of the renewed interest in cultural evolution – associated with Bellah and Eisenstadt – this panel focuses on cultural evolution in the context of axial age religion. To narrow the discussion further we highlight the phenomenon of áskesis. Following Sloterdijk, we define áskesis as programs of training. We shall scrutinize a variety of phenomena not traditionally discussed under this rubric. This admittedly more comprehensive scope of the concept enables us to include not only various forms of religiously motivated bodily self-renunciation and mortification but also ethical programs of divine imitation, philosophical

training programs, sports, etc. We shall highlight the specific forms *áskesis* takes on in the context of axial age culture with an eye on previous types in archaic and tribal cultures and with a keen eye on subsequent forms. Thereby, the panel covers all four of the central themes of the World Congress.

Merlin Donald: The theoretical background for talking about cultural evolution and the Axial Age

The aim of this presentation is to provide the panel with a theoretical basis for talking about the cultural evolutionary perspective and the axial age. The contribution concentrates on the relationship between biological and cultural evolution and discusses the major transitions in memory cognition from three to two million years ago unto today with a special focus on the axial age.

Hans Jørgen Lundager Jensen: *Áskesis* in the Hebrew Bible

Ancient Israelite religion – or more properly the religion(s) of the Hebrew Bible – is commonly not associated with asceticism at all. In many respects the “theologies” and religious attitudes may diverge within the Hebrew Bible. But on one issue there seems to be an almost total unanimity: earthly being is in principle conceived of as good, because that is all there is for humans, Israelites as well as all others, including animals. Hebrew Bible religion is a religion of blessing and fertility, and Yahweh is, first and foremost, a deity of fertility. Still, an “ascetic-oriented” approach may help in pointing out some important characteristics of the Hebrew Bible. It will probably also be beneficial in a discussion about what, if anything, an “axial age” or an axial breakthrough has to do with the theologies of the Hebrew Bible.

Bernhard Lang: Ascetic spirituality and personal piety: two types of individualized religiosity

Traditional Catholic theology distinguishes between the “spirituality” of religious virtuosi and the “personal piety” of ordinary believers. Whereas spirituality (understood in this traditional sense of the term) belongs to the religious elite and is based on ascetic practice that can be taught and learned, personal piety, typical of the masses, seems to arise spontaneously. The paper explores the two types of individualized religiosity with reference to examples. The institutional and formalized nature as well as the life-long commitment of spirituality is contrasted with the non-institutional, informal and episodic nature characteristic of personal piety. The latter is typically linked to the experience of social and personal crisis. By contrast, spirituality seeks to transcend the realm of the mundane, its challenges and crises, so as to free ascetic practice from practical concerns by focusing on the divine as an absolute value. Spirituality seeks perfection rather than the solution of pressing everyday problems.

Einar Thomassen: The question of Islam

How is the emergence and spread of Islam to be understood from the point of view of cultural evolution? This paper will attempt to apply to Islam the parameters characterizing the religious transformation associated with the axial age, with special attention to the ideology and practices of self-renunciation in their various forms: in ritual, social interaction and “mystical” exercises and training programs. How does the emergence of these features in the context of Islam relate to the timeline of religious evolution implied by the theory of the axial age?

Assuming the Supernatural: Cognitive Approaches to Greek Religion and Magic

Panel Chair: Esther Eidinow

Following the discipline of anthropology, scholars have tended to ascribe the beliefs and practices of ancient Greek religion and magic to the workings of “culture”. However, as some anthropologists argue, these explanations may seem partial and unsatisfactory, tending to emphasize factors that promote the spread of ideas, rather than those that constrain them; to treat universal and local properties of culture as mutually exclusive; and to leave the specific processes involved opaque and mysterious. Scholarship in the cognitive science of religion offers some alternative perspectives on the organization of religious/magical ideas. Each paper in this panel examines a different aspect of religious/magical representation, including myth, text, ritual and doctrine. They explore how some recent cognitive theories may support and deepen our understanding of the ontological assumptions implicit in ancient Greek, including Christian, representations of gods and the supernatural, by analyzing processes of cognition universal to human beings.

Sarah Hitch: Cognitive approaches to anthropomorphism: the case of ancient Greece

In Greek myths, the traditions that broadly functioned in ancient Greek societies as religious discourse, gods are often portrayed as subject to many of the physical limitations of humans: in Homer, for instance, gods are unavailable or ignorant of human activities due to physical absence, sleep and other distractions. For many Classical scholars, this picture of divinity could only be reconciled with the extensive ritual performances attested throughout the Greek world by divorcing practice from myth, a segregation supported by the lack of explicit attention to gods as recipients of sacrifice in the majority of myths. In the cognitive science of religion, such a contrast between practice and text can be collapsed

through an understanding of the narrative factors that are mentally appealing and promote memory and transmission of texts. In cognitive terms, a paradoxical notion of omnipotent anthropomorphism is a typical, and very successful, feature of religions worldwide.

Esther Eidinow: Ritual competence, magical power

Scholarship on ancient magic, examining evidence over time and place and across different media, has focused on the role and identity of ritual specialists, investigating the nature and source of their perceived expertise. Less attention has been paid to those intended or identified as the targets of “magical” rituals, who tend to be described simply in terms of their role as passive victims. Focusing on an experience of occult aggression reported by the fourth-century CE orator Libanius, this paper examines how the perceived power of magic was not rooted simply in the exercise of a single ritual. Drawing on the cognitive theory of ritual form developed by Robert McCauley and E. Thomas Lawson, it examines not only the rituals of the practitioners of magic, but also those of their victims, and the ways in which, together, they created the perceived power of ancient Greek magic.

Hugh Bowden: Sensory approaches to divine epiphany

Research into the “cultural life of the senses” carried out by the Concordia Sensoria Research Team (CONCERT) in Montreal over the last 25 years has raised important questions about the “hierarchy” of the senses. Ancient accounts of encounters between mortals and gods in Greek texts often include descriptions of unusual sensory impacts. This paper uses these accounts to explore the role of the senses in Greek religious perceptions. To what extent can we see specific sensory experiences underlying the (obviously culturally constructed) accounts of “epiphanies” in our texts? How far do these accounts follow identifiable patterns? How far were certain actions aimed at invoking the actual presence of divinities, rather than pleasing them from a distance? Focusing on smell in particular it aims to bring insights into work on sensory cognition into the analysis of ancient religion, and to provide material for the broader study of the senses in history.

Bella Sandwell: Are ancient Christian doctrinal formulations cognitively costly?

Those working in the Cognitive Science of Religion usually classify Christianity as a “cognitively costly” religion because the complexity of its key concepts, as formulated in doctrinal statements, make it a poor fit with the structures of the evolved human mind and necessitate that it be transmitted and made memorable by regularly repeated, explicit modes of transmission (Boyer, *Religion Explained* and Whitehouse, *Modes of Religiosity*). This paper will focus on late antiquity, the period when Christianity gained the features that CSR sees as

distinctive of it (complex doctrine and routinized communication in the form of preaching), to argue that this might not be the best way to view the situation. It will suggest three ways in which the doctrinal formulations and the way they were transmitted by Christian preachers might actually have had some cognitively optimal features and that this explains the ultimate success of Christianity as a world religion.

Attempts at Adaptation in Contemporary Japanese Buddhism: Organizational and Discursive Transformation in the Pure Land Tradition

Panel Chair: Michael Conway

In the years since the close of WWII, Japanese society has transformed from a primarily agrarian one to a highly urbanized, post-industrial one. These demographic shifts have physically alienated the established religious institutions from their traditional support base, as temple members have moved en masse to urban centers. In this time period, the process of secularization has also advanced more rapidly than in much of the rest of the world, such that the majority of contemporary Japanese self-identify as “irreligious.” This intellectual alienation has become a major barrier to the attempts of religious institutions to maintain connections to their membership. This panel explores how the established religious institutions have attempted to adapt to this situation. We will show how the Shin Buddhist denomination has consciously attempted to transform both organizationally and discursively to meet the demands of a contemporary audience and inquire into the effectiveness of these attempts.

Robert Rhodes: Transforming and re-transforming Japanese Pure Land Buddhism: the Dōbōkai movement of the Shinshū Ōtani-ha and its contemporary criticism

The Dōbōkai (Religious Fellowship) Movement, started in the 1960s by the leadership of the Shinshū Ōtani-ha (Higashi Honganji), was a radical attempt to restructure the denomination’s activities by shifting its focus away from conducting funerals to fostering the faith of the individual believers. But especially after the disastrous tsunami of March 11, 2011, the movement’s downplaying of funerals has been questioned by those concerned with the issues of death and the afterlife. Similarly, its emphasis on the individual has been opposed by those who place greater importance on the communal aspects of religion. This paper will discuss these recent criticisms of the Dōbōkai movement and consider how they may impact the future of the Higashi Honganji.

Yasushi Kigoshi: The struggles of traditional Buddhist denominations in contemporary Japan: the case of the Shinshū Ōtani-ha

The fundamental problems facing Japanese society at present are the issues of declining birth rates and population concentration. Since birth rates dropped while the Japanese population also came to have the longest life expectancy in the world, the issue of an aging society, where the elderly outnumber the working population, has become a major source of anxiety regarding the country's future. Further, as the population has become more and more concentrated in prosperous, convenient, large cities, the number of marginal villages throughout the country that are in danger of complete depopulation has grown rapidly. Established religious organizations have been forced to attempt to transform themselves in order to survive within these new demographic conditions. This presentation will introduce the current state of these organizations and how they are attempting to adapt to this situation by focusing on efforts within the Shin school, the largest among traditional Japanese Buddhist denominations.

Shin Fujieda: Secularized statements by Japanese Buddhist denominations concerning brain death and organ transplants

Public statements concerning medical issues related to brain death and organ transplants have occasionally been issued by Japanese Buddhist denominations. Unfortunately, they have had little impact on the creation of legislation and the formation of popular opinion concerning medical issues. Presently, when the understanding of religion as a matter belonging solely to the private sphere is becoming ever more prevalent, it appears that established organized religions have had to accept that their influence in such matters is declining. To adapt to these circumstances, religious organizations sometimes have refrained from using religious vocabulary and employed secular language when issuing statements concerning medical issues. How are these secularized statements of Buddhist denominations related to the discussions concerning brain death and organ transplants in contemporary Japan? This is the issue I will take up in my paper.

Tomomichi Nitta: The incorporation of methods of contemporary psychology into Shin Buddhist ministry

In recent years, the number of Buddhist ministers (including ministers in the Shin school) who are attempting to contribute to society by offering psychological care has increased. The methodological foundation for their activities is laid upon contemporary psychological methods combined with a discourse of "spirituality." While these activities can be seen as attempts to adapt religious discourse to the needs of a contemporary audience, the issue of the continuity between these new approaches and traditional doctrinal systems is very much open to question. This paper will introduce the activities of these Shin Buddhist ministers, point out the differences between their approach and traditional Shin

doctrine, and consider the implications of the problems that arise from this dissonance.

Michael Pye: Response

Axial Age Research from the Perspectives of Indigenous Religions

Panel Chair: Armin W. Geertz

Most scholars in the humanities, including historians of religion, during most of the twentieth century explicitly rejected evolutionary theory. The highly speculative, colonial and racist evolutionary schemes in circulation at the end of the nineteenth century led to this rejection. Robert Bellah's book *Religion in Human Evolution* (2011) and the Axial Age debate that it represents was important because it persuaded historians of religions and other historians to opt more or less directly for evolutionary theory. But there are problems with the debate. One of these is that, once again, contemporary indigenous religions are the turning point of major theoretical schemes promoted by thinkers who are not qualified scholars of indigenous religions. This panel consists of friendly but critical responses to Axial Age theory from the perspective of indigenous religions research by scholars who are specialists in indigenous religions.

Armin W. Geertz: Critical reflections on Axial Age theory from the perspective of indigenous religions

Jan Assmann argued that the Axial Age is a creation of philosophers and sociologists, who are concerned with the roots of modernity. He calls this concern the quest for beginnings; in this sense it exhibits mythical qualities. I concur with this conclusion and draw attention to the often too confident generalizations about hunter-gatherers. Very seldom do scholars refer to detailed ethnographic studies of particular peoples. "Hunter-gatherers" may be a useful short-hand category, but variations within this category are not insignificant. The problem is that research on them was often carried out with an evolutionary scheme in mind. Furthermore, many authors simply assume a direct transition from hunter-gatherers to complex big god societies and forget about the many transitions to horticulture, small-scale agriculture, small chiefdoms, and so on. This paper will critically discuss hunter-gatherer examples in Axial Age and other evolutionary discourses.

James L Cox, Suzanne Owen: Indigenous religions as a world religion: challenging the Axial Age theory

The theory of an Axial Age in the development of the history of religions, as interpreted recently by Robert Bellah, uses what Bellah calls "the largest possible

framework for [the] study of religion in human evolution". This framework appears to place indigenous religions at an early, primitive stage of human evolution, or construes them as "primal", as a foundation or base on which the great world religions are constructed. Some decades ago, the category "primal" religion served to bring indigenous religions into the mainstream in the academic study of religions; however, it brought with it the essentialisms and arbitrariness contained in such categorizations. This paper critiques primitivist notions of indigenous religions and challenges the Axial Age theory by suggesting that indigenous religions, when subjected to the same criteria for determining the shift in human cosmologies in a postulated Axial Age, can be interpreted as a "world" religion.

Jan Platvoet: De-centering the Axial Age: contextualizing history of religions

I will develop an outline of a long term morphological history of religions that de-centers the Axial Age approach by demonstrating that the morphology of the so-called Axial Age religions is as much shaped and constrained by the history of the societies that produced and practiced them, as are those of preliterate, folk, and post-1800 religions. Secondly, I propose that we term these post-1800 religions the religions of the Second Axial Age, the extra-religious onset of which I locate in the Age of Discovery; and that we term the so-called Axial Age religions the religions of the First Axial Age. The introduction of a second axial age de-centers also the Eurocentric, colonialist use of the Axial Age as the unique transition from "prehistoric" to "historic" and from "primitive" to "civilized," etc. that would explain our "modernity." And it links this macro-historic research to the study of modern non-religion and secularity.

Jack Tsonis: The marginalization of "non-axial" traditions in the Axial Age discourse: an embedded and on-going problem

This paper provides a critical intellectual history of the Axial Age narrative in order to critique the distinction between "axial" and "non-axial" cultures. Despite Jaspers' pluralistic emphasis, this division ultimately corresponds to the same qualitative hierarchy between "historical" and "non-historical" cultures, and thus to the classic division between Kulturvölker and Naturvölker. Given that modern indigenous peoples invariably fit into the category of non-axial, this surely presents a major problem. Yet this point has never been raised in the tradition of Axial Age research, meaning that the current resurgence of the paradigm has carried this baggage along with it. Although Robert Bellah provides a much more nuanced portrayal of "tribal" religions in his recent evolutionary epic (2011), categories such as "axial" and "axiality" retain unintended but pejorative implications about groups now designated as "indigenous reli-

gions”. I argue that the only way around this problem is to abandon the categories altogether.

Back to the Future: Inscribing Change in a Remote Past

Panel Chair: Philippe Swennen

In numerous religious systems, a change in practice needs to be justified if it reflects an evolution of the belief systems. A frequent strategy legitimates the mutation of the practices with an underlying justification which affirms the restoration of an original cult model. The newness is not claimed as such and the progress does not consist in assuming a change. The legitimizing of the innovation could be done in several forms: (1) by constructing a fiction – that of the returning to the initial states; (2) by referring to an ancestral past that would only reactivate its existence. The argument could be constructed over diverse methodologies that explain the complexity and ambivalence of the notion of origin itself. The present panel wishes to provide some examples of this diversity by taking as testimony related religious systems that could be perceived as completely alien to each another.

Vinciane Pirenne: The politics of Olympus at Olympia: the various “inventions” of games and cults

The traditional date of the foundation of the Olympic Games, 776 BCE, is an a posteriori result of the chronological compilation by Hippias of Elis in the fifth century BCE. The Elean writer certainly enhanced the role of Elis in this context and it remains very difficult to establish the “pre-Elean” situation in terms of cults and games. Rather than recovering absolute dates for a period where few are available, this paper aims at questioning the mythical narratives from the Classical to the Roman periods, adding up various founders at Olympia, both for the games and the cults performed there, in honour of Zeus himself, or of the whole “Olympic” pantheon around him. The intertwined identities involved at Olympia – local, regional, “panhellenic” – are at stake in each “reading” of the past in such a famous sanctuary.

Philippe Swennen: How can an embryo become a prophet?

Both Vedic and Avestan sacrifices show us how a sacrificer tries to make contact with his gods in the context of complex liturgical ceremonies implying the presence of priests who offer several kinds of gifts, for instance poems, libations or slaughtered cattle. In both cases the religious doctrine justifying the liturgical process explains that the sacrificial ground and space correspond to the beginning of time, but the definitions given to these beginnings are extremely divergent. This is surprising, because Indo-Iranian linguistics strongly suggest that

both religious systems should be genetically very close. In Vedic India, the sacrifice represents an embryo, which should have been a god, but begets the human race. In Iran, the sacrifice renews the first perfect ceremony achieved by Zarathushtra, the so-called prophet who chose to revere Ahura Mazda. How did one similar doctrine produce two such different products?

Saskia Peels: The vocabulary of tradition in Greek ritual norms
Inscriptions that presented cultic rules and guidelines regularly claim that things should be done *κατὰ τὰ πάτρια*, “according to ancestral norms”, that *ἀρχαίους νόμους* “ancient customs or laws” should be applied, or something similar (e.g. Chaniotis 1996). These phrases were sometimes used as authority statements, next to or instead of a norm’s presentation as the decision or advice of the people, a god, oracle or priest. This paper asks how the “vocabulary of tradition” functions in relation to other authority claims to legitimate cultic rules, building on the work of Parker 2005 on the normative character of *leges sacrae*. Moreover, although the semantic field of *ἀρχη* and cognates has been contrasted with notions of “origin”, such as *τὸν πρῶτον/τὰ πρῶτα, πάλαι/παλαιός* (e.g. Classen 1996), this paper proposes to study the notion of *τὰ πάτρια* in respect to these other notions.

Céline Redard: Innovation and tradition in the transmission of the Avestan manuscripts

The Avesta had been subjected to a long period of oral transmission before being written down in the fourth century CE. In the seventh century after the Muslim invasion a portion of the Zoroastrian community immigrated to Gujarat, India. As a result, the Avesta started to have two types of transmission: the Indian and the Iranian. These two schools of transmission seemed very close to one another, however each of them had innovations that are reflected in the manuscript. What do they consist of? Moreover, as long as we are faced with a ritual corpus which remains faithful to the archetype and cannot be modified without any well-established reasons, how could the changes take place?

Between Body and Soul: Cultural Change and Religious Transformations during the Reformation

Panel Chair: Alessandra Celati

Aware of the osmosis between cultural historical frameworks and religious dynamics, we aim to put the Protestant Reformation in context. Renaissance culture reshaped the conception of science in a way which was to become ripe with the rise of the Scientific Revolution, and Italy was the torchbearer of this phenomenon, being also quite a peculiar context from the point of view of the

religious Reformation. Bearing this in mind and taking into account the sixteenth-century confessional entrenchment, our complementary papers will focus on Italy, highlighting the way a certain culture of the body intertwined with the religious discourse. Considering the strong interrelation between body and soul in early modern Christian culture, we aim to suggest original research perspectives: focusing on medicine as a pioneering field of analysis, we intend to examine the religious transformations that occurred during the age of the Reformation.

Alessandra Celati: Heretical physicians in the Italian Reformation: original perspectives on the matter of religious transformations

In sixteenth-century Italy, two cultural facts seemed interacting with one another: the aspiration for a religious Reformation and the relevance of Humanism, with its stress on philology and critical doubt. Considering the intersection between these phenomena, my paper looks at the reception of the Reformation in the medical context, examining why a great number of Italian physicians embraced heterodox ideas. Focusing on original archive sources and a sound sample of dissident doctors, I will explain what was specific to their religious experience. Moreover, body and soul being so interconnected, the medical profession became competitive to ecclesiastical authorities with regard to the provision of salvation. Bearing this in mind, the conflict which opposed physicians to clergymen illustrates the peculiar interrelation occurring between medicine and religion. Focusing on heretical doctors, my paper aims to present a fresh interpretation of sixteenth-century religious transformations, offering several perspectives on the complex dynamics underlying these changes.

Domizia Weber: Before and after the Council of Trent: transforming beliefs, transforming practices

Through the analysis of some case studies observed in sixteenth-century Modena, this contribution deals with the transformations that took place in Italy after the Council of Trent with respect to the popular imaginary. The stress the Council gave to the eradication of superstitious beliefs, and everything that seemed to be a deviance from orthodoxy, led to the disappearance of a certain kind of popular culture concerning religion, medicine and daily life. Trials against healers, often accused of witchcraft, highlight this phenomenon, as their contents evolved through the course of the sixteenth century. Early proceedings usually described evocative scenarios resounding to ancient pagan lore and magic medical practices, while late proceedings lacked these elements, revealing that such cultural substrate had faded away. My talk will examine inquisitorial records in order to comprehend these cultural transformations, bearing in mind the “social disciplining” promoted by the Council of Trent and executed by the Inquisition.

Manuela Bragagnolo: Physiognomy, medicine and religion in Late Renaissance Italy: the “Natural Physiognomy” (Fisionomia Naturale) by Giovanni Ingegneri († 1600)

This paper analyzes the links between physiognomy, medicine and religion in the late sixteenth century. It focuses on “Natural Physiognomy” (Fisionomia Naturale) by Giovanni Ingegneri, who was a jurist educated in medicine in Padua, and also the Bishop of Capodistria from 1576 to 1600. Ingegneri’s Fisionomia clearly links the study of the soul to the study of the body. Trying to legitimize an art considered as suspect by the Catholic Church, due to its connections to astrology, the Bishop moves it to medicine, giving a detailed explication, grounded on tempers and humors theory as well as on anatomy, of each physical thing related to inner moral and intellectual inclinations. In my paper I will look at the interest in physiognomy, within the ecclesiastical hierarchy, as an instrument to reach the human soul. I will also consider the religious implications of connecting moral and intellectual inclinations to tempers and anatomical structures.

Cristiano Rocchio: Medicine of the body, medicine of the soul: a contribution on Erasmus’ works

My paper deals with Erasmus’ idea of medicine and religion, expressed in the works *Encomium medicinae*; *Epistulae Beati Rhenani* and *Inquisitio*. In the first work, he praises medicine, acclaiming physicians’ tasks and social relevance. On the other hand, in the second, Erasmus illustrates medicine in its daily dimension, criticizing the ignorance of many contemporaneous doctors, who did not match his ideal image. In this text, he describes Jesus Christ as a medical doctor able to heal both the soul and the body. In the *Inquisitio*, Erasmus analyzes the grounds of Christian faith shared by Catholicism and Lutheranism. Targeting Italy and, in particular, Rome – the corrupted seat of the papacy – he criticizes superstitious practices and any exterior aspects of Catholic devotion, disparaging the rising religious conflict. Finally, just like a physician, he encourages interreligious dialogue as a healthy activity, lashing out against confessional tensions perceived as a disease.

Beyond Conceptual Dichotomies and Eurocentrism: Aesthetic Approaches to the Religious and the Secular in the “Non-West”

Panel Chair: Stefan Binder

While the so-called “classical” secularization thesis has proven empirically untenable and a rigid religious–secular divide has been critically interrogated on methodological and historical grounds there is still a lack of sustained empirical

scholarship on contemporary negotiations and everyday realities of the secular in “non-Western” contexts. The four contributions to this panel explore different forms of negotiating religious–secular binaries and the resulting consequences in India, Haiti and DR Congo. By engaging with aesthetic and praxeological theories, the panel leads beyond the focus on conceptual dichotomizations and retraces concrete dynamics of religious pluralism (including the non-religious) in artistic practices, civic engagements, economic networks, and political and medical discourses. Hence, the geographically and thematically diverse case studies explore the potential of aesthetic approaches to the study of religion for retracing the globalizing diffusion of the religious-secular divide, by emphasizing specific historical trajectories, local transformations, socio-economic constraints, and lived experience.

Stefan Binder: Aesthetics of the secular: towards plural genealogies of the secular beyond a “Protestant origin”

Based on a case study of organized atheism and humanism in South India this paper explores aesthetic dimensions of “non-religion”. By raising the question of aesthetics of the secular it engages with the intersection of two trends in interdisciplinary scholarship of religion: (1) aesthetic approaches to the study of religion and (2) the interest in secularity beyond “classical” theories of secularization. The respective logics of these two trends call for an aesthetic approach to the secular and simultaneously produce obstacles for its realization. While the focus on religions’ aesthetic dimensions seeks to overcome an overemphasis of meaning and cognition, the conceptual and historical focus of current debates on the secular leads to narratives based on cognitive frames, public reasoning, or even anti-aesthetics. I argue that this problem can be resolved by questioning Eurocentric genealogies of the secular and by engaging more persistently with empirical case studies – especially from “non-Western” contexts.

Anandita Bajpai: “Speaking” the nation religiously secular: secularism in the rhetoric of India’s Prime Ministers

This presentation aims to unveil how the Prime Ministers of India (1991-present) have projected India as a “secular” nation, through the medium of their public speeches. In the face of religious riots between Hindus and Muslims (1992 in Ayodhya and 2002 in Gujarat), which intensified the urgency to re-weave the image of a secular India, the Prime Ministers’ public speeches have tried to rescue the ideal of India’s proclaimed secularity from a state of crisis. Secularism here is projected as a necessary basis for a religiously pluralist India. The paper presents a case study which will show (1) how the rigidity of the religious-secular divide is rendered questionable, if not irrelevant, whereby the “religious,” in practice, becomes a means to stage secularism and (2) how the spo-

ken words of a political elite, a cementing material which welds together the nation, offer a means to grasp the aesthetics of the secular.

Oscar Figueroa-Castro: The profane within the sacred: the representation of the origins of drama in Nāṭyaśāstra's first book

The sacred and the profane are ordering categories, whose province and meaning are usually thought of as something separate, sometimes even antagonistic. The culture of ancient India offers a rich repertory of cases suggesting a more complex mechanism of interaction between sacred and profane realities. Among those cases is Sanskrit dramatic art, whose principles, themes and conventions reached a canonical status in the Nāṭyaśāstra, the main treatise on the subject (c. second to fourth century CE). In this paper, I focus on the mythico-ritual and properly scenic representations of the very origins of drama, as articulated in Nāṭyaśāstra's first book. Although these have been studied separately – i.e., as providing elements for advocating either the text's religious origins or its literary aspirations – a satisfactory account of the complex dialectic between sacred and profane is still a desideratum. Thus, as I will argue, the representation of the origins of drama in Nāṭyaśāstra's first book rests upon a complex interchange of religious and purely literary presuppositions – it is inserted in a rhetoric that introduces innovation and secular values, and yet (or for that very reason), shows a deep awareness about the importance of preserving a sacred aura and upholding tradition.

Bhakti in Context

Kayla Kellerman: Mirabai's asceticism: the use of the body as sacred space within Hindu bhakti narratives

I discuss how the rise of bhakti, or devotion, as a Hindu religious tradition impacted the movement from community ritual to individual and personal religious practice: or in other words, the movement from public to private space. I outline how the body is a place for sacred and religious experience within the Bhakti tradition. First, I look at how various scholars like John S. Hawley have described bhakti as a religious practice. Devotion evolves into a tradition in which a devotee interacts with the divine and obtains salvation through a loving relationship. The body then becomes the vehicle with which we understand how the sacredness of oneself supersedes a vibrant communal culture. I look at the work of the popular bhakti poet, Mirabai and outline how she uses her body to emphasize the act of surrendering, and thus, how she uses her body as a sacred place to practice devotion.

Mohan Devraj Thontya: Barmati Panth: the prototype of Meghwar Panths and beliefs in Pakistan and India

Barmati Panth is an about nine hundred year-old religious tradition that continues till today. Shrouded in mist for centuries, it has been introduced to the academic world as recently as two decade ago and western scholars have taken interest in the subject. The Panth is among the several other syncretistic sects of Hinduism that stood to reject all odds of the caste system. The founding gurus of Barmati Panth, previously revered as semi-mythical personalities, are figured out as historical personalities among their “immediate” and “distant” followers mostly drawn from the lowcaste untouchables’ substratum of the Indian Subcontinent. Meghwar Gurus’ shrines in Pakistan and India are centers of spiritual activities. The ritualistic traditions of Barmati Panth are unique in its kind with reference to the medieval history of Bhakti and Sufism. Its stunning canonical literature authored by Shree Mamai Dev profoundly imparts an intriguing way of life and includes prophecies.

Ülo Valk: Secrecy and creativity in vernacular Hinduism: on magical practices in rural Assam

Contemporary Assam is dominated by the neovaishnava bhakti movement, initiated by Shankaradeva (1449–1568), who established Assamese literature, challenged the caste system and confronted the Tantric goddess worship. Radical followers of this mainstream faith do not visit temples, they do not participate in pūjā rituals and they condemn magic. Based on fieldwork, the paper explores the magical practices (bejāli, tantra-mantra) in the region of Mayong in the Margigaon district of Assam, which has been known as a centre of magic all over North Eastern India. More than one hundred semi-professional healers and magicians (bej) in Mayong carry on their art as an alternative tradition to the public forms of neovaishnava religion. How are the two belief systems related? What kind of strategies do the magicians use in order to establish their authority in the seemingly unfavorable social setting where the public worship of deities who are evoked in magic, is banned?

The Biographical Trajectories of Political Islam

Abdulkader Tayob

The study of political Islam, Islamism or Islamic fundamentalism remains a daunting challenge for scholars of religion in general, and scholars of Islam in particular. As religious movements that have dominated public life in local and global contexts for the last few decades, scholars of them have provided useful insights on how Islam has become an ideology or a discourse of resistance

and hegemony. There is also great awareness that political Islam takes many forms, and in fact continues to change. But there is relatively little on the life trajectories of ordinary individuals who participated and engaged in these movements over this long period: facing change and transformation within, reacting to changing politics and social transformation, and navigating personal choices and doubts. With a few notable exceptions, the literature presents a simplistic picture of conversion or indoctrination, delusion or manipulation. In this presentation, I put forward the thesis that political Islam may be illuminated from the perspective of the many journeys of activists in these movements over a long period of time. With a focus on South Africa, I offer a perspective on the biographical trajectories of Islamists over two or three decades. I follow their conversions, engagements, conflicts, high and low points. How do they convert to these movements and leave behind their earlier life choices? How do they navigate the variety of choices and road-blocks placed in their way? What do they find in the movements: deliverance or frustration? Where are they now, and how do they see the future?

With this biographical and personal perspective, I offer reflections on thinking about religion in post-colonial contexts, on religion as a changing and dynamic phenomenon in the lives of individuals, and on the long history of a religious tradition.

Blood Rituals: Animal Sacrifice on the Christian Periphery

Panel Chair: Curtis Hutt

In this panel, participants present their work – anthropological and historical – on animal sacrifice performed by Christians on the periphery of more well-known, dominant Christian cultures where such practices are unheard of and generally forbidden. This oftentimes includes adapting the rituals of the members of other religious communities and even performing them in markedly inter-religious contexts. These non-stereotypical Christian ritual practices will be understood as having been affected by diverse cultural influences – Jewish, Islamic, and polytheistic.

Paul Williams: Dancing on the edge of sacrifice: ritual practices among Congolese Christians in the twenty-first century

When Rev. Bonanga travels the southern half of the Equator Province in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), he navigates rivers and forests to visit church members; he also travels through a forest of ritual activity. More than fifty years after political independence and ecclesiastical autonomy, one of his challenges is to negotiate the relationship between ritual practice derived from

non-Christian Mongo rituals and his own understanding of Christian practice. Based on my travels in this region in recent years, this paper examines contemporary encounters between the organized institutional form of Protestant Christianity (the “church”) and its ritual practices, on the one hand, and the disparate ritual practices of peoples throughout the riverine forest of central Congo, including animal sacrifice (mbeka), offerings to ancestors (bankoko), and resistance to witchcraft (ndoki), on the other.

Jens Kreinath: Animal sacrifice among Christian and Muslim communities in Hatay, Turkey

Sacrifice rituals are performed across the religious communities in Hatay. Regardless of the location or occasion of the sacrifice, the practice of animal sacrifice is common among the different Christian and Muslim communities outlined above. Most often they include the distribution of sacrificed meat, which often transcends the confines of the respective religious communities. Even though the differences in the interpretation of ritual elements are certainly more explicit, this paper argues that features of sacrifice exist among almost all religious communities. Despite the different times and locations of sacrifice rituals, their similarities justify viewing them as part of the local interreligious culture. One of the most significant features is that Orthodox and Armenian Christian communities perform rituals of animal sacrifice and follow traditions of animal slaughter and distribution of the sacrificed meat that can be compared to the Muslim traditions of animal sacrifice.

Curtis Hutt: A threefold heresy: reassessing Jewish, Christian, and Islamic animal sacrifice in late antiquity

Until recently, the vast majority of historians studying Jewish, Christian, and Islamic tradition in late antiquity maintained the following: (1) the sacrifice of animals along with the priestly leadership in Jewish traditions disappeared in the immediate aftermath of the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in 70 CE; (2) Christians altogether rejected animal sacrifice, as the sacrifice of Jesus commemorated in the Eucharistic meal replaced for all time the need for these Temple linked ritual activities; (3) Islamic sacrifice during Eid al-Adha was primarily derived and adapted from the practices of polytheists in the Arabian peninsula as neither Jews nor Christians at this time carried out such rituals. In this paper, each of these venerable assumptions (two theological, one academic) is challenged on the basis of new research into obscured Jewish and Christian pasts.

Bodies, Texts and Otherness: Religious Change in Antiquity and Today

Ingvild Saelid Gilhus

Closing Keynote Address

This lecture is about the interaction between bodies and texts and how, in periods of religious change, superhuman and other non-human creatures are drawn into this interaction. Such creatures are carriers of otherness. Angels and animals are examples of non-human creatures, which are given agency, promote change and are themselves changed. While a text is a natural habitat for angels, demons and monsters, animals have their natural habitats elsewhere. Creatures of the imagination are different from living beings. However, we should not make too much of the difference between facts (animals) and fiction (angels, demons and monsters). Animals in texts are never “real”. They are constructed for some purpose and made into creatures of the human imagination. Animals as well as angels are given social agency both in the field of asceticism and in contemporary therapeutic religion where they conceptualize social boundaries, experiences, norms, thoughts and emotions. I have chosen two examples. Both have emblematic functions and are prototypes of religious change. One is Christian asceticism in Egypt in the fourth century, the century when Christianity became naturalized in the Roman Empire and the Mediterranean became “dotted with something quite new, sexually frustrated readers, stretching from Egypt to the coast of Scotland” (Lane Fox, “Literacy and Power” p. 148). The other example is the contemporary angel school of the Norwegian princess Märtha Louise. Participants in these stories are monks and New Agers, but also angels, demons, dead people and animals. Change involves place, time, relationship to others, status, body and sometimes religion. The two examples in this lecture are connected to globalization and to a substitution of one religious ideology and practice for another. How and when do carriers of otherness, in this case angels and animals, promote religious change? How are they changed? When animals are given religious agency, how does this agency reflect upon views of them?

Body Knowledge in Religions

Panel Chairs: Almut Barbara Renger, Bettina E. Schmidt

Body knowledge – “knowledge about the body” and “knowledge of the body” – is an integral part of the history of knowledge, which examines the interweaving of cognitive processes, social values and cultural practices across disciplinary traditions and boundaries of cultures and societies beyond. This panel looks

at processes of adaptation and transformation involved in transfers of body knowledge in and between religious communities and institutions. The focus is on practices and techniques which are based on physical (including medical) skills. Do such transfers of body knowledge, both within and between European and non-European cultures, lead to religious change? How do these body techniques and practices adapt to social, political or cultural changes? And how does body knowledge adapt to a new social and cultural environment when transferred between societies? Referring to case studies the panel provides examples of forms of transfer, adaptation, and transformation of body knowledge.

Katja Triplett: Transfer of medical knowledge in Japanese Buddhism

The role of Indian ophthalmological knowledge in Japan is an interesting case for the study of the transfer of body knowledge: it dominated eye theory and therapy in combination with indigenous and Chinese medical ideas for over a millennium although its Indian heritage had been largely forgotten by the seventeenth century. East Asian Buddhist texts mention the use of a golden needle to conduct cataract surgery to restore eyesight. The motif of this originally Indian technique of cataract couching is frequently used in the Buddhist scriptures. These passages are not meant to be medically instructive, however. The question is whether Buddhist monastics in East Asia also transferred knowledge of this highly effective Indian medical technique. Overall, cataract couching seems to have been practiced widely in Japan. The paper addresses the role of transfer of medical knowledge in Japan in its religious-secular and social settings.

Lidia Guzy: Boil trance-medium: the embodied feminine divine, examples from Western Odisha, India

The paper which is based on extensive ethnography, discusses the multi-sensual boil trance-medium tradition of Bora Sambar region of western Odisha as a crucial cultural idiom of local goddess worship. Boil tradition represents a local knowledge and belief system based upon the idea that the conceptualized feminine divine – a local or regional goddess – manifests herself in a particular system of sounds and through ritual embodiment. A sonic, sensual and intersensorial approach to sacrality thus shapes cultural ideas of the divine and mediates them through music, the human body and body movements. The conceptualized sacred is on the one hand intangible as manifested in the sounds of ganda baja, the village orchestra; on the other hand it is embodied in the trance-medium boil – a living human who during the ritual transforms into a divine entity transgressing and mediating the world of humans and non-human entities.

Tetsuro Tanojiri: The concept of vital energy: global transfer process of body knowledge in Noguchi-Seitai (野口整体), Japanese Mind Cure
In early twentieth century Japan, Japanese Mind Cure (JMC), which is psychosomatic and private sector medicine, became popular. JMC healers had a meta-

physical and unique worldview and offered psychosomatic healing techniques. They offered religious faiths, political ideals, ethical models and physical health. Until now, the study of JMC has continued sporadically in Japan. By contrast, the study of the mind and body techniques beyond the boundaries of medicine and religion has begun proceeding gradually in the West recently. In 1928, Haruchica Noguchi established Noguchi-Seitai, the most powerful school of JMC. His body knowledge had two kinds of origins: Western spiritualism, theology, alternative medicines and literatures; and Japanese ascetic practices and methods. However, those were interpreted and contextualized in modern Japan, especially the concept of vital energy (“Ki”, “le magnétisme animal”, etc.). By analyzing this transfer process of body knowledge in Noguchi-Seitai, this presentation shows the uniqueness of this phenomenon.

Alison Robertson: Playing with body knowledge: creating transcendence through BDSM

My work uses the concept of lived religion focusing on personal forms of practice outside institutions or recognized religious groups. I am exploring the lived experiences of individuals engaging in the physical practice of Bondage, Domination, Submission and Masochism (BDSM), considering the ways in which profound BDSM experiences are used and understood. BDSM may be engaged in with overt spiritual aims, but even when this is absent the practice can still result in profound or transformative experiences. A successful BDSM encounter combines well-practiced physical skills with knowledge both about the body in general and of the specific bodies to create extremes of emotion and/or sensation. Participants work together to construct, challenge and transgress boundaries, creating intense experiences of “the edge” between order and chaos, form and formlessness. Moments of transcendence are created through shared body knowledge, which is itself changed and extended by the experience.

Buddha in Modern Turkey: Discovering and (Re)Inventing Buddhist History, Aesthetics, and Religion in the Turkish Republic

Panel Chairs: Laurent Mignon, Alexandre Toumarkine

Although Buddhism has been of interest to Turkish intellectuals and scholars and to a certain degree the Turkish public throughout the history of the Republic, the encounter of Turkey with Buddhism has not yet been subject to research. These two panels will focus on exemplary authors, periods, academic disciplines, and topics that shall represent the breadth of engagement with Buddhism in modern Turkey, ranging from literary and philosophical encounters to aca-

ademic research, to the adoption of religious ideas and practices. The panels shall help draw a historical narrative of the changes this encounter underwent and draw attention to the mediation of interest in and knowledge of Buddhism by Western literature and local actors and institutions. They shall highlight conflicts about the nature of the nation, religion, secularization, and multiculturalism inherent in Turkish society and show how the engagement with a religious “Other” could be employed to criticize or reconstruct identities.

Alexandre Toumarkine: The many faces of Buddha in the context of the Turkish secularization process (1920s-1940s)

A succinct academic knowledge of Buddhism was developed in the late decades of the Ottoman Empire. It was transmitted mainly by the History of Religions. This newly founded discipline, based exclusively on Western academic Orientalism, was presenting the “world religions” except for the Abrahamic religions. During the early republican era (1920s-1940s), it continued to inform the Turkish audience about Buddhism, as did the newly founded Indology from the 1930s on. Besides, in a local context of increasing interest for Buddha, henceforth considered as a Turk by Turkish nationalism, new kinds of writings emerged that discussed the religious nature of Buddhism and influenced its perception. This presentation will delineate, analyze and link them with the ongoing national debate on religion during the continuing process of secularization.

Dilek Sarmış: Buddha in the writings of the Turkish thinker Cemil Sena Ongun (1894–1981): philosophical thoughts on the divine

The growing interest in Hinduism and Buddhism in Republican Turkey was rooted in the context of mysticist writings from the end of the Ottoman Empire onward. Cemil Sena Ongun was a Turkish intellectual and philosopher active from the 1930s to the 1970s. One of his main lines of thought consists in reflections on contemporary pragmatic ethics and on divine figures, focusing particularly on philosophical incarnations of the divine. Besides his study of the “philosophy” of the Prophet Muhammad, throughout his career Cemil Sena repeatedly dealt with the figure of the Buddha. This presentation will be based on some of his writings from the years 1940–1941, which centered on Buddha. The analysis of these works shall elucidate the constructions of a favorable intellectual context for a philosophical and distanced use of religious history and a non-spiritualist approach to Buddhism.

Till Luge: Buddhist religion in Turkey? From the publications of Yol Yayınları to contemporary Buddhist practice

Buddhism played a central role in the encounter of intellectuals with Eastern and South Asian religions during the early decades of the Turkish Republic and was of primary importance for the establishment of Yol Yayınları, the first successful New Age publishing house in Turkey, a few decades later. Nonethe-

less, Buddhism has been remarkably unsuccessful as an alternative religion and Buddhist-derived practices have a relatively small share within the New Age market in contemporary Turkey. Based on an analysis of the literary field of alternative religiosities as well as interviews with practitioners of Buddhist meditation, this presentation shall delineate the history of the interest in and practice of Buddhism in Turkey during the past four decades and explore the reasons for its limited uptake and the low degree of its institutionalization.

Laurent Mignon: Asaf Halet Çelebi: Buddhism and resistance

The Turkish poet and scholar Asaf Halet Çelebi (1907–1958) showed interest for belief-systems outside the flexible boundaries of Islam. Merging French surrealist techniques and neo-mystical themes, his exploration of non-Islamic religiosities and Sufism could be interpreted as a form of protest against nationalism and religious orthodoxies. Among non-Abrahamic religions, Buddhism has particularly attracted Çelebi's attention, as can be witnessed in his poetry, his articles on Indian religions and his 1946 monograph and anthology *Pali Metinlerine Göre Gotama Buddha (Gautama Buddha According to Pali Texts)*. This paper aims at contextualizing and analyzing Asaf Halet Çelebi's engagement with Buddhism during a historical period when homogenizing discourses of nationalism and secularism were being imposed by the Turkish state. While attempting to define Çelebi's understanding of Buddhism, it will also outline how his reading of Buddhism contributed to his critique of fundamentalism and nationalism.

Katja Triplett: Turkish Haikus: Japanese Buddhistic poetry in modern Turkey

Since the early twentieth century, there has been a continuous interest for Japanese literature and culture in Ottoman and then republican Turkey. Yet, the Turkish engagement with Japanese literary and cultural products was mediated via translations in Western languages, mainly English and French. During this transfer process, Western interpretations of Japanese culture and particular images of Japan entered Turkish intellectual and literary life, including a discourse which overemphasized the (Zen) Buddhist nature of much of Japanese literature. The aim of this paper will be to explore the transfer of Buddhistic culture through the medium of literary translations and original works in Turkish by focusing on the works of selected poets from the twentieth century.

Arzu Kaygusuz: Geschichte der buddhistischen Studien in der Türkei

Nach den vier deutschen Turfan-Expeditionen, die zwischen 1902 und 1914 in der Turfanose an der Seidenstraße in Ostturkestan (heutiges Xinjiang) unternommen wurden, haben auch die Forschungen zum zentralasiatisch-türkischen Buddhismus in der Türkei ihren Anfang genommen. Es wurden ja bekanntlich sehr viele buddhistisch-alttürkische Textfragmente entdeckt, die den Wissenschaftlern nun zur Verfügung standen. In der Türkei wurden die ersten Studien über

die alttürkischen buddhistischen Texte von Reşid Rahmeti Arat, Ahmet Caferoğlu und Saadet Çağatay durchgeführt. Es sind fast 90 Jahre seit den Veröffentlichungen dieser ersten Studien vergangen, und es haben sich noch zahlreiche weitere Forscher damit beschäftigt. Ich möchte im Rahmen meines Berichts auf diese buddhistischen Studien, die von 1928 bis heute gemacht wurden, eingehen und über die interessante und wechselvolle Forschungsgeschichte des Buddhismus in der Türkei berichten.

The Buddha, the Dharma and Me: The Rise of the Individual in Modern Buddhism

Panel Chair: John S. Harding, Victor Sōgen Hori

Since the mid-nineteenth century Buddhism has been reshaped as a result of its encounter with Western imperialism, Christian missionaries, and the globalization of Enlightenment ideas such as the development of the idea of “religions”. Among the effects of this encounter, Buddhism has been rephrased as a religion of the individual with a primacy placed on experience (e.g. D.T. Suzuki). The accompanying secularization of Buddhism casts it as a practice or spirituality compatible with other religions. Claims elevate this invention of the Buddhist tradition as more faithful to the Buddha’s intent, accompanied by an imperative to untangle Buddhism from superstitious “folk practices/beliefs”. The World’s Parliament of Religions in 1893 showcased Buddhism as scientific, and therefore uniquely modern. This panel will address the question of how the re-phrasing of Buddhism as a religion of the individual has transformed the tradition and how it is being globalized.

Donald Lopez: The two Buddhas of 1844

In November 1839, Eugène Burnouf, holder of the chair of Sanskrit at the Collège de France, completed his translation of the Lotus Sutra. He had the translation printed but did not have it published, because, as he wrote, “I would like to give an introduction to this bizarre work.” This would become *Introduction à l’histoire du Bouddhisme indien*, the most influential work on Buddhism of the nineteenth century. In 1843, he published in a journal a translation of one chapter of the sutra, the famous “Medicinal Herbs” chapter. Burnouf’s piece was translated into English and published by Thoreau in *The Dial: A Magazine of Literature, Philosophy, and Religion* in January 1844, opening with Burnouf’s description of the Buddha. Yet the Buddha described by Burnouf sounded very different from the Buddha of the Lotus Sutra. This paper will explore the dissonance.

Victor Sōgen Hori: Authentic Buddhism: Personal experience vs. academic objectivity

From the mid-1800s on, it was widely agreed in the Western world that Buddhism as practiced in Asian countries was a degeneration. Scholars like Rhys Davids and Max Müller assumed the Buddhism that they found in Pāli texts was authentic Buddhism and declared all of Mahāyāna Buddhism decadent. In the twentieth century, D.T. Suzuki expounded the primacy of personal experience: only one who had personally experienced satori or awakening knew what authentic Buddhism was. Contemporary scholars now consider D.T. Suzuki's invoking of personal experience to be an ideological ploy. It allows insiders, the practitioners of Zen Buddhism, to defend themselves from outsiders, the academic scholars who critique Buddhism from an objective point of view. This paper asks what the criterion of authentic Buddhism is for scholars who claim to assess Buddhism from the stance of academic objectivity. It finds that "authentic Buddhism" is itself an ideologically defined term.

Shin'ichi Yoshinaga: How the "experience" was experienced: the debate over "religious experience" during Meiji 20s

In the latter half of Meiji 20s (1892–1896), there appeared some heated discussions among young Buddhist intellectuals about religious matters in periodicals. Furukawa Rōsen, one of the leading young Buddhists (*Bukkyō seinen*) published an essay "Kaigi jidai ni ireri" (Entering the age of doubt) in 1894. He admitted the critical research of Buddhism as a necessary step of its development, which meant the birth of the individual independent of the sect and the loss of faith. A year before that, Kitamura Tōkoku, a literary critic, published a monumental essay "Naibu seimei ron" (Theory on the inner life), in which he stressed the importance of the inner experience as the ethical guide. Though Kitamura was a Christian, both men relied on the inner experience for conquering doubt. This paper will deal with the discussion about "experience" and its relationship to the selfhood of modern Japan.

Micah Auerback: The Buddha in torment on the pre-war Japanese stage
Beginning early in the twentieth century, the Buddha appeared in modern Japanese writings for the theater, many of which were actually staged. These works included the opera *Śākyamuni* (1912); its adaptation for the popular musical theater (1920); *Śākyamuni in Despair on the Earth* (1922), by a reformist Buddhist cleric; *Śākyamuni in Anguish* (1922), by the scholar of Indian Buddhism Tejima Fumikura; *The Light of the Four Oceans* (1935), by the silent-film star Hayakawa Sesshū; and *Tathāgata Śākyamuni* (1936), by onetime expatriate Okina Kyūin. These dramas projected onto the figure of the Buddha new interests in religious faith and individual commitment, so characteristic of "modern Buddhism" across Asia. No longer a wonderworker or even a great philosopher, the

human image of the suffering Buddha, as developed in this body of art for the stage, remains in circulation to this day.

John S. Harding: Meiji individualism: modern means and ambivalent aims
Meiji Buddhists' strategies and representations of their tradition are illustrative of a broader intensification in the connections between the modern, the global, and the individual. This paper builds on Raphaël Liogier's innovative theories of "individuo-globalism" and religion as well as David McMahan's insights about secularism and spirituality as related modes that offer modern universals in opposition to pre-modern superstitions. Meiji case studies reveal individualistic, modern ways Buddhism was defended, promoted, and represented by a diverse cast shaped by shared influences. Meiji appeals, both to secular science and to spirituality, frame Buddhism as a live option for modern times unencumbered by superstition. However, an exploration of individual cases – Buddhists who traveled the world and figures, including Kiyozawa Manshi, who were shaped by global discourses while remaining in Japan – reveal tensions and oscillations. Some appeals to science, philosophy, and spirituality posited all embracing universals; others fueled religious polemics.

Jessica L. Main: Which one of you is socially engaged? Imagining rational Buddhist institutions and volunteer Buddhists in prewar Japan
A socially engaged Buddhist is a specific kind of modern Buddhist individual. Yet, the socially engaged "mode" exists in tension with other trends in Buddhist modernism, namely the trend towards a privatized spirituality which, in some iterations, is "thoroughly accommodated to the consumerist, materialist, capitalist culture" (McMahan 2009, 253). Buddhist social workers (*shakai jigyo-sha*) and "Society Departments" (*Shakaika*) from Interwar Japan (1918–1939), articulated a modern Buddhist individual that rejected private spirituality and accommodation to the status quo. Examining the publications of these early socially engaged Buddhists and administrative units, we see that the ideal individual favors a vocation of social work and volunteers to perform this work as a "generic" Buddhist, recognizing no difference in moral value between the sympathizer, lay follower, or priest. Moreover, this individual acts in the secular sphere in order to benefit society as a whole, and prefers scientific activities and institutions while denouncing superstitious ritual.

Alexander Soucy: Buddhism for youth: Zen and the modern individual in Vietnam

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, interest in Zen has drastically increased in Vietnam. This re-invented Zen places strong emphasis on individual experience and a secularized practice, mirroring many of the understandings of Zen that were developed by Japanese reformers and were popularized in the West by figures like D.T. Suzuki. Vietnamese proponents in the 1960s, like

Thích Nhất Hạnh and Thích Thiên Ân, then re-introduced it to the West as traditional Vietnamese Zen. This new Zen is now attracting followers in Vietnam from constituencies that had previously shown no interest in Buddhism. In particular, young people are starting to practice Zen because they see it as distinct from the devotionism of their grandmothers. This paper will trace the roots of this new movement and examine the role that the modern pairing of Zen and the individual has had in attracting young people to Buddhism in contemporary Hanoi.

André van der Braak: Buddhism and individualization: Charles Taylor and Buddhism in the West

In his work, the Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor describes a steadily increasing emphasis on a religion of personal commitment and devotion, over against forms centered on collective ritual. The three developments in contemporary religion that he describes (universalization, individualization and psychologization) have also influenced the Western engagement with Buddhism in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. This paper will argue that the reception of Buddhism in the West has been subjected to what Taylor calls “cross pressures within the immanent frame”. Western-style Buddhism has become a participant in the three-cornered battle that Taylor describes between exclusive humanists, anti-humanists, and believers in transcendence, leading to the tendencies of ex-carnation and therapeutization of religion, and a neglect of ordinary life. This paper analyzes this process, and investigates to what extent a more inclusive Buddhist spirituality is also possible that could counterbalance these trends.

Buddhism, Science, and Ideology in Modern Japan

Panel Chair: Masahiko Okada

This panel session aims at considering the relationship between Buddhism, science, and ideology in modern Japan (1868–1945). The modernization of Japan was triggered by the Western impact in East Asia, which also had a great influence on Buddhism. From the mid-nineteenth century onwards, Japanese Buddhists tried to modernize by reconsidering themselves within the framework of modern science, academic disciplines, and political ideologies from the West. However, the attitudes of Buddhists towards these “modern” forms of knowledge remained complex, alternating between resistance and acceptance. We will clarify the process of the formation of modern Buddhism in Japan by exploring how Japanese Buddhists were affected by knowledge about astronomy, evolutionary theory, religious studies, and socialism. From these analyses we will formulate larger questions about the process of the modernization of Buddhism.

Masahiko Okada: The development of Buddhist science in nineteenth-century Japan

In 1810, a Japanese Buddhist monk, Fumon Entsū, published his main work and established his unique theory of Buddhist astronomy. Entsū calculated the movement of heavenly bodies and predicted solar and lunar eclipses, while he still maintained a flat worldview of Buddhism. He arranged the statements on astronomy and worldview in Buddhist scriptures and visualized an image of a flat world system. Then he invented a mechanical model of Buddhist worldview and organized a unique calendar system based on the descriptions in Buddhist scriptures. The intellectual movement developed by Entsū and his followers became highly popular at the turning point of Japanese history. Their activities were not limited to the field of astronomy, but actually included works in other areas of science. In this paper, I would like to introduce this unique intellectual movement in nineteenth-century Japan and consider the impact of modernity on Japanese religious tradition.

G. Clinton Godart: Buddhist receptions of evolutionary theory in modern Japan

The history of the complex relations between evolution and religion has generated a wealth of studies. However, it is no exaggeration to say that research is still very much limited to Christianity and the problem of creationism. How did Buddhist thinkers in Japan respond to the transmission of evolutionary theory? I will provide a broad overview, taking into account a variety of responses to evolution from Buddhist thinkers, from the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century. I will argue that overall Japanese Buddhist intellectuals not only responded positively to evolutionary theory, but also became active interpreters and transmitters of evolutionary thought. Evolutionary theory also stimulated the development of new interpretations of Buddhism. On the other hand, while Buddhist intellectuals tended to accept the fact of evolution, they strongly opposed materialist and reductionist interpretations of evolutionary theory, and tried to embed evolution within an idealist and pantheist worldview.

Yulia Burenina: The reception of evolutionary theory and religious studies in modern Japanese Buddhism: the case of Nichirenism

Evolutionary theory and religious studies were introduced into Japan in the late nineteenth century. Japanese intellectuals readily accepted these new scientific methodologies and Buddhist thinkers were no exception. In this paper, I would like to focus on the reception of evolutionism and religious studies as modern scientific methodologies used by Nichiren Buddhists, Tanaka Chigaku (1861–1939) and Honda Nisshō (1867–1931). Chigaku offered an evolutionary interpretation of Buddhist eschatology based on the principle of progress, and positioned Nichirenism at the apex of a unilinear temporal evolution. For his

part, Nisshō sought to uncover the superiority of Nichirenism based on the Religionphilosophie of K.R.E von Hartmann and the evolutionary religious morphology of C.P. Tiele. Hence, evolutionism and religious studies became the scientific foundation for Chigaku and Nisshō to stress the superiority and scientific validity of Nichirenism as a religion in keeping with modernity.

Eiichi Otani: The crossroads of modern Buddhism and socialism

The purpose of my presentation is to examine the relation between Buddhism and socialism in modern Japan. The encounter of religion and socialism in Japan started with the Christians in the second half of the nineteenth century. Although the relations between Christianity and socialism in Japan are well known, the relations between Buddhism and socialism are not. The encounter between Buddhism and socialism happened in the same period. Takagi Kenmyō, a Jōdo Shinshū (True Pure Land School) priest, wrote his essay “My Socialism” in 1901. After that, Toyoda Kenryō promoted “Buddhist Socialism” in his works *Buddhism and Socialism* (1924) and *The Theory for Reforming Buddhism* (1925), and his ideas were put into practice by Seno’o Girō and the Youth League for Revitalizing Buddhism in the 1930s. I will analyze the development of Buddhist socialism from the 1900s to the 1930s.

Orion Klautau: Response

Buddhist Identities: Method, Theory and Case Studies of Buddhist Diversities

Panel Chairs: Jørn Borup, Stefania Travagnin, Cameron David Warner

What does it mean to be a Buddhist? How does it relate to other identity markers such as gender, caste, social position, ethnicity, and nationality? As a missionary religion, Buddhists aim to convert others to their way of life, but how is that done? How do you become a Buddhist at an ontological/epistemological level? How do you become a Buddhist from an etic point of view vs. an emic Buddhadharma viewpoint? The panels propose a critical analysis of textual sources and regional contexts of Buddhism and Buddhists, and debate methodological and theoretical approaches for the study of the topic.

Henk Blezer: Foundational reflections on the issue of “Buddhist identities”
For my contribution to this panel, I should like to develop ideas and engage methodological reflection on the main concern of this panel proposal: Buddhist identities, from the wider perspectives of the rise of Global Buddhism and the so-called “spread” of Buddhism to or in Tibet and China, and explore how we can usefully reflect on these issues by theorizing on models for regional and global development of Buddhism. I should first and foremost like to offer some pre-

emptive methodological reflections and general observations. If we wonder, as we obviously do in this panel: “What does it mean to be a Buddhist?”, we have already taken on board several assumptions. In the prelude to my paper, I should like to articulate these systematically.

Jørn Borup: “I am Buddhist, not (really) religious”: negotiating Buddhist identity in a Western context

Being “a Buddhist” is a subjective identity marker to designate institutional belonging or personal affiliation with certain ideas of practices grounded in “Buddhism”. In an (East) Asian context, where religious diversity is the norm, such affiliation is often part of a syncretic religious reality, where diversity of religions is seldom a challenge for individual practitioners. In the West, Buddhism is a minority religion brought by immigrants and converted to or included as part of an individualized “lifestyle”, and thus often being “something else” that one has to actively choose or (re-)negotiate. This paper discusses Buddhist identity in a Western context. It is argued that, despite fragmentation, hybridization and increased individualization, it is possible to include different kinds of Buddhists (“culture Buddhists”, “spiritual Buddhists”, “Buddhist atheists”, “convert Buddhists” etc.) in a meaningful category of Buddhist identity by means of self-identification and analytical conceptualization. It is furthermore argued that institutional belonging and personal identification are only partly related to a much larger – and less tangible – cultural influence of Buddhism in the West.

Fabio Rambelli: Variety and limits of Buddhist identities in premodern Japan

The paper explores different modalities of Buddhist identity in premodern Japan, ranging from medieval monks’ self-identification as “sons of the Buddha” (*bushi*), to ideas of Japan as a unique Buddhist country (*bukukoku*) – ideas which however did not affect the individual or collective identity of contemporaneous Japanese – to the forceful attempt to create a state-sanctioned Buddhist identity through temple registration and participation in temple activities during the Edo period (seventeenth to twentieth centuries). In particular, the paper discusses the impact of Tokugawa religious policies on the formation and characterization of Buddhist identities as well as their limits, especially in light of the coexistence, also within the Edo period Buddhist discourse itself, of a number of different and competing religious and intellectual discourses (in addition to Buddhism, Confucianism, Shinto, and others).

Mark Teeuwen: Religious identity and the Christian heresy in late Edo Japan

In Edo-period Japan, all Japanese were obliged by law to “be Buddhists.” Those who did not feature in the “religious enquiry census registers” were assumed to belong to “the Christian heresy” and thereby became subject to arrest and, in

some cases, execution. What does “religious identity” mean in such a context? This paper will focus on an incident that occurred in Osaka and Kyoto in 1827, when the shogunal authorities arrested a large group of alleged Christians. The focus of the investigation was on the question who among the tens of suspects were the true Christians, and who were simply misguided victims of those Christians’ guile and sorcery. This presentation will use the large body of documents produced by the investigators to analyze notions of religious (or, rather, heretical) identity in the last decades of the Edo period.

Stefania Travagnin: Identity network: concepts and contexts of “being Buddhist” in China and Taiwan

How do Chinese scriptures explain the principles at the basis of “being Buddhist”? And how, in response, have Chinese identified their affiliation to Buddhism in the pre-modern and modern time? Do textual prescriptions and ritual performances of the Buddhist identity coincide or differ? And how, in the last century, have Chinese negotiated the experience of “being Buddhist” with other labels such as “being Chinese” and “being Taiwanese”? The paper will address these questions diachronically and synchronically, and contextualize Buddhist identity within a multi-faceted net of identification labels. My study aims to make sense of the dynamics that constitute the Chinese Buddhist identity network, and thus understand religious identity in the tension between national/macro realities and local/micro stories.

Cameron David Warner: Making a space to be Buddhist: context and articulations of Buddhist identity in Nepal (2011–2014)

This paper will present recent changes to Buddhist identity in Nepal (2011–2014) based on fieldwork conducted among two groups of Buddhists: (1) Tamangs, ethnic minorities in Nepal who define their ethnicity in part on changing, globalized notions of Tibetan Buddhism, and (2) Hindu converts to Tibetan Buddhism. When put together, these two groups become contrasting images of the relationship between ethnicity and religious identity. Due to the emphasis on lineage in Tibetan Buddhism, both groups must triangulate their identity in relation to the Tibetan archetypes of their particular lineage, the socio-historical context of Nepal, and increasingly globalized discourses about ideal Buddhist practice.

Cases of Islamic History

Abdulla Galadari: The appointed time: unraveling the concept of “waqt” in Muslim prayer and Ḥajj

In Islam, the notion of time (waqt) is important; Ibn ‘Arabī also discusses the concept of time in his works. There are specific times for prayers and pilgrimage,

as there are also sacred months. From the root of time, “waqt,” comes the term “miqāt,” which is the location where a pilgrim enters the state of sacredness (iḥrām). According to Muslim tradition, there are five times (mawāqit) for prayers and there are five locations (mawāqit) established for pilgrims. The Qur’an uses the root term “waqt” and its morphological permutation (miqāt) in various passages, including the concept of the Day of Resurrection, which is sometimes called the Hour. It is argued that Islamic tradition attempts to symbolize in the rituals of prayers and pilgrimage the Qur’anic concept of time “waqt” and its relation to the Day of Resurrection. It shows how the Qur’an attempts to interpret these rituals.

Ismail Acar: The journey of jihad from the classical to modern era
 Nowadays, when the term jihad is heard, the first thing that comes to the minds of ordinary people is fighting, war, and even violence. Is this the case for the doctrine of jihad in Islam? Does it mean only fighting fiercely for religious purposes? What do the Qur’an and Prophetic narratives say about the subject? Is the doctrine of jihad always the same through Islamic history in all circumstances? Or is there a shift in the teaching of the sacred texts because of external affects? Our aim is to find answers to these questions via examining classical and modern texts on jihad. From the Prophet’s war up until WWI, Muslim leaders have not used the term “jihad” to refer to their wars in general. Rules of war and fighting could be derived from the sacred texts without referring to verses and narratives related to jihad.

Sami Helewa: Lament for the sacred: Islamic perspective
 Medieval Islamic writing includes narrative commentaries of the Biblical figures that serve as proto-types of heroic Muslim leadership. The hero motif in these accounts is not void of challenges that drove some of these Biblical figures into the abyss of shame. In the narrative context of shame also emerges a narrative of lament, and the two narratives blend into a deep quest for the sacred that was once forsaken. The intricate balance of shame and lament in the Islamic accounts of Adam, David and/or even Job suggests an underlying narrative voice searching for the sacred as part of a heroic life. This paper addresses the function of lament in Islamic narratives of the lives of prophets. Stories of the aforementioned Biblical figures from medieval writers like al-Kisā’ī, al-Tha’labī and even al-Ṭabarī will be considered.

Caste in Stone? Representing the Relation between Religion and Social Structure

Panel Chair: Jakob De Roover

For centuries, the caste system in India has been represented as an instance of how religion gives shape to social structures. This representation views Hinduism and its priesthood as causal factors behind the creation of a social hierarchy that perpetuates discrimination, injustice, and poverty. However, the empirical and theoretical evidence for such a view is scanty. This panel will examine this representation of caste and religion as an indirect reflection upon the role that Christianity played in the shaping of Western social structures. We look at its different components as expressions of background ideas deriving from internal Western-Christian debates: (1) the general connection between religion and the hierarchical ordering of society; (2) the explanatory role attributed to caste and Hinduism to account for discrimination, poverty, and other social evils; and (3) the place given to the Brahmin priesthood and its relation to the role of the priest in Christianity.

Jakob De Roover: From church to caste: on the religious ordering of social hierarchy

European representations of caste in India have given great importance to the following question: is caste a religious institution or merely a set of civil observances? Over the centuries, scholars proposed different answers. This paper presents the hypothesis that these actually mirrored insights into the role Christianity played in giving shape to the social hierarchy of modern Europe. Medieval European society consisted of a variety of orders, estates, and ethnic groupings, without any fixed relation to each other. From the eleventh century, however, theologians suggested these formed one hierarchically ordered community consisting of different classes. Society had to be transformed along the lines of this normative model. Eighteenth-century critiques then vehemently rejected this “feudal” model and its religious foundations. In turn, these critiques generated the dominant European images of the caste system, which tell us more about the relation between Christian religion and social structure than about Indian society.

Martin Farek: Corrupt priest or noble Brahmin? European and Indian understandings of the caste system

The standard story about religion in India talks about its decay in the hands of priests: Indian history witnessed the repeated rise of “reformation movements” against a corrupt priesthood. Shramana and Bhakti movements have been depicted as part of an on-going struggle against the rule of the Brahmins over society. The aim of this paper will be twofold: first, it will be shown how originally

Christian theological questions shaped the interpretations of the British Orientalists. William Jones, H. H. Wilson, and others spread the standard understanding of Brahmins as priesthood while they searched for answers to theologically formulated questions. Second, it is necessary to look at the domestic Indian understanding of the category Brahmin. Examples of early Buddhist and Jain discussions, as well as the later Vaishnava debates will be analyzed in order to bring about better understanding of caste issues.

Prakash Shah: The epistemic strength of Orientalism: the case of caste debates in the United Kingdom

In his *Orientalism*, Said refers time and again to the idea of the “strength” of Orientalism as a way of understanding the Orient. This paper explores how the idea of a caste system exemplifies the “epistemic strength” of European ideas of India. The paper draws upon the research program Comparative Science of Cultures developed by S.N. Balagangadhara in order to understand the deeper roots of the “caste system” idea in theological reflections of Indian society and culture. Secularized theological ideas about the caste system serve as an “explanation” for the character of Indian society and culture: it is viewed as the cause of discrimination and poverty among Indians. The paper provides an illustration of how this occurs today in British parliamentary debates, which draw upon age-old ideas of the caste system to justify particular types of legislative action, poverty alleviation programs, and proselytizing activity.

Categorizing and Conceptualizing Religion Education

Panel Chair: Tim Jensen

The papers in this panel critically analyze different categorizations and conceptualizations of religion education (RE), using material related to both confessional religious education (for example, Islamic RE in Sweden) and non-confessional education about various religions and worldviews in different European countries. The panel, furthermore, tries to trace characteristics of a distinctive study-of-religions approach to education about religions and worldviews, be it with respect to general principles, competences or other recurrent issues in RE debates.

Jenny Berglund: Moving between religious and religion education

In this paper I discuss the relation between the Swedish non-confessional integrative school subject Religionskunskap [Knowledge about religion], the academic discipline Study of Religions and the academic discipline Didactics of Religion (or Didactics of the Study of Religions). The school subject is, according to the national curriculum, to foster certain values within the school, values that

are considered necessary to create good democratic citizens. This differs from the academic study of religions, which has as its aim the understanding and explanation of religion and religious people in past and present and to teach this to university students. Although strongly related, the school subject can never be understood as a condensed form of the Study of Religions. The difference between these, the subject and the academic discipline, also reveals the necessity and focus of Didactics of Religions and its role in, for example, teacher education. Although Sweden's non-confessional school subject differs from many other forms of Religious Education school subjects in Europe, I would argue that the role of Didactics of Religions can still be the same.

Katharina Frank: A study-of-religions-based model of competence
During the last few years, many countries established Religion Education for all pupils. As far as the classes are compulsory, the teaching has to respect freedom of religion, which is especially crucial in regard to its negative aspects. Usually, the respective programs (e.g. Guidelines of the OSCE 2007, Guidelines of the AAR 2010) are highly speculative and they do not sufficiently keep apart secular and religious (theological) principles of education. On the empirical basis of classroom research on a compulsory form of Religion Education (e.g. Frank 2014a; b), this paper develops a competence-based learning model (cf. Lersch 2010) in a study-of-religions-perspective. Examples from educational practice will illustrate how these competences are conveyed and how pupils adopt them.

Karna Kjeldsen: “Didactics of the Study of Religions” for RE in public schools: a new approach

This paper is based upon an analysis of normative reflections or principles on “Didactics of the Study of Religion” for RE in public schools. It is argued that a common set of principles, although always in critical development, can be found in writings of some of the members of the EASR working group (e.g. Alberts 2007; Andreassen 2012; Frank 2013 and Jensen 2011) and that the principles, as regards some key issues, differ from some of the most influential international and national positions. Thus, they make up a new position. The principles will be presented and systematized as: (1) general frames for RE in public schools; (2) objectives and contents; and (3) approaches to representations of religion and religions. The paper is based on a theoretical framework developed for my PhD dissertation about the status, function and representation of Christianity in RE.

Wanda Alberts: Conceptualizations and contextualizations of education about religions and worldviews

This paper attempts to analyze some central and recurrent issues in the scholarly and public debate about religion education (RE) from a study-of-religions perspective, based on discussions of the EASR working group on religions in secular

education. The paper starts with a critical analysis of the use of key terms used in the discourse about RE (for example, different categorizations of RE, different names for the subject in different countries, the debates about “religious literacy”, concepts such as “intercultural”, “interreligious”, “multireligious” and “pluralistic” in relation to RE) and proceeds to wider issues such as the question of how the learning area “different religions and worldviews” is contextualized in curricula in different countries and in transnational recommendations. The concluding part deals with the question of how distinctive study-of-religions approaches to this topic differ from other approaches.

The Category of “Religion” in Public Life: Empirical Cases and Theoretical Considerations

Panel Chair: Teemu Taira

James Beckford has suggested that “disputes about what counts as religion, and attempts to devise new ways of controlling what is permitted under the label of religion have all increased.” If the analysis is correct, more attention needs to be paid to recent negotiations and demarcations over what counts as religious or faith-based in various public institutions and see how, where and why the disputes take place. This panel examines empirical cases in which “religiosity” of groups or practices has been negotiated and demarcated. Empirical cases from England, Scotland and Finland focusing on legal processes, the media, parliament rituals and scholarly involvement provide material for theoretical considerations regarding the ways in which the category of “religion” functions in public life. Papers address what are the implications for the dynamics of various groups and the roles of scholars in reproducing and challenging discourses on “religion”.

Suzanne Owen: Druids and the category of religion: the debate continues In 2010, The Druid Network successfully registered as a charity in England and Wales for the advancement of religion after much negotiation over the definition of religion in charity law and whether “nature” could be viewed as a “supreme being”. A few years later, The Druid Network applied to become a member of The Inter Faith Network for the UK but were rejected by some representatives of Christian groups, opening up the debate about the category of religion once again. This paper will examine the rhetorical strategies taken by The Druid Network to be accepted as a “religion” and objections to these in public debates.

Teemu Taira: The art of becoming a religion: law, media and scholars of religion

In early 2013, the application of the Finnish group Karhun kansa – whose aim is to rehabilitate pre-Christian Finnish folk beliefs and practices – to become a registered religious community was initially rejected. Their second application was successful and they became a registered religious community almost a year later. This paper focuses on what happened between the two applying rounds and how the group that was first not considered a religious one was later regarded as religious by the same expert committee. Attention will be paid to how scholars of religion were involved in the case and in the media before the final decision. This raises questions on the public role scholars of religion have in how society organizes itself by negotiating the boundaries of the category of “religion”.

Steven Sutcliffe: Managing “faith” in a modern state assembly: the ritual of “Time for Reflection” in the Scottish parliament

This paper analyzes the representation of the category “faith” in a ritualized address called “Time for Reflection” in the Scottish Parliament. TfR is a four-minute public address given by an individual to the weekly plenary session of parliament since devolution in 1999. I provide a brief ethnography of the event, a history of its formation, an indicative content analysis of its early deliveries, and a discussion of the ways in which this modest yet symbolically powerful ritual can be seen to “manage” an item of public behavior on behalf of post-devolution civil society in Scotland. I will argue that the ritual can be understood as a classic liberal solution to the problem of representing religious plurality in a modern state assembly, yet at the same time an expression of both power and anxiety in respect of defining and “managing” an apparently liminal category of behavior in modern western civil society.

Tuomas Äystö: Religion crimes and the category of religion: the case of the unregistered Islamic community in Finland

In 2006 a man spilled blood over a mosque in the city of Kajaani, Finland. He was found guilty of criminal damage and breach of the sanctity of religion by the District Court of Kainuu. However, the Court of Appeal of Eastern Finland overruled the religion crime verdict on the basis that the Islamic community, which used the mosque, was not a registered religious association at the time. Formally, the breach of the sanctity of religion-section pertains only to Finnish national churches and registered religious associations. This paper examines the arguments in the court’s rulings and the ways in which the categories of religion and Islam were understood. It also briefly examines the Finnish penalization of blasphemy and defamation of religion, as religion crime convictions have become more prevalent in the twenty-first century.

Challenges in Contemporary Religion

Ann Af Burén: Multiplicity of religious self-descriptions among semi-secular Swedes

In my study of “semi-secular” Swedes I have found that when given the option they choose to describe themselves in terms of several religious categories simultaneously. In this paper I describe these religious self-descriptions as fluctuating and palimpsest. However, this volatility does not necessarily describe a change of attitude, beliefs, behaviors, aspirations and affiliations. It is a fluidity that is discursively allowed within the frames of a culture that offers a multiplicity of subject positions in terms of religious identities. It takes place in a context in which the boundaries between the secular and the religious are, in practice, fuzzy and permeable, allowing for signifiers to float between the different discourses on religion that the respondents are enmeshed in. However, this does not mean that “anything goes”—these religious self-descriptions have boundaries that need to be considered as related to the local discourses on religion available to the respondents.

Pauline Lere: A decade of ethno-religious crises on the Jos Plateau: a socio-political analysis

While religion has contributed to human civilization, it has been manipulated and used to cause strife and wars. Religiously motivated conflicts have proliferated around the world and the case of Nigeria is not different. Religion, perceived as personal, in recent years has been remote-controlled by man. The current heightened religious crises in Nigeria are traced back to the early 60s. Jos, the capital of Plateau State Nigeria, once peaceful, with a temperate climate has endeared many ethnic groups. The city, known as “the home of peace and tourism”, has in the past decade witnessed intense crisis situations, resulting in wanton destruction of lives and properties. This localized conflict graduated into a global dimension attracting the international community. This paper explores the causes of the violence and the role of the media in the crises. The paper relies on oral interviews and documented research on the decade long crisis in Jos.

Valdemar Kallunki: The changing welfare role of the Church in Finland
The crisis of the welfare system and welfare reforms have created an opportunity window for the Churches as welfare providers in European societies. In Finland, the ongoing restructuring of welfare services and parishes means differentiation between secular and religious structures. Responding to changes, the Lutheran Church of Finland has launched a project called “The Church and welfare services”, in which it tries to revise its role in the welfare sector. The objective is to decide what kind of role the Church is aiming at in outsourced welfare services. In this paper, I will scrutinize the changing welfare role of the Church in Finland.

Theoretical perspectives for the examination are the welfare crisis, individual level secularization and the differentiation of secular and religious structures. The data includes 25 interviews of parish and municipal employees and quantitative data gathered from all the parishes.

Challenging Traditional Sociology of Religions

Frederik Elwert: From Content and Structure to Structure of Content: Text Network Analysis in the Study of Religions

Research in the study of religions moves between the poles of social structure (e.g. religious institutions, social settings) and religious content (e.g. scriptures, teachings). The sociology of religion often has to defend against the claim that it favors the study of social structures over the analysis of religious content or, as Weber put it, interests over ideas. Philological approaches in contrast have been accused of overemphasizing scriptures at the expense of social context and lived religion. Recent approaches in text-based network analysis promise to bridge this divide, at least partially. They allow us to visualize and study structures internal and external to texts, in conjunction with their content. On the methodological level, they can be discussed with regard to their implications and limitations. The paper will present findings from the completed project SeNeReKo as well as an outlook for future directions in this field of study.

Naomi Goldenberg: Theorizing religions as vestigial states in the context of contemporary governance and jurisdiction over violence

I will argue that it is useful and productive to understand religions as vestigial states in order to clarify how religions are functioning in current technologies of statecraft. Both words in the composite term “vestigial state” will be discussed. “State” will be defined with reference to its usage in international law although the specific linkage of the state and violence by Max Weber will also be cited. “Vestigial” will be presented as an evocative metaphor that hearkens back to history both actual or imagined. Conceptions of past sovereignty will be hypothesized as grounding ambitions for the possibility of future powers. Examples of the succession of sovereignties and the gradual evolution of the term “religion” to apply to such histories will be employed. “Religion” will be shown to be used as category in which governments place displaced or marginalized groups and grant them limited autonomy. In general, physical force is forbidden to vestigial states that tend to lose the classification as religions if they authorize violence in almost any form. Exceptions to this policy as it applies to disciplining women and children will be highlighted.

Nikolas Broy: Bourdieu, Weber, and religious diversity: the religious field of China

French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's interpretation of Weber's sociology of religion is a well-known and much lauded attempt to analyze religious change both in the "religious field" of a given society and within a religious tradition itself. Although scholars have presented various refinements of his theories, we are still missing proper attempts to apply Bourdieu's approach to religious landscapes that differ from the European and Western experiences. Therefore, this paper will employ the example of the religiously diverse setting of late imperial and modern China in order to discuss three crucial concerns: (1) the religious field of a religiously pluralistic society without just one monopolistic religion; (2) the role of the state and nonreligious agents within the arena of religious contestation; (3) the application of Bourdieu's approach to a modern society whose religious field has been fundamentally altered in the course of modernization and politically asserted secularization.

Willem Hofstee: Fields and figurations

Pierre Bourdieu and Norbert Elias launched key notions which might be relevant for the study of religion: "field" (Bourdieu) and "figuration" (Elias). Bourdieu's field concept refers to a social universe with a language and logic of its own. It consists of networks in which games are played with bets and capital. Inequality of power and power struggles are an inherent aspect of every game that is being played. The concept of figuration (Elias) refers to the network of direct and indirect interdependencies which a plurality of individuals form with each other during their sustained interaction. Every actor has a certain autonomy of decision, but finds himself dependent on other actors due to control over resources. Are both concepts useful in understanding conflicts between and cohesion within religious groups? Are they useful in determining how ideas, acts and institutions sustain or inhibit religious ideas and motivations?

Change of Religious Consciousness under the Roman Empire: Animal Sacrifice and its Substitutions

Panel Chair: Hiroshi Ichikawa

In the history of religion, there was a period when religious consciousness changed, and we witness the formation of self-identified religions under the Roman Empire. For example, in the second temple period, Judaism consisted of two basic elements of religion, i.e., sacrifice and law. However, after the destruction of the Second Temple of Jerusalem, Judaism began to identify itself as a religion of the divine law. Christianity had the same tenet of new religious

consciousness, which gave rise to conflicts with the traditional Roman state religion. The panel will focus on the change in the significance of animal sacrifice in respective religious communities in the late Roman Republic and the Roman Empire. The emphasis will be on the development of new ideas concerning the reflection and adaptation of the sense of sacrifice in various spheres of life.

Hiroshi Ichikawa: From sacrifice to divine law: the formation of the Halakhic religion of Jews under the Roman Empire

In terms of the perspective of religion, Judaism ceased to be a religion of sacrifice after the two destructive wars against the Roman Empire, and Jews have established the identification of Judaism as a religion of the divine law, whose historical significance is to be a forerunner of the Islamic religion of Sharia. However, this did not mean that Judaism denounced sacrifice as superstitious or obsolete. On the contrary, the sages endeavored to give theological interpretations of the lack of temple sacrifice. Some theories will be analyzed including the theory of substitution by the deed of loving-kindness and the theory of prayer as the sacrifice of the heart. In this context will be considered the reasons for the attitude of the Romans of showing mercy to the Jews and thus helping them to survive and preserve their own way of life after the wars.

Keiko Kobori: Roman sacrifice in the late Republic and under the Empire
Animal sacrifice is said to have been “the heart of most acts of cult worship” in modern Roman studies of the last half century. In fact, Church Fathers denounce the Romans based on the act of animal killings at sacrificial rituals. However, was animal sacrifice central in Roman cult worship? Firstly, the Latin word *sacrificare* does not mean animal killing, but just “to make it belong to the deities.” Another Latin word for the sacrificial ritual, *immolare*, means “to sprinkle meal.” Secondly, did distribution of sacrificial meat have a great significance in Roman urban life as described in 1 Corinthians? Recent osteological evidence shows that the quantity of meat produced by sacrificial rituals fed far fewer people than the population of a city or even a large group. Finally, despite the Church Fathers’ denunciation, the Romans had gradually come to avoid bloodshedding and animal killing at rituals throughout the imperial period.

Yumi Doi: How early Christianity reacted to sacrifice in Judaism and Roman sacrificial rituals

This presentation will focus on sacrifice in the early Christian community in the first century CE of the Roman Empire. In the earliest Christian community in Jerusalem there were already both Jews (who spoke Hebrew) and gentiles (who spoke Greek). In addition, in the course of his missionary journeys, Paul encountered various gentiles who were pagans within/outside Judea, as Acts says. Both Jews and gentiles had sacrifice rituals. In contrast, early Christianity had no longer sacrificial rituals, but the Eucharist could be interpreted as a substitution.

This change process will be analyzed minutely. Firstly, how did the people who had converted from Judaism to early Christianity react to the Roman sacrificial rituals including animal sacrifices? Secondly, did the gentile Christians carry out sacrificial rituals in the Jewish Jerusalem temple? How did they begin to put the “sacrifice” of the Eucharist into the Temple?

Iskra Gencheva-Mikami: Religio nova: sacrifice, state and the self in late antiquity

This presentation will reconsider the modifications in the practice of religious sacrifice in the Mediterranean world of late antiquity as a result of Roman state policy before and after the triumph of Christianity under Constantine the Great. The presentation will argue that the changes in the official attitudes to animal sacrifice have to be analyzed in the context of a growing fascination with human sacrifice represented by the ascetic and the martyrdom traditions of late antiquity. In conclusion, it will be suggested that the official prohibition of animal sacrifice and the reverence for asceticism and martyrdom appeared as two aspects of a new phenomenon: the birth of the religious self in late antiquity.

Changes and Continuities in Contemporary Zoroastrianism

Panel Chair: Rafael Walthert

Our panel asks about the changes and continuities in contemporary Zoroastrianism. Nowadays, this religious tradition is mainly based in ethno-religious communities situated in Iran and India but also dispersed further over the globe by migratory movements of Parsi and Irani Zoroastrians. Demographic change, migration, urbanization and individual mobility lead to ongoing challenges for the established ritual practice and the ethnic boundary-making of this particular religion. The goal of the panel is to characterize the influence of such wider societal and cultural transformations on the social form and religious tradition of Zoroastrianism. How can changes as well as continuities be explained in the context of a changing environment? The papers in the panel discuss this question by developing and using the categories of community, ritual, practice and space. The perspectives focus on Mumbai with historical and contemporary cases.

Håkon Naasen Tandberg: “Some Parsi homes ... it’s like a whole diversity of culture on their altar”: on the impact of Mumbai’s multireligious context on contemporary Zoroastrianism

The title of this paper is a statement by a head priest of a fire temple in Mumbai. On the basis of analyzed material from interviews with over 50 respondents, I

discuss the impact of Mumbai's multi-religious scene on contemporary Zoroastrianism. This impact is thematized in many different ways in my material, but in this paper I will limit myself by presenting three instances, the last constituting the main focus of the theoretical discussion: first, respondents use comparisons to point toward similarities and differences between Zoroastrianism and other religions; second, certain beliefs or practices are deemed to be the outcome of influence from other religions; third, relating to when respondents engage in practices, visit places, or celebrate festivals that are typically described or identified as non-Zoroastrian (both by scholars and the respondents themselves). I relate this phenomenon to the larger discussion over changes and continuities in contemporary Zoroastrianism by connecting it to Michael Carrither's (2000) concept of polytrophy (the "eclecticism and fluidity of South Asian religious life" (834)), instead of other concepts such as syncretism. I will end the paper with a critical discussion of the vocabulary scholars employ when discussing the relation between religions in multireligious contexts.

Leilah Vevaina: In death an endowment is born: Parsi Zoroastrian cremation and the new Prayer Hall Trust

Sacred space for Parsis (Indian Zoroastrians) in Mumbai is managed by their governing body, the Bombay Parsi Punchayet, a public charitable trust. Customarily, charitable giving was often performed as part of death and remembrance rituals known as *muktads*, and donations were channeled through the BPP. While the traditional funerary rite of *dokhmenashini*, sky burial, has been practiced for centuries and managed by the Punchayet, many Parsis view the process as non-functioning. Today more and more Parsis are opting for cremation, a practice that was historically considered doctrinally abhorrent. In 2014, a former trustee of the BPP formed the Prayer Hall Trust, a small charitable organization that collected funds to operate a prayer hall within an existing public crematorium. This paper will explore how those who opt for cremation are adapting their ancient funerary rituals to this new form, by attending to the shifts in charitable giving now associated with cremation.

Dorothea Lüddeckens: The stability of death: continuity of tradition in a changing world

This paper focuses on the continuity of death rituals despite two developments: firstly, within the Zoroastrian community in Mumbai the traditional funeral practice of sky burial (*dokhmenashini*) has been the subject of criticism and conflict in recent decades. For example, doubts are raised concerning the functioning of the system because of a lack of vultures. Besides, the exclusion of non-Zoroastrians from the main parts of the funeral ritual is controversial. Secondly, and more generally, many Parsis have changed the way they practice their religion. For example, many do not obey purity rules, daily prayer rituals, or wear religious

clothes any more, i.e., they are very liberal-minded or even indifferent towards the Zoroastrian religion. Despite these developments, an overwhelming percentage (over 90%) still opts for a sky funeral at the traditional funeral ground, accompanied by the four-day-death ceremonies. The paper seeks to explain this seemingly paradoxical persistence of a ritual practice.

Jenny Rose: Tea and toddy: early nineteenth century Parsi-Yankee encounters in Mumbai

As a “middleman minority”, the Parsi community was confronted with modern Western influences early on. The mid-nineteenth century was a particularly challenging period for the Parsis in Bombay (Mumbai) in terms of social transition and transformation, and many of the changes effected during this period resonate into the modern period, not the least of which is a familiarity with English language and custom. This paper will begin with an exploration of several original documents describing historical encounters between Parsis and American visitors to Bombay, which inform us of both the elevated material and social standing of the Parsis, alongside the aspects of their tradition that they sought to sustain against all change. These two facets of Parsi identity – an ability to assimilate to a majority language and mores, while at the same time asserting difference according to tradition – will be discussed in terms of their impact on contemporary expressions of the Zoroastrian religion.

Changing Landscapes of Saiva Siddhanta: Transforming Tradition through Innovation: Historical Perspectives

Panel Chair: Ulrike Schröder

India’s religious traditions are subject to processes of constant innovation and transformation. Saiva Siddhanta, one of the traditional philosophical systems in Saivism which is especially popular among Tamils in South India, has undergone significant changes from the nineteenth century onwards. The panel focuses on the analysis of the modern transformation of Tamil Saiva Siddhanta and its religious practice as a consequence of global discourses on religion. It discusses the standardization of Tamil Saiva Siddhanta and the significant modifications that its teachings and religious practices have been undergoing vis-a-vis the unifying forces of modern Hinduism in India and the spread of South Asians as a global diaspora. This encompasses the entanglement of traditional Saiva institutions with modern lay organizations as well as the re-reading of Saiva Siddhanta as the original religion of all Tamils. Thus, Tamil Saiva Siddhanta provides a paradigmatic case for the discursive dynamics of religion past and present.

Srilata Raman: The evasive guru and the errant wife: anti-hagiography, Śaivism and anxiety in colonial South India

The genre of polemical literature (*khaṇḍanas*) has a long history in both Sanskrit and Tamil literature. Nevertheless, polemical positions long rehearsed and anticipated were crafted anew with the emergence of Christianity in the Tamil literary scene, both in Jaffna and Southern India, from the seventeenth century. In this paper I discuss one such work I label an anti-hagiography, repudiating, through savage polemics, the genre of hagiography as practiced in the Tamil religious context. The text by Ārumuka Nāvalar of Jaffna (1822–1879) is an indictment of his contemporary and popular Śaivite religious poet Ramalinga Swamiḡal (1823–1874). Examining this text will also address issues of Śaivite religious authority and canonicity, the nature of scandal and the anxiety of authorship, issues which begin to emerge in the context of the printing of religious literature in colonial South India.

Eric Steinschneider: True religion in an uncertain age: Comacuntara Nayakar and nineteenth-century Saiva hermeneutics

The dominant vernacular theology in South India, known as Saiva Siddhanta, was reconfigured at the turn of the twentieth century in response to the new demands posed by colonial modernity. Recent scholarship has explored the role of Orientalist discourse in prompting the colonial reevaluation of Saiva Siddhanta as “Tamil religion.” Yet the internal vernacular dynamics of Saiva reform in this period have received significantly less attention. My paper addresses this issue by examining the writings of Comacuntara Nayakar (1846–1901), a highly influential Saiva Siddhanta polemicist. I consider how Nayakar’s attempt to distinguish his tradition from the rival school of Advaita Vedanta was mediated by his reception of precolonial Saiva literature. I argue that Nayakar’s concern to establish the sectarian affiliation of this literature signals a new hermeneutics of the Saiva text. My paper thus seeks to locate Nayakar’s religious innovation within a much longer conversation about Saivism in South India.

Rafael Klöber: What is Saiva Siddhanta? Contemporary conceptions of a universal, yet Tamil religion

The philosophy of Tamil Saiva Siddhanta was struggling for pan-Indian recognition as an eminent school of Hindu thought at the turn of twentieth century. Despite the efforts of Tamil reformers Saiva Siddhanta hardly gained trans-regional importance, due to the global appropriation of hegemonic Neo-Hinduism. It almost disappeared from public and scholarly attention in the twentieth century. In the last two decades, however, several renowned religious institutions (i.e., Maths and Adhinams) as well as private initiatives started to revive Tamil Saiva Siddhanta in the public sphere and forged novel ways to propagate the philosophy/religion among Tamils. My paper focuses on the recent Saiva Sid-

dhanta discourse in Tamil Nadu and will elaborate on crucial concerns in current discussions in the Saiva Siddhanta spectrum. This encompasses issues of language, lineage, canon and practice which are debated among “traditional” monastic orders and “popular” propagators alike, circling around the question: what is Saiva Siddhanta?

Ulrike Schröder: Being Saivite the South African way: the reshaping of Tamil Saiva Siddhanta in South Africa between local traditions and global Saivism

The paper analyzes questions of cultural and religious identity among Tamil people in South Africa by looking at Saivite revivalist movements which emerged in Durban in the twentieth century. The revival led to the formation of a broad network of Saivite organizations in South Africa. The groups focus on practicing Saivism and its philosophy and strongly advocate a distinct Tamil cultural identity which can be traced back to the renewal of Tamil cultural and religious expression in South India earlier in the twentieth century. After the end of apartheid, various religious leaders even seek to reestablish links with traditional South Indian authorities of Saivism. Thus, I will argue that the Saivite movement in South Africa has not only led to the emergence of new “diasporic” forms of Saivite religion but also mirrors the close but hybrid connection between local and global forms of Tamil religious identity.

Changing Women’s Roles in Contemporary Japanese Religions

Panel Chairs: Monika Schrimpf, Mira Sonntag

This panel focuses on women in contemporary religions in Japan as agents of religious change. In the Study of Religions, religious roles are usually defined by clear-cut borders based on status, gender, education etc. However, women in contemporary religions often cross or dissolve these borders by integrating multiple roles or re-defining the praxis and meanings of particular roles. The panel explores a variety of changes in role definitions and performances as initiated by contemporary women in Japanese Buddhism, Shugendō, Shintō, and Christianity, addressing the following questions: Which kinds of status and which roles are ascribed to or are accessible for women in contemporary religions in Japan? How do women (re-)define their own roles, and how do they construct their religious identity by integrating various roles? How far does the distinction between laity and clergy actually affect women’s role performance and self-understanding? And where do they draw boundaries?

Naoko Kobayashi: The entrance of women into “sacred mountains”: The case of Ōmine Okugake Shugyō (ascetic pilgrimage at Mt. Ōmine)

Although Mt. Ōmine is one of the most important and fundamental holy places for mountaineering ascetics, women, even skilled female ascetics, were excluded from it for over 1200 years. It was said that if women were to climb it, the sanctity of the mountain would be violated, and its role as a site of ascetic pilgrimage would be ruined. However, since the 1970s, the demographic of excluded women at Mt. Ōmine has changed. Female ascetics have gradually come to participate in ascetic pilgrimage at Mt. Ōmine (Ōmine Okugake Shugyō). After female ascetics joined, it changed from an activity that was combined with sight-seeing to a practice that focused on ascetic practices without pleasure. This paper will clarify the change that the entrance of women into “sacred mountains” has brought for the religious activities of mountaineering ascetics.

Monika Schimpf: Self-perceptions of Buddhist nuns in contemporary Japan

This paper explores the diversity of Buddhist nuns’ lives and self-perceptions in contemporary Japan. Buddhist nuns shape their lives and negotiate their identities between the legal permission to get married and wear “secular” clothes, and Buddhist precepts reflecting the ideal of world renunciation; between a hereditary system of temple succession for men and women, and insufficient opportunities for a monastic life within each Buddhist school. Whether they head a temple, are married to a temple priest, or live “secular” lives outside a temple, Buddhist nuns cross borders between roles and constantly re-negotiate what it means to be a nun, depending on their social context. Based on interview data, the paper takes a closer look at these self-perceptions and negotiations. How do Buddhist nuns define the purpose of this role, draw boundaries, conceive their position within their Buddhist school, and integrate other roles such as mother or wife?

Mira Sonntag: Christian feminism and the relevance of interreligious dialogue in Japan

This paper explores contemporary approaches of Christian women to theology and practical faith, focusing on proponents of “Christian feminism” in the broadest sense. Although Japanese Protestant churches started women’s ordination as early as 1933, women’s means of influence on church administration and political decisions are still very limited. While some women established independent research and/or mission institutions, others received support from international initiatives (UN or WCC campaigns) pushing gender-balanced action inside the churches. Active women from Catholic, Anglican and Protestant (UCCJ) backgrounds and their notions of a “feminist/women’s perspective” will be introduced and analyzed. Struggling to make a difference as a sub-minority of the re-

ligious minority of Christians in Japan, they came to realize the importance of interreligious dialogue with other Japanese women as well as in the broader Asian community. At the same time engagement in dialogue seems to pose a threat to their theological self-assertion.

Rosemarie Bernard: Shinto priest(ess): contemporary implications of women in Shinto practice

This paper examines the careers of women Shinto priests, with a focus on their professional activities and achievements in the last twenty years. The Shinto community, with its administrative center at the Jinja Honchô (Association of Shinto Shrines) in Tokyo, generally offers relatively few full-fledged positions as Shinto priests for women beyond the traditional roles of administrative secretary, miko (ceremonial dancers and assistants), or a variety of educational roles. I will focus here on women who, despite this, have been active as priests or otherwise as Shinto practitioners since the 1990s, and whose careers span an era in which there have been seen some improvements in the status and professional opportunities granted to women in the broader society. I will explore the role of the Association of Women Shinto Priests, as well as the achievements of women locally active in their communities.

Birgit Staemmler: Female healers' online strategies for demonstrating competency and reliability

Contemporary Japan is a society dominated by bio-medical healing techniques and sceptical about possibly charlatanic faith healers. Non-institutionalized faith healers, many of them women, wishing to present themselves and their services on the Internet in order to attract new, totally unknown customers, thus face the difficulty of having to demonstrate their authority as simultaneously competent and reliable healers. This is no easy task given that competency as a faith healer is best established via authentic religious experiences and associated with other-worldliness and a certain degree of extra-ordinariness. Reliability is, on the contrary, based on characteristics such as empathy, down-to-earthness and normality. The question to be addressed and answered in this paper is whether and why websites and weblogs by female faith healers use different means and emphases – biographic elements, conversion stories, terms and conditions and so on – than their male counterparts to demonstrate their competency and reliability.

Morny Joy, Noriko Kawahashi: Responses

Charisma, Conversion, Atmosphere: Social Dynamics

Leon Van Gulik: “You could cut the sacred with a knife”: towards a theory of atmospheres in the context of religious change

Atmospheres are the implicitly experienced background qualities that co-occur with our encounters with people, objects, and situations. Our level of conscious perception of these atmospheres depends on our frame of mind. The notion of atmospheres is beginning to attract attention in areas as diverse as psychology, cultural anthropology and the cognitive sciences. The time has come to also put it on the map of religious studies. In fact, in the domain of the sacred, atmospheres surface most poignantly, since appropriate actions, objects, spaces, words, and music literally deal with ultimate endings, so that our associations, proclivities, and intentions will come under scrutiny. In this paper I will advance thoughts on what these affective entities we call atmospheres are, how they become embodied by religious objects, and why conflicting practices may simultaneously serve to create, mystify, disperse, confront, embrace or dispel them or their material carriers.

Marco Lazzarotti: “Because the Shaman told me”: experiences of conversion in Taiwan

Many disciplines – Religion, History, Psychology, Anthropology, Sociology, and Theology – are involved in studying the phenomenon called conversion. Usually the models proposed by Social Sciences are focused on three dimensions of conversion: the converted individual, the religious group to which the individual converts, and society, as a “silent” or indirect partner of the conversion process. It seems to me necessary to take the previous system of belief of the converted individuals into account. In this paper I describe some cases of conversion from Chinese Folk Religion to Catholicism in Taiwan. These cases should be considered within the Chinese Folk Religion system of belief in order to give them a social value and to better understand the individual choice of conversion. The converted individuals were not “faith-searchers” and they did not receive any particular pressure from the social and familiar context. We can only understand their conversion using their previous religion parameters.

Martin Ackermann: Charisma-networks around gurus
Charisma, defined as the attribution of the “extraordinary”, is a purely relational construct. In the paper I will discuss the terminology and concept around charisma by implementing the perspective of social network analysis (SNA). Instead of speaking of charismatic actors, I suggest to reserve the term charismatic for relationships and networks only. When speaking about actors, however, the terms charismatizing and charismatized will be suggested. By using the example of the guru Amma (Mata Amritanandamayi) and her following, further light will

be shed on the constitution of charisma-networks. I will present key processes of network diffusion and network consolidation by analyzing the practice of charismaticization and the negotiation of the (above mentioned) extraordinary. These processes arguably guarantee the guru's centrality in her following.

Ofelia Perez: New Religious Movements in Cuba: innovation or tradition? A reality for debate

A new face has invaded the Cuban religious scenario. It came about in response to backward and out of context discourses and religious practices in Cuba, mainly in groups that broke away from existing ones, while unknown but charismatic leaders appeared suddenly and established themselves with great appeal for followers, in ever increasing scenarios. Small structures multiply at high speed horizontally through our society, while larger ones which attract more followers unite the smaller ones in an interesting combination of community action and verticality. More attractive and innovative mechanisms, mainly for young people, often cover up more orthodox fundamentalist discourses and practices than the allegedly criticized ones, a call for an intimate relationship with God.

Children in New and Minority Religions: Questions and Cases

Panel Chair: Liselotte Frisk

Growing up in a minority or new religion is a subject which has been much discussed during the last few years. Fears have been expressed about potential harm to children of parents who are members in different religious groups. Naturally, the conditions for children in minority religions vary a lot depending on the religious group in question and also depending on the parents' kind of engagement. This panel investigates some of the questions and special conditions for children growing up in some minority religions.

Susan Palmer: Children in New Religions: the question of harm
The presence of children in the so-called "cults" is a controversial issue. They are often portrayed in the media and anticult literature as underprivileged and uneducated captives, or victims of medical neglect, forced labor and psychological, physical or sexual abuse. Questions of religious indoctrination/conversion and "individual choice" are often raised. Drawing on data collected through fieldwork in contemporary NRMs and from reading memoirs by second generation members of utopian communes, this study focuses on examples from Ecoovie, the Anthill Kids, the Solar Temple, the Oneida Community, the Gurdjieff movement and other spiritual communities. This paper addresses the question of whether, and under what doctrinal, ritual and social conditions, children grow-

ing up in new, unconventional religions might be exposed to various dangers or disadvantages.

Liselotte Frisk: Growing up in controversial minority religions: constructions of childhoods

This paper discusses patterns and structures in different constructions of childhoods in some controversial minority and new religions. The study is based on life story interviews with young adults who grew up in religious groups such as the Church of Scientology, The Unification Church, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Knutby Filadelfia in Sweden. The sample consists of interviewees who decided to join the religious groups of their parents, as well as those who decided not to. The method used is that of narrative analysis.

Sanja Nilsson: "She sees the smallest ones ...": children's construction of love and longing for the charismatic leader in Knutby Filadelfia, Sweden

Knutby Filadelfia is a Christian congregation of approximately 85 members residing outside Uppsala, Sweden. The group became publicly known in January 2004 when a pastor allegedly persuaded a young female member to shoot two other members, one of whom died. The perpetrator of the crime was under the impression that she acted according to God's will. The murdered member's sister, pastor Åsa M Waldau, called "the bride of Christ" by the media, has a unique position as the group's charismatic leader. Since 2008 Waldau has gone into seclusion, leaving her post as a pastor as an effect of the media coverage. Her role in the congregation is still, however, of great importance. This presentation aims at describing the children in the congregation with special focus on how they perceive their relation to Waldau, and argues that her role as a charismatic leader was enhanced by her withdrawal from the group.

Peter Åkerbäck: Children without original sin: the perception of children in the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification

The Family Federation is a firmly established and internationally well-known new religious movement. Since its start in the mid-1950s the group has developed into a denomination that stresses the importance of the nuclear family and children. Even though the group has been studied from a number of interesting points there are few studies of the upbringing and socialization of the groups' children. Internationally, it has been difficult to find any substantial material produced by the movement that addresses child rearing. However, the Swedish movement has produced extensive material for use in the teaching of children. This paper aims to present this material in order to investigate how the group is socializing its children into its teachings and how to be a good citizen. The material has also been complemented with interviews with young adults growing up within the movement who have had firsthand experience of these teachings.

Christian Transformations: A Variety of Processes

Claudio Ferlan: The religious revelation of Wovoka between syncretism and cultural adaptation (1889–1890)

Single events, ideas, individuals do not determine per se big religious changes in history. Yet, we can say that individuals can assume a role of catalyst. In the history of Christian missions in the New World in the modern era, what is the role of individual conscience in the construction of the religious identity? The dynamics of evangelization imply individual conscience, both for the missionary and for the indigenous. Only two possibilities exist for the former: conversion or refusal. History shows us that the most frequent response is syncretism or patchwork religiosity. The question for the missionaries is: how much of cultural adaptation and accommodation is permissible without falling into an illegitimate syncretism? This paper aims to answer this question through the analysis of the religious aspects involved in the Ghost Dance as it has been developed after Paiute Messiah Wovoka's preaching (1889–1890), and as Christians have interpreted it.

Myung-Sahm Suh: Generational rift among socially concerned Evangelicals in contemporary South Korea

This paper examines the contested legacy of the First Lausanne Congress in both global and South Korean Evangelical communities. In response to theological and practical innovations in the Catholic and Ecumenical Churches from the 1960s onward, thousands of Evangelical leaders from more than 150 countries gathered at Lausanne, Switzerland in 1974 to discuss the proper relationship between evangelism and social action. The meeting culminated with the production of the Lausanne Covenant, which delineated the scope and methods of mission practices from an Evangelical perspective. Nevertheless, the absence of a practical guideline in, as well as built-in ambiguity of, the Covenant has left a door open for evangelical social activism of all sorts, whether it is of the Christian Right or the Evangelical Left, for decades to come. Taking a cue from such diverse ramifications of the Congress at the global level, this case study explores the ways in which the idea of Evangelical social action has been differently interpreted and implemented by two distinct generations of Evangelical social activists in contemporary South Korea in relation to their respective socio-historical experiences of the Korean War and the '80s Democratization Movement.

Shin Ahn: When repentance is impossible: a study on three branches of Gu-wonpa, "Salvation Sect" in Korea

On April 16, 2014, the Korean ferry Sewol [semo world or Moses world] sank in the southwestern sea of Korea. 304 victims died, mainly secondary students traveling from the Incheon port to Jeju Island. Prosecutors investigated the causes of this horrendous accident, and the owner of this ferry was disclosed in public: Yu

Byeong-eon (1941–2014). He was the religious leader of Guwonpa, “Salvation sect.” He was born in Kyoto, Japan in 1941, and moved to Daegu in Korea after liberation from Japanese colonialism. He attended the Seongkwang [sacred light] School, a Christian mission school and studied the Bible at the missionary school named “Shield of Faith Mission” with American missionary Dick York (USA) and Dutch missionary Kays Glass (WEC). In 1962, his father-in-law Kweon Cheol-sin (1923–1996) and Yu founded the Evangelical Baptist Church of Korea (EBCK), so-called Guwonpa [salvation sect], which conservative Korean Christians identified as a heresy because they taught their believers the new doctrine of exact forgiveness of sin that righteous believers do no longer need repentance and forgiveness after being saved. There are three major branches of Guwonpa: (1) Kwon Cheol-sin’s EBCK (former Korean Evangelical Layman’s Church), (2) Park Ok-su’s Good New Mission (since 1976), and (3) Lee John’s Good Word Mission (since 1982). This paper deals with their missionary activities and characteristics as religious phenomena.

Sophie Bønding: Methodological reflections on the study of continuity in relation to the Christianization of the North: a discursive approach

I propose the notion of discourse as a central methodological concept when attempting to identify religious continuity in relation to the Christianization of the North. The notion of discourse has recently been applied in the reconstruction of pre-Christian Scandinavian worldviews by Jens Peter Schjødt, understanding a discourse as constituting the sum of meaningful expressions that can be produced within it. In line with this approach, I explicate the theoretical foundation, pointing to the production of meaning inevitably taking place within and therefore being constrained by the discourse(s) that one is embedded in. Hence, the introduction of Christian ideas to the North must necessarily be constrained by the existing pre-Christian discourse(s), i.e., the existing semantic framework(s). I conclude with a case study, showing that the conceptualization of Christ in kennings of early Christian skaldic poetry indicates continuity in relation to the discursive representation of gods as non-transcendental beings in pre-Christian Scandinavia.

Christian Zionism, Europe, and Israel

Panel Chair: Göran Gunner

For many scholars around the world, Christian Zionism is understood to be a paradigmatically American phenomenon associated with the United States that is typically described as dispensationalist and oftentimes connected to charismatic and/or extreme Jewish nationalist movements. In this panel, we will ex-

plore different forms of Christian Zionism that have emerged from non-U.S. contexts where these characteristics may or may not be the most prominent. Our international panelists examine a significantly understudied though fast-growing global phenomenon. Of special interest are European Christian Zionist approaches to Israel, Islam, and the search for peace in the Middle East.

Kristian Steiner: The hope for peace in Christian Zionism: a comparative analysis of German and Swedish Christian Zionist movements

According to previous research on Christian Zionist literature, Christian Zionism demonstrates very little hope for peace in the Middle East. Humanity is flawed. Islam, Muslims, and Arabs are depicted as an obstacle to peace, and inferior. Jews and Israel are given appreciative attributes but also seen as God's tool in history, and thus instrumentalized. Human history is predestined; violence will peak before the return of Christ. The readership of this literature is required to pray for Israel, but dissuaded from supporting peace initiatives, and from saving Jews from Armageddon. In this paper I will present current research assessing the ongoing status of these notions.

Curtis Hutt: The battle for Jerusalem: Marcel Dubois' challenge to Roman Catholics, Israeli Jews, and Christian Zionists

For several decades, the face of Christian Zionism in Jerusalem was not the International Christian Embassy or John Hagee's Christians United for Israel but a French/Israeli Professor of Philosophy at the Hebrew University – the Dominican priest, Fr. Marcel-Jacques Dubois. In this paper, Dubois' once influential form of Christian Zionism is discussed. While few today outside of Israel and Rome are familiar with his brand of non-premillennial dispensationalist Christian Zionism, I will lay out the persuasive relevance and challenge of his work for those making claims on Jerusalem today.

Aron Engberg: Ambassadors for the kingdom: narrative sense making among Evangelical volunteers in Jerusalem

In the study of contemporary Protestant affinity with the state of Israel, or "Christian Zionism", the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem provides a particularly interesting case. Not only is it special in its European origin and its close historical ties to South Africa and Europe, but also in its very global constituency today. Drawing upon field work among evangelical volunteer workers of European, African, Latin & North American origin I argue that the volunteers represent themselves as less motivated by dispensationalism, or various end time scenarios, than as ambassadors for the kingdom of heaven. As such they negotiate the boundaries between the future and the here and now, the private and the public as well as between the "political" and the "religious". They are "ambassadors" for a non-state of divine origin, not yet, but hopefully soon in existence.

Christianity and Society

Carlos Caldas: Mainline Protestants, Evangelicals, Charismatics, Pentecostals and Neopentecostals and their participation in the public arena in Brazil: a critical assessment

Brazil, the fifth largest population on Earth and the sixth wealthiest country in the world (in 2014), is a society where religion still has great influence. The growth of non-Catholic Christianity in recent decades (Mainline Protestants, Evangelicals, Charismatics, Pentecostals and Neopentecostals) has been observed by many who study religious phenomena worldwide, e.g. Philip Jenkins. With such a tremendous numeric growth the participation of those groups in the public arena in Brazil is unavoidable. This paper intends to explore the characteristics of such involvement: what are the major concerns of the aforementioned religious groups, as far as social-political questions are concerned? How did their main leaders work during the period of the last Presidential elections? The main hypothesis is that the theological “credenda” of the group will guide its social and political “agenda” in Brazilian society.

Christopher Driscoll, Monica Miller: K(no)w where to go: diasporic transatlantic commuters, African-American religious studies, and escaping the “permanence” of American racism

The Atlantic Ocean has, for both the study of African-American Religion and those it studies, served as a sacred/profane distinction. Whether framed as the profanization and objectification of black bodies via the Middle Passage, or as means of resacralization through diasporic travel to Europe or Africa via the “black Atlantic,” travel – through space and time – has worked to construct the tradition we call African-American religion. Examining figures like writer James Baldwin and rapper Kanye West and their use of literary and technological modes of omnipresence as contemporary expressions of this tradition, this paper travels the borderlands between theory and data to suggest that categorization of religious traditions as well as the methods used in their study follows a logic of K(no)wing Where to Go: that is, knowing that “travel” requires escape from sacred/profane binary thinking, but recognizing that there is seemingly (no)where to go for escape.

Orivaldo Lopes Jr.: Presence of Christian theology in contemporary academic thought: an historical change

The occidental and modern scientific state has as a fundamental article a clear demarcation between the peculiarity of rational thought and other ways of thinking. We try to demonstrate through this paper an opposite tendency in advanced modernity: the construction of a two-way road between academic thought and religion in the public square. We intend to focus here on the academic realm

as being much more open to religious thought. In post-doctoral research presently developed at the University of Padua, we concentrate on two Italian thinkers, Gianni Vattimo and Giorgio Agamben, in order to demonstrate that this interaction became possible as the result of the exposition of itself in the public square practiced by Christianity, especially by their theologians. We intend to present how it happened, and what were the epistemological bases that permitted this kind of interaction. The relationship with the religious universe here practiced, shows some intellectual possibilities and caveats.

Colonization and Religious Dynamics in Antiquity: Contact, Continuity and Change

Panel Chair: Marion Bolder-Boos

In the context of colonization people migrated across the ancient Mediterranean, bringing the cults of their hometowns to foreign regions, where they encountered people with different sets of beliefs. Cultural contacts certainly took different shapes and courses depending on whether the colonial encounters were friendly or hostile, but while in the past it has often been assumed that supposedly “superior” cultures would imprint their cults on their “barbarian” neighbors, it is now widely accepted that the religious dynamics in colonial situations were much more complex. Indigenous populations reacted in different ways to the cults of the newcomers. In return, colonists could be affected by the religious traditions of the local inhabitants. Even a religious “middle ground” could develop where cultural contact and intercultural exchange resulted in the emergence of new forms of religious practices.

Marion Bolder-Boos: Tutelary deities and Roman colonization

In the course of their territorial expansion, the Romans founded colonies in numerous indigenous settlements, which caused serious changes not only in the political but also in the social and religious makeup of those communities. Especially the cults of the tutelary deities were affected. On the one hand, one must ask whether – and, if yes, in what form – the old protective divinities of the pre-Roman population were able to continue in existence, how they were transformed and what role they assumed within the colonial pantheon. On the other, it is important to look at the cults the Romans brought with them into the newly founded settlements. In the light of recent discussions about the validity of the concept of “religious Romanization” a re-evaluation of the role of Jupiter and the Capitoline Triad is of particular significance.

Frank Daubner: Macedonian colonization and the gods

From its very beginnings, the kingdom of the Argeads was an expansionist and colonizing power. The Macedonians occupied districts formerly settled and ruled by Paeonians, Thracians and Chalcidians even before they emerged in the colonizing history caused by the deeds of their kings Philip II and Alexander III. The better-known colonizing movements under those rulers brought Macedonians to Asia and to the East. This movement went on under their successors. The religious dynamic of Macedonian colonization in Classical and Hellenistic times has never been sufficiently stressed, so I try to trace the hints of “Macedonian religion” in the areas of Northern Greece, Asia Minor and the Near East which were affected by Macedonian settlers and settlements in order to come closer to a comprehensive understanding of the role the gods played in the nearly 500 years of Macedonian colonization.

Christopher Cornthwaite: The Letter of James and Egyptian patronage

The publication of Paul Veyne’s book, *Le Pain et le Cirque*, brought the study of Greek benefaction (euergetism) and Roman patronage into the discourse of antiquities scholars and, especially in the last decade, into Christian origins. Unfortunately, these categories of benefaction and patronage have also become somewhat ossified as the two possible options for understanding patron/benefactor relations in the Graeco-Roman world. This has led to the neglect of a third option, the Ptolemaic and Egyptian system of *skepē* patronage, on which the only thorough study is Marta Piatkowska’s *La Skepe dans l’Égypte Ptolémaïque*. This paper examines how *skepē* patronage can elucidate elements in early Christian literature, using the following issues in the Epistle of James as a case study: *proedria*, the faith and works discussion, and the prohibition of oaths.

Michael Affleck: The identity of the founding author of Christianity

The history of the dynamics of the rise of Christianity has been written and understood without ever knowing who the author was of the most widely read book in Western civilization, the Gospel according to Mark. Authorship is everything yet the search for Mark has been all but abandoned. Modern analysis has created new approaches to finding the revolutionary author who wrote some good news in response to the destruction of Jerusalem. Knowing the author reveals the purpose for which he wrote his gospel that was empowering in form and substance. This paper will establish the historical criteria for identifying the person who used the pen name, Mark. Socio-economic, political, religious, linguistic and motivational criteria will be examined and applied. The author who hid in history, a founder of the Christian movement, the author upon whom the other three canonical gospels rely, will be identified by name.

Combinatory Practices of Buddhist and Kami Worship on Mt. Hiei

Panel Chair: Meri Arichi

In addition to being the center of an esteemed Buddhist institution, Mt. Hiei is also known for its unique tradition of kami worship. The tutelary kami of Mt. Hiei, Sanno Gongen, is an avatar of Buddha Shakyamuni. He was regarded as the highest god in all Japan, and was the focus of devotion for his power to grant worldly benefits. This panel engages with different ways in which we may approach and explain the relationship between kami and buddhas that was nurtured on Mt. Hiei, paying particular attention to aspects relating to religious culture and understandings of kami. The first panelist will focus on aspects of cultic devotion in historical context while the remaining two panelists focus on aspects of art, examining the images of kami and buddhas and the cultural influence of Mt. Hiei.

Satoshi Sonehara: The lineage of the Sanno deity

This presentation examines traditions relating to the protector kami of Mt. Hiei, Sanno Gongen, taking particular account of the influence of the Daishu scholar monks of Mt. Hiei. It is said that Sanno was a protector deity of Mt. Tiantai in China who now defended the dharma in Japan. Another tradition states that Oonamuchi-no-kami, who bequeathed the land to Amaterasu-Oomikami, became the Miwa deity, then shifted location again to become Sanno. We may understand this presentation of the origins of the Sanno deity as involving an attempt to establish Mt. Hiei as a separate, independent religious authority and rival to the secular rule which had passed from Amaterasu to the Imperial House. The respectful regard in which the Imperial Court of the middle ages held Mt. Hiei was due to a sense of awe felt for a rival, yet complementary institution.

Meri Arichi: Iconography of Hie-Sanno Mandara in the British Museum Collection

The belief in kami Sanno of the Hie (Hiyoshi) Shrine flourished within the Tendai theoretical framework in the climate of Shinbutsu Shūgō on Mt. Hiei from the medieval period. The extant examples of Hie-Sanno mandara indicate that the iconography of the twenty-one Sanno deities was well established by the Muro-machi period. The Edo period example of Sanno Mandara, now in the British Museum, conforms to the established iconography and follows the typical format that depicts the deities in hierarchical rows, but the unique feature of this example is the addition of an extra figure in the prominent position in the lower center. This figure can be identified as Goin from his distinctive physiognomy of karasu tengu, the mythical creature with a beak. This paper will trace the

origin of the iconography, and considers the significance of this figure in the historical and ritual contexts.

Eriko Saeki: The faith and pictorial images of Sanju-ban Shin

This paper introduces the influence of Tendai Buddhism on religious traditions concerning deities indigenous to Japan, with a focus on the Sanju-ban Shin (the thirty protective deities). The thirty deities were each allocated a certain day of the month during which they were to protect the Lotus Sutra or the emperor and the country. This faith was systematized at the Enryakuji temple on Mt. Hiei during the Heian period, and spread widely afterwards. The Nichiren sect of Buddhism adopted the thirty protective deities as the tutelary deities of the Lotus Sutra. They were to support the promulgation of the Nichiren sect teachings in Kyoto. Moreover, Nichiren's disciples were greatly influenced by the art of the Tendai sect, including works such as the Hie-Sanno Mandara. This paper will trace the influence of the aspects of Tendai Buddhism described above by comparing pictorial images of the Sanju-ban Shin with the Hie-Sanno Mandara.

Commodified Spirituality: Marketing Pilgrimages in Japan

Panel Chair: Mark MacWilliams

Ian Reader has recently pointed out the “problematic assumption” made in academic studies of pilgrimage distinguishing its “sacred” or “authentic” nature that is “despoiled and undermined by modern commercialism” (p. 11). This panel takes its inspiration from Reader's important new comparative study, *Pilgrimage in the Marketplace* (2014). The panel's goal is to apply, challenge, question, and extend Reader's argument by focusing on mass marketed pilgrimages in contemporary Japan. All panel participants begin with Reader's assumption that the “dynamics of the marketplace” are essential for pilgrimages' “successful functioning, development, appeal, and nature” (p. 15). Each panelist looks at this by drawing from the rich examples of Japanese pilgrimage today: Yamanaka looks at religious tourism in Nagasaki; Imai looks at otaku pilgrims and their new use of votive tablets (ema) at Washinomiya-shrine; Shultz looks at asceticism and “brand building” for individuals who write about their journeys on the Shikoku henro. MacWilliams looks at the character-centered sacred narratives of *Ano hana*, key to the anime pilgrimage now popular in Chichibu Japan.

Hiroshi Yamanaka: Commodification of contemporary pilgrimage in Nagasaki, Japan

Many scholars in religious studies seem to take for granted that religion has nothing to do with tourism, which is considered a symbol of secularism. Howev-

er, as the current popularity of the less religiously motivated pilgrims of Santiago de Compostela shows us, the boundary between religion and tourism seems to be blurring in Western Europe. Even in Japan it is said that the number of young travelers who do not have any explicit religious motivations has been increasing at popular Buddhist pilgrimage sites. In Japan, the designation of particularly famous places as World Heritage Sites plays an important role in blurring the lines between religion and tourism. In Nagasaki, Catholic churches and other sites associated with the city's rich Christian-related heritage will be designated as World Heritage sites next year. The Nagasaki Pilgrimage Center has already developed a new pilgrimage package called the "Nagasaki pilgrimage" in cooperation with tourist agencies. Nagasaki's case provides an interesting example for examining religious tourism in Japan.

Nobuharu Imai: Anime fans and votive tablets: reinscribing sacred landscapes in Japanese Otaku pilgrimage

The aim of this paper is to discuss the fans who visit Japanese sites associated with anime or "animated films". Japanese anime are hugely popular in Japan, and there are many real-life locales that form the backdrop of the stories in these films and TV shows. The fans, called otaku (anime fans) in Japanese, often visit these places and describe them religiously. They call their journeys "sacred pilgrimages" (seichi junrei). But what do they mean when they describe their journeys this way? Why call it a "pilgrimage" and what makes these sites appearing in anime stories "sacred"? To answer these two questions, I will analyze the votive tablets (ema) that otaku have left at one of these anime seichi, Washinomiya-shrine in Saitama prefecture, which appears in the popular anime and comic book (manga) series Lucky Star. Ema are typically used by pilgrims and parishioners at Japanese shrines and temples to post prayers and wishes for this world benefits to the kami or Buddhist divinity enshrined there. Interestingly, otaku have continued this practice, often hanging up their own ema, but have transformed this practice by using their own hand made illustrations of anime characters. Moreover, rather than serve as a means of linking otaku pilgrims to the divine, otaku ema are used as if they are communicating on Facebook, Mixi, and other electronic bulletin boards on the Internet. Although initially criticized by the mass media, the new forms of ema have gradually become normal at shrines and temples, and otaku pilgrimage has gained acceptance as a new form of young people's spiritual journey. In other words, ancient shrines have gained a new relevance as "sacred places" for otaku whose initial connection with them comes from animated films and TV shows. In this paper, I will argue that ema serve as a new mode for reinscribing a mass mediascape at traditional religious centers in Japan.

John Shultz: Gyō-ing somewhere: pilgrimage ascetic practice to finance human capital

The notion of individuals representing their own commercial brand has become ubiquitous in contemporary society, and brand building can be enabled through many types of media. In this research, I concentrate specifically on pilgrimage asceticism as an avenue for the development and marketing of personal human capital. In particular, I consider examples of several prominent individuals in the Heisei era (1989-present), who have published first-person pilgrimage narratives of their experiences on the Shikoku henro, a 1,200 km journey that has become Japan's most famous pilgrimage. These cases include religious professionals, authors, and characters who have become famous personalities in the wider social sphere of the pilgrimage itself. In all of these instances, pilgrimage asceticism provides very unique – even unrivaled – opportunities for both personal development and career advancement.

Mark MacWilliams: Rethinking the sacred in Japanese pilgrimage: Ano hana, anime pilgrimage, and the Chichibu thirty-four temple circuit

In this paper, I show how commercialism and pilgrimage are one and the same by looking at the well-known anime pilgrimage devoted to “Ano hana,” a popular 2011 TV show set in Chichibu, which is also the site of an ancient sacred pilgrimage route devoted to Kannon bodhisattva. I will argue two key points. First, both pilgrimages offer radically different discourses about what Eliade calls “hierophanies,” or manifestations of the sacred. By using Eliade's model, however, I make no claim that the sacred is somehow intrinsic or innate to Chichibu pilgrimage sites. Rather I argue, following John Eade and Michael Sallnow's critique of Turner's concept of *communitas*, that Eliade is not describing something innate but rather types of discourse. Temple traditions, commercial interests, and the mass media generate very different fields of sacred discourse for Chichibu pilgrims: There is the more temple- and icon-centered discourse of Kannon “reijō” (sacred places) of traditional Chichibu pilgrims, and the 2011 anime character-centered discourse of Ano hana for fan-based pilgrims (*otaku*) who visit what they call Chichibu's “seichi” (holy land). Second, I will also show that while Eade and Sallnow are correct that pilgrimages offer a field of multiple discourses, these need not be contested. The Chichibu pilgrimages generate coterminous discourses – sharing the same boundaries of Chichibu while intersecting spatially only once – at temple 14. But even there reijō and seichi inscribe the space in radically different sacred ways.

Ian Reader: Response

Comparative Spirituality East and West

Panel Chair: Jørn Borup

“Spirituality” is often used among religious people or in “holistic milieus” and has become a concept increasingly discussed in academic research within the study of religion. The concept is being used in a very heterodox way, and its “fuzziness” and often implicitly religious agenda has led some scholars to reject the very notion. When the concept is investigated as an analytical concept it is often understood as a non-institutionalized, individual search for inner experiences and personal transformation, and the “new spirituality” is often contextualized within a frame of post-modernity in which a subjective turn de-traditionalizes religion in a neo-liberal market reality. Spirituality is thus often used (positively) within psychology and (more critically) within sociology, most often in a Western context based on Christian history and traditions. The aim of this panel is to explore “spirituality” comparatively across two cultural spheres, namely Japan and the West. The concept of spirituality (in Japanese *supirichuaritei*) will thus be investigated critically as phenomenologically, historically and sociologically particularized and yet parallel fields. The papers will address the relevance of the concept in concrete cases, and discuss global and transnational transformations and circulations of ideas, practices and traditions within spiritual fields.

Jørn Borup: Transnational spiritualities: post-modern Self religiosity in a global world or cross-cultural empty signifiers?

“Spirituality” for users in both Japan and the West points to authentic experiences of Self transformation, but also to a diversity of ideas and practices with little semantic coherence. The history and significance of the concept differs accordingly, but yet seems to legitimize a common field of comparison, not least when seen in a contemporary perspective as an expression of individualization in a neo-liberal world. This paper will introduce characteristics of the concept of “spirituality” in typical Western and Japanese contexts. It will ask theoretical questions of its legitimacy as an analytical concept, and discuss methodological challenges related to studying spirituality, not least in a comparative perspective.

Norichika Horie: Wicca today in Japan: aspects of culture, gender, and the media

Recently, those who identify themselves as wiccans are increasing in the social media in Japan. This paper is based on an interview research on three wiccans. Their stories will enable us to search for the meaning of learning wicca (which originated in the West) and practicing it in contemporary Japan. The findings are as follow: (1) they criticize the patriarchal elements in Japanese religious culture; (2) thus they are attracted to wicca as a foreign culture and are practicing it individualistically; (3) at the same time, they are trying to be rooted again to

what they regard as “Japanese,” and that is easier in today’s new conditions of changing formations of gender and of emerging social networks on the internet. Those findings help us understand the globalization of spiritual resources, its relation to the local religious tradition, and the role of gender formations in both of them.

Michiyaki Okuyama: Interpretations of spirituality comparing cases of Shinnyo-en followers in Japan and the West

The Japanese Buddhist community Shinnyo-en has about one million members, mainly in Japan but also in other countries. Shinnyo-en’s practices derive from the Shingon esoteric tradition and the Mahayana Nirvana Sutra. Shinnyo-en practices a form of meditation known as “sesshin,” a name that also describes a meditative practice in Zen traditions. During sesshin in Shinnyo-en, a practitioner meditates in front of a spiritual guide, who enters an altered state of consciousness and offers insightful guidance. Shinnyo-en has established branch temples in Asia, Oceania, Europe, and the Americas. This paper uses pilot interviews to learn how international practitioners have understood the Shinnyo-en worldview, and especially the spiritual insights, that originated in a Japanese context. The paper presents their interpretations of spiritual matters and compares the different approaches to Shinnyo-en taken in Japan and the West.

Erica Baffelli: Response

Comparing Paradigms in the Study of Ancient Religions

Panel Chair: Richard Gordon

Based on a comparison between Egypt and (Classical) Greece, this panel proposes to examine how ancient Mediterranean religions were studied from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries – in many ways a formative period for scholarship in the field, with a lasting impact on current approaches. In particular we propose to compare the ways in which the collective and individual dimensions of these religious traditions were represented. The panel consists of two case-studies, each focused on a particular religious tradition, concentrating on the ideologies that shaped scholarly conceptions of these religious traditions. Egypt: the two major focuses will be on the Amarna period and its role in the history of Egyptian religion, and the place of personal piety versus temple practice. Regarding Greece, the dominant approaches can be roughly correlated with a (Hegelian) model that prioritized the State and a neo-Romantic elevation of *das Volk*.

Janne Arp-Neumann: Monotheism, orthodoxy and heresy as paradigms in the history of the study of Egyptian religion

For decades Ancient Egypt was viewed as the cradle of Christian monotheism first attested in the sun cult of the so-called Amarna period, and hence construed as part of Western culture. Simultaneously, Amarna became equated with heresy: as a sudden, severe, or sometimes even revolutionary, rupture in tradition. Against this foil, the subsequent Ramesside period could be construed as a time of restoration of traditional cults and, indeed, return to orthodoxy, and at the same time as the “age of personal piety” and “dawn of conscience”. Although some scholars arrived at a completely different interpretation (viewing the Amarna period as a failed attempt to return to the pure/original Egyptian religion), such readings of the ancient evidence were apparently not persuasive. Our paper will scrutinize the structure and transmission of these narratives and discuss the question of why some dominated the Egyptological discourse and beyond, whereas others were forgotten or neglected.

Richard Gordon: Constructing Greek religion: from K.F. Herrmann to M.P. Nilsson

Since J.G. Lakemacher’s *Antiquitates Graecorum sacrae* (1734), the study of Greek religion in Germany – a particularly Protestant pre-occupation – was based on a model derived from the study of Judaism, conceived as a population coterminous with its religion. From the 1840s, we find attempts both to insist on the complete congruity of State and religion on the one hand, and on the wide-ranging diversity of belief and practice on the other. The study of Greek religion became a recognized special topic within a specific genre, *Griechische Antiquitäten*, focused on Classical Greece. The major figure of twentieth century study, M.P. Nilsson, attempted to reconcile these divergent trends by insisting on the primacy of a diachronic approach.

Corinne Bonnet: Post-mortem ideas and symbolic language: Franz Cumont between texts and images

Already in his famous corpus, *Textes et monuments figurés relatifs aux mystères de Mithra*, which appeared in fascicules between 1894 and 1899, Franz Cumont tried to stage a dialogue between texts and images. He thought that the section of his great work devoted to assembling the sources would be its “most enduring” achievement, precisely because it was the “most impersonal” – as though he wanted to suggest that the source-materials, the ancient texts and monuments, spoke for themselves. Yet by virtue of his differential weighting of texts, whether literary or epigraphic, pagan or Christian, poetic or philosophical, and likewise in his interpretation of the “hieroglyphs” (i.e., the iconography), the historian inevitably leaves his personal imprint on the way the pieces of the puzzle are fitted together. Starting from Cumont’s *Recherches sur le symbol-*

isme funéraire des Romains, published in 1942, and republished with a scholarly introduction in 2015, this paper will try to clarify Cumont's views on the relation between text and image, between formal ideas and symbols relating to death, in what we may call the Graeco-Roman Empire. Cumont tried, behind the texts, behind the images, and beyond their partial imbrication, to reconstruct a "theology" where others see only an aesthetic without religious implications. Such an approach, already then contentious, has since evoked numerous interventions. As a key figure in the historiography of the religion of the Graeco-Roman Empire throughout the first half of the twentieth century, but whose formation belonged essentially to the late nineteenth, Cumont's views provide important insights into the debate over the relation between individual and collective representations during this period.

Comparing the Dynamics of Pilgrim Experience of English Cathedrals Past and Present

Panel Chair: Marion Bowman

Adopting an interdisciplinary approach, the three-year-project Pilgrimage and England's Cathedrals, Past and Present is researching pilgrimage and engagement with sacred sites in England from the eleventh to the twenty-first centuries, and assessing the growing significance of England's cathedrals as sacred/heritage/tourist sites today. It examines the intersection between the material and representational (buildings, works of art, devotional objects etc.) and belief, practice and experience. It also explores the interface between sacred and secular practices, in what are both sacred places and sites of local and national heritage. In this panel, we draw upon both historical research and contemporary fieldwork data to compare and contrast the motives, materiality, sensory experiences, expectations and interpretations of those participating in contemporary English cathedral focused pilgrimage with what can be known of the medieval milieu.

Simon Coleman: Finding a space for pilgrimage: the roots and routes of English cathedrals

English cathedrals represent a remarkably under-researched area, yet they are growing in popularity in terms of numbers of visitors. If one analysis of British religion argues that a powerful trajectory is from "cathedrals to cults" (Bruce 1996), I suggest a trend may be moving equally in the reverse direction – a direction that allows us to juxtapose the roles of cathedrals with those of other pilgrimage sites but also multi-faith rooms, chaplaincies, and engagements with heritage and religious landscapes. The phrase "finding a space for pilgrimage"

represents the exploratory character of this paper: based on preliminary data from an interdisciplinary study still in progress, I ask how both researchers and visitors locate cathedrals in intellectual, religious, spiritual or cultural terms. How do the “roots” of history and architectural style relate to the “routes” formed by contemporary varieties of mobility and urban regeneration?

Dee Dyas: Creating a context: using the senses in shaping a pilgrim environment

In the fourth century, as Christian pilgrimage to holy places was coming into being, Cyril of Jerusalem wrote jubilantly “Others only hear, but we see and touch”. The subsequent growth in “sensory piety”, linked to relics, sacred sites and shrines, has shaped Christian pilgrimage experience ever since. Though potentially theologically problematic, the profound human instinct to invest place with spiritual significance and shape spiritual experience through the tangible and material has persevered. Despite the Reformation suppression of pilgrimage in England and other Reformed contexts, it has re-emerged recently with a new force, and the lure of holy places has been reasserting its power, though often without the rich and complex sensory stimuli of earlier centuries. This paper will examine the dynamics which drive “sensory piety” and the role of art, architecture, liturgy and other factors in creating a sensory environment which shapes pilgrim experience and responses.

John Jenkins: The dynamics of medieval and contemporary pilgrimage at Canterbury and Durham cathedrals

The pilgrim experience in medieval cathedrals was carefully controlled. Paths and access points around the building were clearly demarcated, and visitors could expect a range of sensory cues to instruct them in how to behave. Canterbury and Durham were both remodelled around the imposing golden shrines of their saints, Thomas Becket and Cuthbert, providing a focal point for pilgrimage and for the cathedral itself. Drawing on historical research and contemporary fieldwork, this paper presents case studies of pilgrim/potential pilgrim and visitor experience at two major English pilgrimage sites. The author examines various sensory interactions with the cathedral and its practices, and question whether the lost dynamics of the medieval experience continue to subtly shape, positively or otherwise, that of the present.

Marion Bowman: “Containers of the sacred”: from pilgrim badges to magnets, ducks and selfies

Pilgrimage centres traditionally have been, and continue to be, places rich in material culture. Such special or sacred places were and still are sites of commercialism, with artefacts on sale and a long tradition of pilgrims imbuing objects and substances found there with significance on account of their connection with a sacred site. Coleman and Elsner refer to the souvenirs that pilgrims

take home as “containers of the sacred” (Coleman and Elsner 1995, 100). Concentrating on material culture at English Cathedrals which function as places of contemporary pilgrimage, and focussing on the dynamics of relationality and materiality, this paper explores the range of pilgrimage memorabilia available to pilgrims and visitors, their motives in purchasing such items or creating their own pilgrimage mementos, and the rationale of providers. Can small rubber ducks dressed as bishops or “selfies” taken on mobile phones be taken seriously as containers of the sacred?

Conceptualizing Japanese Religion

Makoto Ozaki: Heidegger and the Lotus Sutra on the beginning

There might be some affinity between Heidegger and the Lotus Sutra concerning the beginning. For Heidegger western history began with the Greeks as the first beginning and now comes to the end, preparing for the other beginning of a new history in which the last God may appear. In the Lotus Sutra the historical Buddha reveals his own eternal origin in the countless past and predicts the appearance of the unseen Buddha hidden in the depth in the eschatological time, i. e., the mappo era. While Heidegger’s idea of the other beginning as the retrieval of the still deeply hidden origin of the first beginning is restricted to finite history, the notion of the eternal original Buddha suggests his cyclic reappearance in history after the demise of the historical Buddha in the anticipatory form of the Supreme Conduct Bodhisattva. Heidegger’s concept of the last God may correspond to the anticipatory Bodhisattva.

Eckehart Schmidt: The spirits, the Buddha, and a working definition of religion

It is well known that Theravāda Buddhism is the main religion of Myanmar. In addition to Buddhism, there is another spiritual practise which is of great importance, especially among the rural folks: nat (spirit) worship. Since both spiritualities are often practised by the same individual, the question is how they are related to one another. Is nat worship a special part of Myanmar Buddhism? Is it separated from Buddhism and can it be explained as mere superstition? Are both spiritualities based on two different religious systems? There is some disagreement about this question. The answer depends on the applied working definition of religion. In this paper a definition which focuses on the individual will be proposed. Therein, religion shall not be understood as a monolithic entity distinctly separated from other cultural areas. Multiple religiosity could be described without downgrading nat worship as “superstition” or defining it as one part of Buddhism.

Michihiro Yokota: Daisetz Suzuki's outlines of Mahayana Buddhism and its influence upon Max Weber's sociology of religion

In his work *Hinduismus und Buddhismus*, Max Weber described Mahayana Buddhism as "the inner-worldly mysticism". Weber's theory on Mahayana Buddhism was actually based on Daisetz Suzuki's work *Outlines of Mahayana Buddhism*. Suzuki wrote this during his stay in America in order to show western Christians what Mahayana Buddhism is. Suzuki applied Schopenhauer's theory of the Will to the doctrine of Mahayana Buddhism in which all beings are one in the Dharmakaya. This corresponds with Schopenhauer's Will, however the Dharmakaya is not necessarily "blind" as is Schopenhauer's Will. The Will has no direction or goal for history and social organization, but the Dharmakaya provides guidance for how to live our lives. Our shared ignorance of the Dharmakaya corresponds with the blindness of Schopenhauer's Will. In this presentation, I will analyze Suzuki's interpretation of Mahayana Buddhism and show how Max Weber's understanding of Mahayana Buddhism was influenced by Suzuki's work.

Takashi Okinaga: The "Logic of Basho" of Nishida Kitaro and the question about the beginning: contrasting with "original chance" of Kuki Shuzo
Why does our question about the beginning of the universe become a mystery? In this presentation, we examine this issue referring to Nishida's "Logic of Basho (topos)". When we ask about the cause of substances, we confront an infinitely retroactive mystery in which a cause requires another cause. But we cannot ask a cause of Basho. This is the fundamental difference between substance and Basho. The question "why did something come into being?" can be answered only when a form is settled to regulate both the "before" and "after" sides of its existence. However, if that form itself came into being sometime, we cannot explore the beginning of the existence of that "something" before the form came into being. Is the peculiarity of Basho, transcending any predicates, really beyond rules, time and causality? We will investigate this topic by contrasting it with the idea of "original chance" of Kuki Shuzo.

Conspiracy Theories in Contemporary Religious Discourse

Panel Chairs: Egil Asprem, David Robertson

Academic interest in conspiracy theories has grown in recent years, as it has become apparent that they are a central locus for contemporary debates over power, democracy and rationality. Some scholars have noted the intersection between conspiracy theories and contemporary religious narratives (Goodrick-Clarke 2002; Barkun 2003), but there has been no sustained critical analysis

of the field, nor theoretical models through which to interpret the multiple and complex interrelations. This panel is intended to help define the boundaries of this developing field and outline avenues for future research. How is conspiracy discourse promoted and/or combated within religious communities? Which resources are drawn upon in such struggles over meaning and influence? What are the common epistemological features of religion and conspiracism, e.g. belief in occluded agencies? Might we usefully analyze conspiracy theories as a modality of religious thought and practice, e.g. as soteriology, theodicy or esoteric hermeneutics?

Asbjorn Dyrendal: Elected marginality, popcultural mediation, and new media: dynamics producing conspiracism in “the cultic milieu”

In the original formulation of the idea of a “cultic milieu” (Campbell 1972), deviance and mysticism played the central roles in defining the subculture and its dynamics. With the popular mainstreaming of mystical religion and the knowledge-claims of the attendant practices, deviance would seem to play a lesser role. However, Campbell already stressed how processes of secularization meant that the sciences, not the Church, was now the “other” that defined deviance with regard to ideas about the world. Even though the alternative history, physics, economics, and treatments of the cultic milieu have become mainstream in society and popular culture, they are still “epistemically dispossessed” (Robertson 2014) by authorities. This paper discusses some of the possible dynamics whereby conspiracy theories arise as a form of counter-knowledge in the cultic milieu, from seemingly well-documented explanations such as marginalization and anomie, the internal logic of this conspiracy discourse (Barkun 2003) and necessary disappointment of utopian visions, to how traditions of esoteric discourse relate to new entrepreneur roles.

David Robertson: The counter-elite: strategies of authority in millennial conspiracism

Despite frequent exhortations to individualism and free-thinking, it is clear that certain figures are authorities within the field of millennial conspiracism. Alex Jones, David Icke et al. command considerable audiences and sales figures, and seem to function as “gatekeepers”, validating, popularizing and synthesizing narratives within the discursive field. When the hermeneutic of distrust is taken to such extremes, the question of how authority is maintained demands serious attention. Drawing on Max Weber’s notion of “charisma” (1947 [1922]), Matthew Wood’s description of “multiple and relative” “non-formative authorities” (2007) and the author’s description of “epistemic capital” (2014), this paper will examine power structures in the non-institutionalized conspiracist milieu. It argues that such individuals accumulate authority through a strategic mobilization of mainstream and alternative sources which draw from traditional,

scientific, channelled, intuitive and synthetic epistemic strategies, thereby constructing themselves as a “counter-elite”. Such non-formative authority may represent a structural similarity which helps explain the relationship between conspiracism and certain forms of contemporary religion.

Beth Singler: Big, bad pharma: New Age biomedical conspiracy narratives and their expression in the concept of the Indigo Child

5.7 million American children aged 3 to 17 have been diagnosed with ADHD. Approximately two thirds of those diagnosed have been prescribed amphetamine based drugs such as Ritalin as a treatment. Diagnoses and prescriptions are also increasing exponentially in the UK. Diagnostic checklists include: fidgeting, answering questions before they are finished and being unable to stick at long and tedious tasks. In this paper I will explore New Age conspiracy narratives which accuse the pharmacological industry, or Big Pharma, of collusion with schools to turn naturally active children into compliant drones. In particular, I will describe the category of the Indigo Children: allegedly a special, intuitive, spiritual generation appearing since the 1980s. This category celebrates the inability of some children to fit into mainstream systems while actively attacking the commercial machinations of “Big Pharma” involving children: over-medication, but also harmful vaccinations and genetically modified foods.

Kevin Whitesides: Response

Constructing Moral Selves: Transmitting and Appropriating “Muslim” Values In and Outside Institutionalized Religious Settings in Europe

Panel Chair: Gerd Marie Ådna

In today’s dominant European discourse, so-called “Muslim” and “Western” values are increasingly presented as being mutually exclusive. In this context, it takes Muslims a lot of biographical work to construct a moral self. This panel addresses the issue how European Muslims with migration backgrounds construct moral selves in dialogical relations with various collective and personal “voices” that inform their life worlds simultaneously. The focus is on how culturally and religiously framed values are transmitted to Muslim children by parents and religious community leaders, and, vice versa, how such values are actively appropriated by the offspring of migrants in dialogues with the multiple value discourses and practices that characterize the domains in which they participate in their everyday lives. Our goal is to create a discussion forum for researchers who study the construction of religious and cultural identity of Muslim children and their families in various European contexts.

Marjo Buitelaar: Doing moral “biographical work”: the narrative construction a Muslim moral self

This paper addresses the impact of being raised within different, asymmetrical pedagogical systems that transmit (partially) different world views and ideologies of personhood. It investigates how religious self-presentations of female Dutch Muslims with Moroccan backgrounds are informed by the interplay between pedagogical styles and personal and social developments. Narrations on religion in the life stories of three highly educated women are presented to analyze in what instances “Dutch”, “Moroccan”, and “Islamic” cultural values are identified by the women and presented as compatible, complementary or contradictory to each other. The focus is on narrations concerning parental styles of transmitting religion. It is reflected how continuity or discontinuity in the stories with parental voices relate to the specific balance the narrators seek to realize in their lives between various kinds of agency and communion.

Gerd Marie Ådna: Narratives from Stavanger and Berlin about the interplay between daily lives and moral ideals in the self-reflection of Muslim mothers

This paper addresses some religious and cultural values, as found among Arab- or Turkish/Kurdish-speaking Muslim mothers in Berlin and Stavanger. They want to transmit religious and cultural values to their children and hope that they will become well-integrated in the society, schools and the Muslim community. For instance, encountering the Norwegian society’s expectations that all women should be full-time professional workers is sometimes perceived as being in conflict with “Muslim” family values. Further, the patience of the Prophet Ayoub is often mentioned as an ideal, especially in times of hardship. The mother’s ability to be patient is tested when she acts in roles as her children’s educator, her female friends’ support and mediator, and the organizer of the mosque’s bazaars. This paper takes a history of religions approach in analyzing narratives and observations among first generation migrants in a European urban setting.

Nadia Fadil: Reclaiming the “traditional Islam” of the parents: practices of authentication of liberal and secular Muslims in Belgium

Scholarship on Islam has largely investigated the question how younger Muslims relate to the Islam of their parents. Within this perspective, the idea of a generation gap has emerged as an important analytical template to assess these developments. Drawing on fieldwork with Belgian Muslims of Moroccan origin, this paper seeks to nuance this perspective by exploring accounts wherein the religious legacy of the parents is actively reclaimed. This was especially the case for liberal and secular respondents who held onto the “traditional” religion. This paper proposes to take them as redefinitions of what constitutes and can be considered “real Islam”. By re-invoking a different set of criteria that have been discarded in Islamic revivalist tendencies, the narratives not only show

how genealogy and ancestry play a central role in redefining the “real” Islam, but also how the turn to orthodoxy becomes disqualified as an inauthentic way of practicing Islam.

Riem Spielhaus: Coping with exclusive narratives: the value discourse among young female Muslim activists in Germany

Based on empirical research among young Muslim activists in Germany this paper addresses how Muslims in Western Europe are confronted with and respond to an assumed dichotomy of “Muslim” or “Islamic” and “European” values. Values are an ingredient of many exclusive narratives of Europe that portray Muslims as incapable of submitting to core values like gender equality or respect for diverse life forms and faith groups. While it appears that Muslims need to be questioned about equal treatment of women, governments present themselves as flagships of gender equality. The paper hence asks, which values do young Muslims present as both German and Muslim values, in such a discursive environment, and which strategies to cope with exclusive narratives do they choose? Another question is what reference frames young Muslims use to legitimize their claims.

Constructions of Religious Pasts

Anastasia Serghidou: Nature, the challenge of “thauma” and the invention of the physical history

Pliny in his *Natural History* (III) proposes a global conceptual approach on what he called “miracles of the earth” (*miraculis terrae*). Indeed, though the notion of “miracle” takes in his work a purely naturalistic dimension it serves as an epistemological base which challenges the evenemential history. Based on the concept of the “exceptional” and the “spectacular,” the author re-evaluates the archaic or classical cosmological predicates related to the power of physis. He focuses on the rationale which forges the meteorological dynamics and the meaningful interconnection between geographical localities, human and/or animal identities and religious experiences associated with the epistemological dimension of the *autopsiae*. We mainly explore the evenemential challenge of *thamata* and the way Pliny associates them with the idea of *erêmos*, unexplained disasters and/or vanishing agglomerations, including cities or human communities. We explore the narrative paths the author followed to establish historical temporalities and production of events. By that we take into consideration the conceptual analogies which helped him to cover the “circumstantial” events that meet with the cosmos as a locus of “great and wonderful achievements” (*megala and thaumasta*) (Hrdt I). We finally study the programmatic sentences of Pliny and

the changes they brought, notably on the interpretative level of physical phenomena and religious interpretation (N.H III, I). This last interpretation is expected to be analyzed on the classical reception level through some Byzantine authors, notably through the commentaries of Malalas and Tzetzes.

Tillo Detige: Dynamics of reform & Orientalist discourse in Digambara Jainism

While Digambara Jainism's ascetic ideal is that of the naked, peripatetic muni, seats of clothed, sedentary bhaṭṭārakas formed the backbone of Digambara asceticism for most of the second millennium CE. In the seventeenth century, their power bases were eroded by two consecutive reform movements, Adhyātma and the Digambara Terāpanth. Early in the twentieth century, quasi contemporary to the "revival" of the muni lineages, the bhaṭṭāraka institution again came under siege, this time by modernist reformers. Through a comparative study of these various mo(ve)ments of opposition to the bhaṭṭārakas, this paper attempts to trace the impact of the Orientalist discourse on the later reformers' self-understanding and self-articulation. Did Western conceptions about "original" Indian religions degenerating at the hands of "corrupt priests" merely dovetail with the opposition to the bhaṭṭārakas and reinvigorate the ideal of the muni? Or did they enable a new type of criticism by installing an evaluative, normative framework?

Uta Karstein: Religion and modernity: the ambivalent role of Christian art unions in the nineteenth century

The presentation discusses first empirical findings from a habilitation project which deals with the complex and ambivalent role of Christian art unions in nineteenth-century Germany from a sociological perspective. Those associations (e.g. "Deutsche Gesellschaft für christliche Kunst") were taking part in debates about architecture and fine arts, were supporting artists and were influencing relevant decision-makers within churches, academies, parishes or councils during the second half of the nineteenth century. In doing so, they were becoming part of conflicts about the secularization and professionalization of art and architecture and the so-called "Verbürgerlichung" (bourgeoisification) of religion. The presentation discusses three dimensions of these associations to illustrate the ambivalent effects and results of their activities: (1) a tension between democracy and elitism in terms of the organizational form of these associations; (2) a tension between autonomy and heteronomy which relates to the support of art; (3) a tension between higher and lower taste patterns related to their target groups.

Contacts between Religions and Religious Representations

Miriam Benfatto: The exegetical method of a Jewish polemical text: the case of Isaac Troki's *Hizuk Emunah* (1593/4)

The *Hizuk Emunah* is an anti-Christian polemical text composed by the Karaite Isaac of Troki. Written in Hebrew, it was later translated into Latin (1681) and widely circulated within the Jewish and Christian contexts. My paper attempts at analyzing the relationship between the exegetical structure of the polemical discourse and issues of historical nature regarding the character of the “historical Jesus” and the features of early Christianity. Is there a relationship between the dynamics of Jewish polemical literature, conceptions of history and hermeneutical approaches applied to the Scriptural materials? Which are the results of exegetical techniques? Is this precise type of textual exegesis enhancing new historical representations? The aim of the paper is therefore meant to explore the rise of historical consciousness in relation to early Christianity, in the midst of heated confessional and inter-religious Scriptural confrontations, which especially took place in areas of high interconfessional divide.

Richard Marks: Representations of Hinduism in Jewish thought of medieval Spain: toward a history of Jewish concepts of comparative religion

Four Jewish writers of twelfth to fourteenth century Spain constructed their ideas of Hinduism from Arabic-language travel reports, heresiologies, and other writings, which they adapted to a biblically-based view of history and revelation. Judah Halevi construed Hinduism as a combination of the Muslim images of revelation-rejecting Barahima and image-venerating Sabians. Moses Maimonides likewise saw Hinduism as a remnant of ancient Sabian religiosity, an idolatrous stage in human history. For Abraham ibn Ezra, relying on Arabic traditions of Indian astronomy-astrology, Hindu thought was valuable theoretical knowledge which recognized God in a lower aspect called Elohim. Lastly, based on an Arabic translation of the (Indian) Panchatantra, Jacob ben El'azar presented Hinduism as glorious, universal moral teachings derived from human insight about cosmic moral law. These four views of Hinduism (emphasizing idolatry, science, or ethics) illuminate opposing Jewish conceptions of the history of ancient religions and how Judaism differed.

Shin Nomoto: Toshihiko Izutsu (1914–1993) reads *Ismā'īlī* Texts: A Japanese Philosopher-Islamicist on a *Shī'ī* form of Islamic Thought

Toshihiko Izutsu was a Japanese philosopher and Islamicist whose contribution to various fields of Islamic studies and scholarship on East Asian thought continuously gains high appraisal. Recently his philosophical project which aims at extracting a paradigm of mystical recognition of existence from the thoughts from Japan to the Middle East has been gradually receiving global attention in

the academic scene. This paper will elucidate his understanding of Ismā'īli Shī'ism, once influential in the Middle East from the ninth to thirteenth centuries. In his discussion on this subject Izutsu chooses the topics such as the idea of the Imamate, antinomianism and cosmology from medieval Ismā'ilism, whereas he does not pay much attention to the idea of cyclical history, one of its indispensable doctrinal elements. Considering this, we will also show how thought on history, an integral doctrinal part of each of the Abrahamic monotheist traditions, is treated in Izutsu's own mystical philosophical project.

Contemporary Catholic Transformations or Dynamics

Anna Hojdeczko: The tabloidization of the religious-oriented press in Poland: the examples of “Egzorcysta” and “Dobry Tydzień” periodicals
 Polish Catholic-oriented media surprisingly followed the global tendency of providing “infotainment”, and this style of journalism worked astonishingly well. The staggering example is “Egzorcysta” (“The Exorcist”), a monthly magazine, founded in 2012, the aim of which is “fighting with the spiritual dangers”. This self-proclaimed “tool of modern evangelization” publishes articles about possessions, revelations and spectacular conversions, interviews with exorcists and advice concerning religious life. The magazine's circulation reached 40,000 at the beginning of 2014. The trend might be confirmed by “Dobry Tydzień” (“The Good Week”), a weekly first published in October 2014, targeted at “women who appreciate tradition, family and religious values” and containing articles about history, celebrities, memories from the time of the Polish People's Republic and Bible study. The presentation will focus on main issues that appear in those periodicals and will be an attempt to put the religious-oriented press tabloidization phenomenon in a larger context of changes in the modern press.

Denise Motzigkeit: New Ecclesial Communities: signs of the times?
 In the twentieth century many New Ecclesial Communities (NEC) arose within the Catholic Church. Since the Second Vatican Council, these NEC have gained more and more influence within the church. The constantly rising membership numbers stand in contrast to the known situation of the Catholic Church in Western societies, which is characterized by high numbers leaving the church and empty worship services. Against this background, NEC seem to become the “new hope” of the Catholic Church – but what makes them so attractive? At least it cannot be due to their openness concerning church policies or questions of morality, because on these points they strictly adhere to the dogmatic doctrines of the church. NEC are no longer satisfied with the “normal” offers of a regular parish: they are characterized by a great lay spirituality that encourages

individuals to actively create their own lives guided by faith. The community spirit is central. A mandatory organizational structure and strong conservative content make NEC especially appealing to people who no longer get along with the open way of life of the modern spirit. Thus, members of NEC criticize the social form of the church, the way of evangelization, as well as the secular lifestyles of modernity. The following questions will lead through the presentation: How is the criticism of the NEC in church and society expressed in concrete terms? What exactly is criticized by the NEC (with regard to church and society)? What are their claims and struggles? What are the potentials and risks of the NEC for the Catholic Church?

Dominika Motak: Traditional Polish religiosity in a maelstrom of modern culture: continuity and change

Kalwaria Zebrzydowska – an old religious complex (calvary) related to the Passion of Christ – is one of the major pilgrimage centres in Poland. The ritual cycle of the Holy Week, culminating in a passion play and a mass procession performed on Good Friday, is regarded as the epitome of traditional Polish popular religiosity. Nevertheless, it may also serve as an excellent illustration of changes which are taking place in the lived religion: we can observe that a traditional religious practice starts to transform into a leisure time and media event, and at the same time becomes a platform for the Catholic clergy to promote its views about current political affairs (e.g. in vitro fertilization). Drawing upon the results of field research and other sources the paper addresses a few theoretical issues particularly pertinent to the dynamics of continuity and change of Polish traditional religiosity.

Contemporary Chinese Religions

Jens Reinke: Constructing a modern Pure Land: Pure Land Practice at Dharma Drum Mountain

In recent years scholars have begun research on Pure Land in Chinese Buddhist history. Here, contrary to the situation in Japan, Pure Land does not constitute a school but is a part of general Buddhist practice. However, most works focus on pre-modern forms of the tradition and very little has been done on the contemporary situation of Pure Land in Chinese Buddhism. This paper tries to fill this gap by examining different concepts and practices of Pure Land at a contemporary Taiwanese Chan Buddhist group, Dharma Drum Mountain (DDM). It is based on extensive fieldwork, publications of DDM, and the writings of the organization's founder, Ven. Shengyan. I argue that Pure Land's concepts and practices and different interpretations thereof are where demarcations between elite

and popular, modern and traditional Buddhism, occur. Clarifying the relationship between these approaches to Pure Land will help us to understand the modernization of Taiwanese/Chinese Buddhism.

Shun-Hing Chan: The political influence of the Protestant churches in Hong Kong

This paper seeks to examine the political influence of the Protestant churches in Hong Kong. Drawing on the theory of religious influence formulated by Paul Djupe and Christopher Gilbert, this paper examines how the Protestant churches facilitate the development of socio-religious subcultures – collections of individuals who form attachments that persist inside and outside formal church structures. Membership in these subculture units opens up organizational channels that transmit political information, resulting in numerous salient conduits for political influence within a congregation. This study uses both survey and interview as research methods for a full test of the effects of the Protestant churches on the political behavior of their members. The research findings will provide a better understanding of how voluntary associations expose individuals to political information and norms, how public opinion is formed and why people participate in politics.

Contemporary European Religiosities

Anja Terkamo-Moisio: Religiosity among nursing students in Finland

This paper aims to describe the religiosity of the nursing students (n=91) in five polytechnics in Finland. A cross-sectional electronic survey, including the Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS), was conducted in May 2014. Most of the participants were female (91%). Their ages varied from 19 to 54 years, the mean age was 31 years. Only 9% of the participants were highly religious and 39% of them were non-religious. The means of different categories varied from 2.06 to 2.94 where ideology was the strongest and experience the weakest category. Adherence to a religion was a significant factor in all other categories, except intellect. The age of the participant was significant in category private. Non-religious nursing students confront the spiritual needs of religious patients, which may lead to dissatisfaction on both sides. More information is needed about the religiosity of nursing students in order to improve the quality and ethics of care.

Elena Stepanova: Multiple moralities in Russia: religious and secular components

Today's Russia is a place of multiple moralities (moral bricolage), which combine a variety of conflicting discourses. So-called "traditional" religions, the Russian Orthodox Church in particular, view themselves as the only source of "true" mor-

ality based on traditional values. Religion in Russia is unquestionably a major moral authority not only for those who regularly practice religion, but also for a great majority of non-religious individuals. At the same time, the very presence of traditional values in public discourse reveals serious controversies in the search for a new national identity, as well as the lack of reliable common values, which can give meaning and structure to everyday lives. There is an increasingly widening gap between the declarative moral values on the level of collective representations, which do not manifest themselves in actual behavior of people, and the operational values, i.e., principles and rules of behavior of people in their daily lives.

Göran Ståhle: Self-help culture and holistic beliefs in relation to Ayurveda in Sweden

This is a study of persons using Ayurveda as self-help in relation to holistic health practices in Sweden. A survey was given to all persons attending a centre for Ayurveda in Stockholm, Sweden during 2014. A selection of 20 persons was made for in-depth interviews. The participants display dissatisfaction with biomedicine. A belief that a state of perfect health is reachable by holistic medicine is held, but practical reasons are cited as explanations for not being able to live according to the guidelines given. The participants also emphasize how holistic medicine is making them able to be active agents in relation to their health issues. This pertains even to their use of Ayurveda where they display a critical and pragmatic attitude. The persons pick and choose the parts that they perceive as working for themselves and relate them to other holistic health methods.

Klaran Visscher: Jozef Rulof and the revelations of the Age of Christ: modern religiosity in the Netherlands

My PhD project addresses the case of Jozef Rulof (1898–1952), a marginal but constant figure within modern Dutch religious history. As a self-proclaimed prophet and medium in the service of “The Other Side”, Rulof operated as a painter, trance lecturer and writer of many books that remained, albeit within very small circles, relevant as spiritual guidelines for daily life, to the present day. Over twenty years of writing and lecturing Rulof developed a complex system of rules and principles that address more or less everything in life, space and time, combining elements from his Christian background, which at the same time he fiercely opposes with specific notions from Theosophy, which he also rejects. His aim was to prepare humanity for the coming of a new era, the Age of Christ, which his nowadays followers believe to have really started around 1945, finding proof in Rulof’s writings and post-war societal and historical events.

Anna Mariya Basauri Ziuzina, Oleg Kyselov: Religions on Maidan: the case of Orthodox Christians and Jews

The goal of the paper is to study how Jews and Orthodox Christians affected social change in Ukraine during Maidan (a general name for the protest rallies taking place in November 2013 – February 2014). Starting December 2013 the presence of religious organizations became noticeable. The inter-religious council (including the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Jewish religious community) made public statements on the social situation. Rabbis claimed that Jews participate in protests only as individuals, not as a religious community, but the presence of religious Jews was obvious at Maidan. They were convinced to fulfill the mitzvah of tikkun olam. Unlike Jews the Orthodox Christians officially were active on Maidan: Orthodox priests blessed rally participants from the stage, prayer tents were organized, ecumenical prayers were held regularly etc. Although the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Jewish religious community had different public positions, their members actively participated in Maidan, making social changes in Ukraine real.

Atsushi Koyanagi: Avant-garde and arrière-garde in German Protestantism
In the recent research on the history of modern theology, dialectical theology is characterized as the theological avant-garde. Although this characterization is useful, it could become a superficial theory of generation. Thus, I propose in my paper that the idea of “Arrière-garde” should be introduced in the study of modern German Protestantism. “Arrière-garde” is a remarkable notion in the study of the modern French literature history. It has a potentiality to consider the continuity, as well as the gap, between the dialectical theologians and the older theologians such as Ernst Troeltsch and Wilhelm Bousset. With the notion of “Arrière-garde”, I try to place the shift from liberal Protestantism to dialectical theology in the wider cultural movements.

Gábor Ittzés: Salvation and religiosity: the predictive strength of a Rokeach Value Survey item

The paper presents empirical findings of a national Rokeach Value Survey (RVS) from Hungary. We analyzed data recorded in connection with the fourth wave of the European Social Survey (N = 1,144) to determine whether the salvation item of the RVS can be used as an indicator of religiosity. We performed statistical tests, including crosstabs and Pearson’s correlation to compare the RVS salvation to four other indicators of religiosity, and found that it stands in statistically significant moderate association with them. We also found that RVS salvation correlates with the religiosity principal component (based on the four indicators) in terms of key demographical characteristics (age, gender, education, and domicile). Overall, a smaller proportion of the sample proved religious and a larger proportion explicitly irreligious by the RVS salvation test, which we found a

somewhat stricter indicator of religiosity than the other four measurements but generally able to predict religiousness in a sample.

Svetlana Karassyova: Cross-confessional study of the types of religiosity: constructing universal parameters (Belarusian example)

The 2012–2014 all-republican survey was aimed at discovering the universal types of religiosity of modern Belarusians. One of the tasks was to construct cross-confessional parameters of religiosity corresponding not only to different religions, but also different types of religions. The universal parameters were set in the questionnaire as generalized statements. The problem of appropriate recognizability of those abstract statements by the respondents – the bearers of a certain style of conversation, way of thought and life – was one of the risks for the project. Therefore, the questionnaire, along with the list of prepared answers, contains an “other” option. The analysis of answers given by the respondents as “other” and its concordance with the menu of answers proved that the universality and the constructed abstract statements are correct. The paper offers the results of the analysis and the examples of answers. A wide applicability of the constructed universal parameters is noted based on the assumption that Belarus is a model of poly-confessional societies.

Contemporary Japan

Eiko Hara Kusaba: Changing traditional folk beliefs of Itako shamans' activities in modern Japan: comparing two areas' types in Tohoku district

Itako shamans have been very famous for calling to and communicating with deceased persons in Japan. The traditional type of Itako is a blind female. In the Meiji era (later nineteenth century), the activities of traditional Itako shamans changed significantly. Itako shamans have gathered in Osorezan temple in Aomori Prefecture and mass media have reported their activities of summer festivals at Osorezan Temple for calling to the souls of deceased persons. They have changed their activities with the tide of the times. However, another group of Itakos with their blind monk husbands established a new Buddhist Tendai school for blind persons in Iwate Prefecture. This group had many members for a period of time in the past. What has been changing and preserved in the activities of traditional beliefs? I will compare innovative and traditional activities in these two areas' types.

Kenta Kasai: Introducing chaplaincy to Japanese society: an experience of the Institute of Grief Care, Sophia University

After a derailment accident of West Japan Railway Company which killed 107 people in 2005, the company established JR-West Relief Foundation and the In-

stitute of Grief Care in April 2009. The Institute is the first of its kind in Japan to offer a general institutional education program of care of the bereaved, or “grief care.” Although there are some programs of clinical pastoral education founded by various groups other than the Institution, general folks in Japan have tended to be skeptical of the religious human care program. The huge accident made people accept the potential of the care of the mixed emotions of the bereaved by “spiritual” caregivers. As one of the supervisors of the clinical education course of the Institute, I will discuss the training program of spiritual care workers, in reference to the theory and method, the “religiosity versus secularity” discourse, and the alliance among the institutes and groups.

Tetsuro Tanojiri: Joint struggle of Catholics and communists in assistance for refugees of Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster: spirituality, science and politics in post- 3/11 Japan

Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Disaster (3/11) occurred in 2011. Many people fled their homes to escape radiation exposure. Some Catholics and communists have been struggling jointly to assist them. KN (Kirakiraboshi-Net, their organization) faced three problems. First, the joint struggle was organized in Tokyo, not in disaster areas. Internal–external contradictions and conflicts with their colleagues occurred. Second, the Japanese government enforced religion and science-technology policies to prevent the voluntary emigration. Many other religions and scientists supported the policies; KN had to resist. The third problem related to the emergence of a personal “spirituality of migration”. This is a spirituality of resistance to the “kizuna” concept which gives priority to attribution and obedience to the local community rather than personal life and faith. In this paper, we understand their struggle in the context of the spirituality, science and politics of “post-3/11 Japan”.

Toshiaki Kimura: Lost community and ritual revival after the Great Tohoku Earthquake

After the Great East Japan Earthquake, the local festivals of the affected area have attracted wide attention as a means to the recovery of the local communities. Many NGOs and other organizations have offered material and human support to revive festivals and mass media reported on them more frequently than ever before. Theoretically, these positive evaluations of the community festivals are based on classical optimistic theories about the ritual and social integration. However, these scholars do not pay so much attention to the dynamics when the ideal cosmic order intervenes into our everyday world. In this paper, I try to examine the process of revival of the “Oshiokori” festival, which is held once in twenty years in a coastal village, to show how people of the affected area face the gap between their devastated everyday life and the ideal order promoted through the festival.

Contemporary Muslim Identities

Laurens De Rooij: The effect of media on Muslim identity construction and their public and private practices

Everyday media practices of Muslims in England affect the construction of their identities as they locate themselves in their local and global environment. This paper will discuss how media consumption is linked to the construction and expression of diasporic Islamic identities. This paper will explore further links to media usage influencing religious identity construction and the conceptualization of religious identities in light of cosmopolitanism and in a global society. The effects of media narratives regarding Islam from a number of sources consist of, among others, blame, trust, curiosity, prejudice and persecution and are used by various communities to construct their identity and define their place and role in society. The existing protocols of media and public space of a given context characterize the kinds of experiences communities are exposed to, as well as dictate their participation when transitions take place across geographic areas and in many cases across cultural borders.

Lenka Zilvarova: “Muslim Fundamentalism” and its mass media representation in BBC News

The way Muslim fundamentalism is reported, be it in social sciences or mass media, is concerning due to chaotic accounts as well as the lack of theory and any fixed framework about what fundamentalism actually is. Nowadays to mark a movement as fundamentalist is definitely in accord with explaining neither its character, nor the heart of the fundamentalism itself. This paper focuses on phenomena, such as Islamism, Salafism and Jihadism, that are frequently labelled as Muslim fundamentalism in general. The question of the label’s relevance in a given context, the issue of mass media representation and interpretation principles form the theoretical frame of the paper. Analysis of mass media contents (including the terms discussed) published on BBC News websites between November 2010 and November 2014 follows. The findings show how the BBC mass media picture of Muslim fundamentalism manipulates public opinion of Muslims as a social (religious) group and fortifies intuitive stereotypes.

Nadia Fadil: Europeanizing Islam: a colonizing trap or a process of emancipation?

This paper delves into some recent conversations among Muslims in the Francophone intellectual milieu on the desirability of a European Islam and its relationship to the process of secularization. Comparing Tariq Ramadan’s seminal “Être Musulman Européen” (1999) with a recent publication by Aissam Ait-Yahya “De L’Ideologie Islamique Française” (2013), it seeks to examine how structural contradictions that are internal to Europe’s modernity (universal vs. particular) play

out in the contemporary engagement of Muslims with the Islamic tradition and the European public sphere. Ramadan's work gained prominence through its attempt to synthesize the Islamic Reformist intellectual legacy and cultivate ethical and theological spaces that would enable Muslims to inscribe themselves as citizens in the European society. Ait-Yahya's work, on the other hand, centers on a deconstruction of the narrative of "modernity" by demonstrating its Christian roots and pointing at the incommensurability of Christianity/secularity and Islam. I take these discussions as a starting point and illustrative of a deeper epistemological shift that is ongoing amongst the Muslim intellectuals on the position of Islam in Europe and on Europe as a project.

Youshaa Patel: Muslims "imitating" non-Muslims: Islam and cultural change in mid-twentieth century Syria

In this paper, I explain how a Syrian-Albanian religious scholar from mid-twentieth century Damascus attempts to deter Muslims from imitating cultural practices associated with non-Muslims. In 1949, Sulaymān b. Khalīl al-Ghāwji al-Albānī (d. 1958) published a brief treatise that highlights five problematic cultural trends that accompanied the French mandate of Syria after WWI: (1) Muslims wearing foreign headgear; (2) the increasing presence of women in public life; (3) Muslims (men and women) marrying non-Muslims; (4) the spread of photography; and (5) the abrogation of Islamic inheritance laws. I illustrate how al-Ghāwji adapts a pre-modern Islamic discourse to an entirely new cultural context. Thinking with Walter Benjamin and Theodore Adorno, I connect al-Ghāwji's anxieties over rapid cultural change to the decline of Muslim political power, the global spread of Western cultural norms, the social displacement of religious elites, and the rise of mechanical reproduction in the modern Middle East.

Contemporary Paganism: Leadership, Legitimation and New Forms

Panel Chair: Milda Alisauskiene

Contemporary paganism is a religious phenomenon to be found in a majority of modern societies. In attracting scholarly interest, various networks of scholars of paganism have been established. This session organized by the Contemporary Paganisms and Alternative Spiritualities in Europe (CPASE) network has invited scholars from various academic backgrounds (psychology, sociology, anthropology) to contribute theoretical and empirical insights about recent developments within paganisms. The contributions to this session comprise interdisciplinary theoretical and empirical insights into various levels of contemporary paganisms. These include a discussion of the individual processes of self-justification

of Wiccans, an analysis of the pagan elements within contemporary tomb pilgrimage, research into the shifts within the activities of the pagan Romuva community and the relations of various pagan communities to the state.

Leon van Gulik: Contexts of discovery as contexts of justification: negotiating historical, psychological and biographical narratives in Wicca

As expressive individualist adherents of a countercultural new religious movement, Wiccans find themselves forced to come up with well-founded arguments to legitimize both the enterprise, and their involvement. They originally held the belief that their religion was a remnant of a pre-Christian pan-European fertility cult, which went underground during the early modern period of the witch hunts. However, historical research has firmly established that such a cult never existed. The waning of this paradigm of origin coincides with an increased interest among Wiccans in psychological explanations of the religious psyche as put forward by G. C. Jung. In my paper I will discuss this process, while also giving attention to how one's biography, when used as a means of self-justification, may rely on both collective histories and the Jungian notion of a shared psychological ancestry.

Michael York: Pagan elements of contemporary tomb pilgrimage

Much of contemporary Western paganism is involved with localizing the sacred as well as honoring it in a specific locality. While the time-honored practice of visiting sacred places for purposes of holiness or healing has persisted into the present, a modern transformation has occurred that has given rise to contemporary sociological understandings of a pilgrimage-religious tourism continuum. Certainly religious tourism differs from medieval pilgrimage inasmuch as the use of and/or visitation to a sacred place by contemporary pagans operates through changed understandings of what constitutes the physical embodiment of sacredness. One remaining area that offers a pilgrimage-type of locus for contemporary spiritual tourism is the cemetery or resting place of the dead. Vernacular behavior of this kind, I will argue, is a pagan legacy that persists whether religious affiliation has become more officially Christian, Muslim, Hindu, etc. or even a religiosity that is stripped to secular humanistic fundamentals.

Milda Alisauskiene: Ancient Baltic Faith Community Romuva: from cultural movement to religious community

The paper discusses the shifts of the Ancient Baltic Faith Community Romuva identity since its establishment as a countercultural movement in the late 1960s until the formation of the religious community as it is nowadays. According to data from the Lithuanian national census in 2001 and 2011 the number of adherents of Ancient Baltic Faith Community increased four times. What social and political factors influenced this increase? What is the place and role of paganism in the contemporary society of Lithuania and its public life? These ques-

tions will be approached with the help of an analysis of social research data both qualitative and quantitative which allows to conclude that paganism is a positively valued religious minority although it is rarely considered to be a religion. The attempts to become a so-called “traditional” religious community in 2001 located this community in the religious field of Lithuanian society that is dominated by the Roman Catholic Church. This event together with the election of the leader of the community Krivis Jonas Trinkūnas in 2002 might be considered a symbolic boundary in the community life within the construction of its identity on the religious background.

Essi Mäkelä: Registering liquid religiosity: case study Finland

Finnish law states that the credentials for registering a religious community are a creed, sacred writings, or a well-established sacred basis for religious practice. This presentation discusses the process of registration from the point of view of pagan religious communities. As case studies I use the disqualified application of the Finnish Free Wicca Society and the later registered case of Karhun Kansa, a Fenno religious community. I will discuss the perceptions these groups have had on the processes. The law is vague on defining religion: it leaves more room for interpretation for the communities but also for the legislative board. Not only religious but also political and societal feelings are aroused in the process of registering groups practising fairly unknown individualistic spiritualities. The presentation will discuss why the process of registration is begun and how these communities react to the bureaucracy and opinions of the legislative boards.

Controversial Islam

Chentu Dauda Nguvugher: “Istanbul” and “Jeruselems” in Jos: a perspective of the ethno-religious conflicts in Jos, Nigeria

The agitation for territorial expansion is a basic tenet of most missionary religions in the world. Christianity and Islam, the two most dominant and prominent religions in Nigeria, display this tendency as they try to dislodge each other in the city of Jos. While many scholars of the Jos conflicts have largely referred to historical, political and socio-economic factors, the expansionist motif has received little or no attention. The renaming of a previously Christian section of Jos, but now taken over and dominated by Muslims, as “Istanbul” and such labels as “Iran”, “Afghanistan” etc. in other sections, along with so many so-called “Jeruselems” being painted by Christians in previously popular Muslim areas demonstrate this expansionist tendency. Both groups are likely influenced by their histories and their desire for territorial expansion. Through relevant lit-

erature, interviews and discussions with Muslims and Christians in Jos and environs, this paper examines the motivation and implications for the renaming.

Milena Uhlmann: Choosing Islam in contemporary Western Europe: conversion to “reflexive Islam” and alternation to Salafi Islam

My paper examines two different modes of change of a person’s religious affiliation: conversion and alternation, as conceptualized by Richard V. Travisano. In his understanding, conversion entails a change of the convert’s self-identity, whereas alternation signifies a change of roles. Changing one’s self-identity requires reasoning and reflection. When going through a process of alternation, the individual will streamline his behavior to the demands of the collective identity of the new reference group. I will compare my concept of converts to “reflexive Islam”, who internalize the faith as a new system of belief in a process which leads to a broadening of their perspective and the strengthening of their self-identity as well as their self-esteem and agency, with Salafi interpretations of Islam, where role-taking is of particular importance. This will include an analysis of their motifs and the social implications of their choice.

Sanni Amidu: New phase of religiosity and ethical renewal in Sudanic Africa: a narrative from Nigeria

Salafism as a renewal of orthodoxy and orthopraxis has been identified with the Islamic world (Meijer 2012). But for Ihle (2003), and more recently Østebø (2012) and Loimeier (2013), Africa, south of the Sahara is all but dismissed in the Western discursive tradition on the phenomenon of peaceful creedal and ethical change. My paper intends to illustrate two different but interrelated tendencies of revivalist and ethical activism among the Yoruba of southwest Nigeria. One is individualistic, the other is communal. At the heart of the former is the promotion of the sense of personal responsibility in a public sphere. The other tendency, which has society as its sphere of operation, has political goals which are ultimately rooted in Islamizing all aspects of life. My paper will focus on the activities and challenges of the individualistic group which has found new local expressions for the quieter forms of reform, religiosity, and ethical renewal.

SherAli Tareen: When does innovation become heresy? Modern Muslim contestations on the boundaries of heretical innovation (bid‘a)

The late nineteenth century was a time of intense polemical activity for South Asian Islam. Under British colonialism, the anxiety of Muslim religious scholars (“ulama”) of preserving the normative model (sunna) of the Prophet assumed an unprecedented urgency. These ideological rivalries were animated by a fundamental ethical question that has captured the imagination of Muslim thinkers for several centuries: what are the limits of innovation (bid‘a) to the normative model of the Prophet? Bid‘a refers to novel unsanctioned practices that oppose the prophetic norm. But what are those practices and how should that be decid-

ed is a question that generates tremendous controversy. In this paper, I examine intra-Muslim polemics over this critical ethical question in nineteenth-century North India. More specifically, I focus on the polemics between the pioneers of two major Sunni reform movements/ideological orientations in South Asia, the Deobandis and the Barelvis.

CSR Session: Religious Practice/Belief and Non-Belief

Joseph Bulbulia, John Shaver: Affiliation in collective ritual

Collective rituals have been shown to increase social bonding and may have some positive effect on well-being and mood. An increasing number of experimental and field studies have demonstrated that both behavioral synchrony and pain experienced during the ritual increase both affiliation with other group members and affiliation with larger collectives, irrespective of the participation in the activity. What is less clear at this stage is how these changes may come about. In this presentation, we explore the role of physiological changes in the bodies of participants that may bring about these effects. We review and discuss previous research on the potential role that changes in stress and affiliation hormones may play in regulating affiliation responses in ritual. We then present pilot data that tests these mechanisms in the context of two different naturally occurring rituals. In study 1, participants in one high ordeal Buddhist ritual were sampled. In study 2, participants in a low ordeal Hindu ritual, but with a high social evaluation component, were sampled. Hormonal changes as captured in saliva were measured before and after each ritual. We also asked participants to report on their mood and affiliation motives before and after. We place our preliminary findings in the larger context of the cognitive science of religion and discuss how scholars may move forward in studying social effects of religious ritual in natural settings.

Olympia Panagiotidou: History meets cognition: the Asclepius cult as pattern of practice

Cultural diversity and religious change are not only the products of different contexts, historical periods, political dynamics, and social interactions during which various religious and cultural forms arise, develop, and decline. Specific patterns of practice mediate between the external cultural settings and innate human capacities, and extend from the individual brains to the social and material discursive environments, enabling cultural learning, communication, and change. This paper suggests that a bio-cultural approach to the Asclepius cult might throw light on the underlying processes which enabled the development of its main features through an incessant process of reflective interaction be-

tween individuals' neural networks and bodies, and their material, discursive surroundings. The Asclepius cult is presented as a set of patterns of practice developed and shared by people of the Graeco-Roman era. These patterns of practice are not conceived as abstract models, somehow imprinted in the person's mind, but as multiple dynamic processes through which individual brains are coordinated generating particular representations and beliefs, sharing practices and constructing common worlds. The Asclepius cult is used as a paradigm in order to demonstrate how historical dynamics are interweaved with the biological, cognitive and psychological processes that take place in the human body, brain and mind, and generate various historical patterns and behaviors. In this light, modern bio-cultural and cognitive theories can be valuable for historical research in order to understand the individual and collective mechanisms of cultural and religious change and diversity.

Tamas Biro: (Not) only the circumcised may circumcise: theological correctness and intuitive religiosity in Judaism

A system of religious rituals that lacks special-agent rituals is predicted by McCauley and Lawson 2002 to exhibit the tedium effect. It will be characterized by Whitehouse's doctrinal mode, unless some splinter group reintroduces imagistic mode elements. Judaism has been argued to lack special-agent rituals, and hence we ask how it copes with the tedium effect. Using circumcision as an example, we shall explore various ways. In the theologically correct (or "halakhically correct") realm, circumcision is shown not to be a special-agent ritual: a special-patient ritual at best, if one generalizes the framework of Lawson and McCauley 1990. Then, mainstream rabbinic texts will be contrasted to three alternative sources. These tend to introduce ideas that jointly facilitate mentally to conceive circumcision as a typical special-agent ritual. Later Midrashim are agadic (non-halakhic) collections, which will be argued to display a stronger influence of intuitive religiosity within rabbinic literature. Secondly, popular understanding of circumcision, unsurprisingly, also displays the same influence. Third, non-rabbanite "splinter groups" seem to experiment with alternative approaches to circumcision, as will be demonstrated in Anan ben David's Book of Precepts. While this experimentation is consistent with the proposal of Whitehouse, McCauley and Lawson, neither Anan's halakhic codex, nor the later Karaite movement can be viewed as a typical "imagistic splinter group". In sum, Judaism challenges cognitive theories of religion. Not fully corroborating them, a detailed analysis of Jewish rituals enables us to reconsider CSR's concepts.

Quentin Atkinson, Rita Anne McNamara, Benjamin Purzycki, Aiyana K. Willard, Dimitris Xygalatas: Representational models of gods' minds in eight diverse societies: an ecological account

Some attempts to explain the ubiquity of supernatural agent concepts suggest that because they are associated with “socially strategic knowledge”, they are especially salient and memorable. Socially strategic information is any information that engages the cognitive systems that modulate social interaction. From a cultural ecological framework, a compatible but more nuanced view would predict that as religion minimizes the deleterious effects of locally specific problems of coordination and cooperation, and gods function as difficult-to-verify sources of motivation and reminders to act in accordance with these problems' solutions, what the gods care about should correspond to such problems. Up until now, there has been a dearth of reliable and comparable cross-cultural data attending to representational models of gods' concerns and the degree to which they overlap with local cultural models of the socially strategic. With data collected on fifteen different gods from eight diverse societies, we present evidence that what the gods care about are important indices to understanding the function and evolution of religious systems and highlight the impact that local ecological problems have on religious cognition.

John Teehan: Empathy, religion, and social evolution: a cognitive model That religion played a decisive role in the development of complex, large scale societies has significant support within CSR. Belief in “Big Gods” that enforce a group's moral code circumvents the need for direct observation of behavior and so extends moral status to even anonymous members of the group. This model, however, has been criticized for failing to accord with the historical record. “Big Gods” arise too late to explain the expansion of society. Furthermore, most gods described in the ethnographic record are morally indifferent: some source other than religion is needed to explain social expansion. However, both this standard model and its critique fail to give proper consideration to the proximate mechanisms of moral behavior, i.e., the empathetic systems of the brain. These systems underlie the basic elements of moral behavior, and studies show they are modulated by indications of in-group/out-group status. Signals of in-group status, e.g. participation in rituals, trigger the neurological mechanisms for pro-social behavior – independent of the moral interests of a god. Morally indifferent gods are not morally irrelevant gods, as long as they are existentially relevant, i.e., they may respond to human actions in a way that imposes costs on the group. Conformity to behavioral norms that protect the group from such costs signals group membership, priming a suite of empathetic responses that constitute moral concern, even for otherwise anonymous individuals (and such signals need not be costly). This empathetic system allows

even minimally involved gods to contribute to the expansion of the group, and paves the way for Big Gods.

Andreas Nordin: Reputation in cognitive and evolutionary understanding of supernatural agent concepts

The aim of this presentation is to discuss religious morality from the perspective of supernatural agent conceptualization and reputation monitoring. Honor, glory and reputation are cultural beliefs transmitted by the support of local institutional arrangements, evolved cognitive proclivities such as reputation monitoring and signalling related to a sense of morality, cooperative trust and punishment. In cognitive and evolutionary accounts of religious “adaptivist” and “by-product” theories, reputation is an important although seemingly given primitive. “Adaptivist” theory points out that supernatural punishment supports commitment enhancement and promotes intra-group competition, especially in the absence of reputational pressure. “By-product” theories such as the “standard model” reason that the relevance of supernatural agent morality is part of a cognitive machinery devoted to social interaction entailing reputation monitoring. From the perspective of altruist and mutualist models of human cooperation and morality, reputation implies different functions and, by consequence, divergent importance in “adaptivist” and “by-product” theories. By comparing altruist and mutualist accounts, the latter (“partner choice” strategies) will be adopted to complement the modelling of the social cognitive machinery that underpins the moral relevance of supernatural agent concepts. An argument will explicate the proposal that reputation is close at hand in supernatural agent cognition since it presupposes “strategic information” and “full-access agents”; further, reputation is likely to have a central position in the cognition of religious morality according to mutualistic theories; and finally, the preoccupation with reputation is likely to be a key element of relevance for moral supernatural agent cognition and religious group commitment.

Cultural Changes in Islam

Kieko Obuse: Japan Islamic Congress: a forgotten episode in the history of Islam in post-war Japan

Japan Islamic Congress (JIC, Jap: Nihon Isuramu Kyodan) is a controversial Islamic organization which emerged in the early 1970s and claimed over fifty thousand members (i. e., Japanese converts to Islam) in the 1980s. However, the group is very little remembered within Japan’s Muslim community, and its activities are largely shrouded in mystery. This paper discusses JIC’s major activities, through examining published and unpublished (internal) sources, and interviews with

former JIC members as well as leading figures in the present Japanese Muslim community, and clarifies what was behind JIC's expansion and sudden demise, and why it has been forgotten, or ignored, by the majority of Japanese Muslims in Japan. Particular attention will be paid to JIC's attempts to build connections with major Islamic countries such as Saudi Arabia and Indonesia, and its unconventional interpretation of, or attempt to Japanize, Islam.

Masashi Nara: Openness through purification: Islamic revival amongst Hui Muslims in Yunnan Province, China

This paper examines how Islamic revival has influenced inter-ethnic relationships in Yunnan Province by focusing on marriage practices shared amongst Hui Muslims. Hui Muslims have historically preferred endogamy, especially since the end of Qing dynasty when they were massacred by the Han people. However, Islamic revival in the post-Mao era has made rigid religious discourse more influential in Hui society. Consequently, religious purification has progressed amongst Hui Muslims through removing "Hanized" elements from their everyday life. This strengthens a preference for endogamy. However, Hui-Han intermarriage has increased. Although these phenomena are superficially contradictory, religious purification paradoxically expands the scope for accepting Hui-Han intermarriage. Such purification categorically separates "Muslim" from "Hui", although these were traditionally viewed as indivisible categories. Consequently, Hui Muslims have progressively been enabled to marry within any ethnic group which has converted to Islam. Hence, religious purification does not necessarily make Hui society exclusive but more open.

Murtala Ibrahim: Nasfat: the rise of born again Muslims in Nigerian urban landscapes

This paper is a result of an ethnographic study of NASFAT (Nasrullahi Fathi) which is one of the largest Islamic religious movements that emerged in the mega city of Lagos in the past decade. The paper has looked into NASFAT's embodied and sensational spiritual practices that are similar to Pentecostal forms of worship. The paper argues that NASFAT's innovative approach to spirituality has appealed to large numbers of Muslim youths and somehow checkmates their attraction toward Pentecostal Christianity by giving them immediate access to transcendental reality. This access is believed to foster spiritual empowerment that serves as an instrument for facing the challenges of worldly life. By avoiding religious base identity politics common to other religious groups NASFAT was able to anchor its religiosity on individual piety through which a new image of Islam emerges as a privatized religion that is compatible with modern life.

Cultural Racism and Interreligious Prejudices: Establishing a Dialogue between Approaches of the Humanities and the Social Sciences

Organizers: Silvia Martens, Anna-Konstanze Schröder

This open session aims at a constructive exchange between different disciplinary traditions that are concerned with the discrimination against others, especially against different religious groups. In our interdisciplinary project “Xenosophia and Xenophobia within and between Abrahamic Religions” at the University of Bern, we are confronted with different terminologies, methodologies and data as well as theoretical and phenomenological similarities and overlaps in the research approaches of different disciplines in the humanities and the social sciences. Practical questions that arise include: How do terms such as “racism” in social anthropology and political science relate to terms such as “prejudices” in psychology and sociology? How can we combine quantitative measures as typically used in psychology with qualitative analyses as they are typically used in the humanities? What to do with terms such as “Xenosophia” or “Islamophilia” that are found in humanities research but have no equivalent in psychological measures? The discussion focuses on these and other content-related and conceptual questions. We will provide a concept-map to structure different approaches to discrimination in the social sciences and the humanities and highlight (possible) connections between them. We invite you to add to this map and to also indicate your research groups’ geographical location on a world map.

Current Dynamics within Orthodox Christianity: Between Tradition, Innovation and Realpolitik

Panel Chairs: Sebastian Rimstad, Vasilios N. Makrides

During the last 100 years, the areas where Orthodox Christianity predominates have experienced numerous socio-political and other upheavals. Moreover, processes of globalization, local nationalisms, political cleavages and regionalisms have heightened the challenge of religious pluralism in these regions, as well as increased the number of Orthodox faithful residing outside the traditionally Orthodox heartlands in Eastern and Southeastern Europe. All of these developments have prompted various responses within the Orthodox world. Underlying most of them is the question of authority within the church: to what extent are pressures from secular models, societal modernization processes, global developments and strategic political considerations considered legitimate from the point of view of Orthodox Christian theology? How do the various Orthodox

Churches react to these pressures and accommodate them? Are there any discernible differences in this respect between the historical Orthodox mother-churches and the Orthodox transnational communities across the globe? The eight papers of this panel, divided in two sessions, attempt to offer glimpses of the evolving dynamics within the contemporary Orthodox world and its oscillation between traditional commitments and the challenges of change.

Daniel Jianu: Orthodox Greece and digital media: theology, science and social media as reflected through the particularities of the “blasphemy law”

In 2012, a 27-year-old Greek blogger was arrested for what the authorities called “malicious blasphemy”, namely for managing a Facebook-page that lampooned the very popular Eastern Orthodox monk Elder Paisios of Mount Athos (1924–1994). Although the Greek Church has shown that it is very open to the digital age by enabling the request that various church documents, like baptism certificates, be made available online and by an increased use of social media to attract the Greek youth, it has also strongly supported and encouraged these charges of blasphemy. This begs the question of what the social, theological, cultural, and political implications of the use of social media in modern Greek society are; and specifically for the Greek Orthodox Church, what the limits of acceptable behavior and use of social media are. The paper will analyze this case against the backdrop of historical and theological considerations regarding the relationship between science/technology and Eastern Orthodoxy.

Lukasz Fajfer: To be online or to stay offline – that is the question! Mediatized spaces within the Orthodox Church in Poland

Mediatization has been gaining an increasing scholarly interest in the past few years. This term is usually understood as a multi-layered process enhancing the influence of media communication on people’s lives. Mediatization concerns many spheres of everyday life, such as consumption, entertainment, politics, social institutions and many others, and it affects churches and religious organizations as well. Some of them take advantage of modern media, others still struggle with the issue of using them. This paper investigates the mediatized spaces within the Orthodox Church in Poland. Primary attention is given to the Internet use of the Orthodox Church. In doing so, the following questions are posed: Which media/programs/tools are specifically used? For what purpose are they utilized and since when? And what are the consequences and implications thereof? The related discussions within the church will be taken into consideration and will be analyzed in view of the dynamics of the Orthodox Church’s further development.

Georgios Trantas: Pro- or anti-European? The Orthodox Church of Greece at the crossroads

The overall attitude towards the concept of Europe within the Church of Greece is neither unitary nor homogeneous. Disparity can be identified between its Holy Synod – itself partly fragmented – and the official representation of the church in Brussels. The Synod has pursued a utilitarian approach while differentiating itself from the EU, indicative of “introvert state-centrism,” whereas the church’s representation in Brussels is prepared to engage in dialogue and seeks convergence, thus demonstrating an extrovert predisposition. Late Archbishop Christodoulos of Athens (1998 – 2008) often served as mediator between the two camps at times of discord. Current Archbishop Hieronymos is distanced from politics and avoids instigating further public unrest. The paper will try to assess the whole situation and explore the current dynamics within the Orthodox Church of Greece.

Dragan Šljivić: On the enemy within: the Serbian Orthodox Church’s response to the civic-liberal critique in its official periodicals (2007–2012)

In general, the Orthodox Church has had relatively little experience with democratic governance, which has caused some researchers to question the compatibility of Eastern Orthodoxy with a democratic political order. Nevertheless, the Serbian Orthodox Church and most of its hierarchs were vocal supporters of the democratic forces in the country and have challenged the legitimacy of authoritarian regimes. This paper will show the way the Serbian Church currently shapes its own position on the basic tenets of democracy through its responses to the attacks from extreme liberal circles. It will be argued that the absence of a genuine dialogue between the church and other participants within Serbian society could be detrimental for the overall development of Serbian democracy. The inclusion of the Serbian Orthodox Church in the dialogue on the future of Serbian democracy may thus be important for its final and successful consolidation.

Valdis Tēraudkalns: Standing between conflicting loyalties: the Orthodox Church in contemporary Latvia

The aim of this paper is to analyze how the Orthodox Church of Latvia positions itself in the public space and how it is perceived by political actors on the one hand, and by the media on the other. First, it is an integral part of the Moscow Patriarchate, which functions as an arm of the public diplomacy of the Russian state, often placing the local church in a difficult situation. Second, the Orthodox Church in Latvia proclaims its loyalty to the state of Latvia. It sees the support of the state as a safeguard against the Estonian scenario of two separate and competing Orthodox Churches. The Latvian Orthodox Church also looks for allies in promoting the gender politics of the Patriarchate of Moscow. Finally, it positions

itself as standing above ethnic conflicts, while at the same time having to deal with various nationalisms (both Latvian and Russian) present in contemporary Latvian society.

Nicolas Kazarian: The Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, jurisdiction and power: the stakes of a Pan-Orthodox Council

The starting point of this paper is a paradox that the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople faces today. The Ecumenical Patriarchate, which has been the first Church within the communion of Orthodox Churches for centuries, is the ecclesiastical institution which has lost the most territory and members during the twentieth century, from the end of the Ottoman Empire through the exchange of populations between Turkey and Greece in 1923 to the closing of the Halki Orthodox Theological Seminary in 1971. Its local weakness has pushed the Ecumenical Patriarchate towards a strategic redeployment of its global power through the forthcoming Pan-Orthodox Council. Although it serves as the guarantor of unity and communion among the numerous autocephalous Orthodox Churches, the Patriarchate of Constantinople is marginalized by the rise of the national Orthodox Churches, particularly of the Patriarchate of Moscow. This paper will highlight and analyze the efforts of the primate of the Orthodox Church to organize this Council as a form of resilience. In other words, how is the Pan-Orthodox Council a question of power for the Ecumenical Patriarchate?

Sebastian Rimestad: Using history as a weapon: jurisdictional conflicts on the periphery of the Orthodox world

In the Orthodox Church, there is a plethora of jurisdictions, each claiming to constitute the church in its entirety. This is particularly noticeable in those cases where two or more jurisdictions co-exist, each claiming to be the legitimate local Orthodox Church. This pertains to, for example, Estonia, Moldova, Ukraine and former Czechoslovakia, where competing churches exist, variously supported by one Patriarchate or the other. These conflicts have an important aspect in common, namely the way both parts claim legitimacy on the basis of recent history. Both sides usually accuse the other of having acted illegitimately and uncanonically at some point in the twentieth century. This history being quite well documented, there is no shortage of arguments for both sides to turn to. This paper will analyze and compare the four cases mentioned above, particularly the deployment of twentieth-century history in their arguments.

Emil Bjørn Hilton Saggau: The return of Duklja: the Montenegrin Orthodox Church's recasting of history

The Montenegrin Orthodox Church was revitalized in 1993 after a bitter feud between the local Montenegrins and the Serbian Orthodox Metropolitanate of Montenegro during the breakup of Yugoslavia. This new Orthodox community has since tried to transform, adapt and re-shape the history of Montenegro to fit in

their claim of an independent status detached from the Patriarchate of Beograd. This reshaping is partly based on the revival of a “Dukljan” identity linked to the medieval Slavic state known as Duklja or Diocleia, which is claimed to have been religiously and culturally independent of the Serbian medieval state, known as Raska. This paper investigates this revival of the “Dukljan” identity, the reshaping of its history within the Montenegrin Church and how it is used to detach the Montenegrin Orthodox population from the Serbian Metropolitanate.

Current Perspectives on Atheism

Ethan Quillen: Doing away with theoretical abstractions: a discursive analysis of the definition of Atheism and critical analysis of the positive vs. negative paradigm

In recent years the study of Atheism has grown in popularity, leading to both positive and negative results. On one end, this has engendered a polyvocal and polyfocal discourse, garnering perspectives from a number of different methodological and theoretical approaches so as to develop a truly multi-disciplinary understanding about how Atheism is defined and how Atheists define themselves. On the other, this myriad of voices has led to an ever-broadening discordancy, an equivocal discourse that makes it all the more difficult to state with any sort of certainty what Atheism is or how Atheists define themselves. The latter issue is the result of a theoretical abstraction, a scholar-based attempt at theorizing a universal interpretation about Atheism that might pragmatically generalize the concept. Offering an analysis of this discourse, this paper will endorse a move away from such generalizations, offering instead a means with which to approach this subject more objectively.

Ingela Visuri: Autism, theism and atheism

The study of autism and religion has been neglected until recently, perhaps due to the (false) notion that all individuals on the autism spectrum would be atheists. Interest has however begun growing rapidly, and autism is foremost studied from cognitive perspectives on religion. This paper is a critique of publications aiming at establishing autism as a case of atheism, arguing that these are based on a simplified view on both autism and religion. Research rather needs to acknowledge that theistic belief and unbelief are likely the result of complex psychological and sociocultural processes. Thus, methods and approaches need rethinking in order to explore autism and religion in depth.

Stephen LeDrew: Atheism as a secular religion

This paper explores the question of whether the New Atheism and the groups and organizations associated with it could be understood as a kind of secular

religion. The New Atheism is not only an aggressive critique of theism, but itself a belief system that promotes scientism and evolutionism as a conceptual structure that provides meaning and coherence to experience through a teleological narrative of human origins and social progress. Atheist organizations, meanwhile, provide community and transcendence through collective practice and rituals that establish the sacred authority of science. These substantive and functional aspects of religion in the New Atheism will be analyzed with reference to Auguste Comte's Religion of Humanity, which the New Atheism mirrors in many respects. While typically understood as an intellectual or cultural movement, this paper argues that our understanding of contemporary atheism is enhanced by sociological and historical perspectives on the study of religion.

Ethan Quillen: Fictionalized identity: narrative representations of Atheism as ethnographic source

For a number of reasons – a shortage of developed ethnography, a discordant discourse on defining the term, and a lack of group organization – Atheism as an identity is a precarious concept, and is thus difficult to “define” with any sort of certainty. Likewise, and as if to remedy this issue, the predominant means of studying Atheism seems to be mired in sociological examinations. The intent of this paper is to offer a more qualitative, yet also experimental, approach. By adopting the language that underscores the methodology of Discourse Analysis, and coupling it with narrative and textual scrutiny, this paper will look at how Atheist identity construction is made available via three artistic – aesthetic – media: a novel, a film, and a painting. Presented as an introduction, this process will further support the idea that perhaps it is through the experimental where we might make better sense of certain precarious religious concepts.

Current Views on Secularization Theory and Religious Decline

Carles Salazar: The decline of religiosity in Western Europe: An anthropological approach

The purpose of this paper is to propose an anthropological perspective on one of the strangest cultural oddities of the present time: the decline of religiosity in western European societies. Taking the definition of (popular) religion as a way of engaging with the world, rather than a way of thinking about the world, as a theoretical point of departure, the hypothesis to be developed is that neither the secularization of sociopolitical institutions nor the alleged expansion of scientific rationality can fully account for that decline, but rather it is closely related to the cultural effects of the peculiarities of European demo-

graphic development in the twentieth century. This demographic development has to do with an increased life expectancy, unique in human history, and its related cultural effects refer to the new understandings of death brought about by that exceptionally long life expectancy.

Sampsa Andrei Saarinen: Revisiting Nietzsche's reflections on the nineteenth century "crisis of faith": a case for paying attention to the interplay of moods and motivations in the history of religions

The critical attention devoted to narratives of secularization in the last decades has spawned increasing interest in "the secular": now understood as an important topic of study for the history of religions. This paper approaches the "crisis of faith" among intellectuals in the nineteenth century, an epochal turn in European intellectual history, through the writings of F.W. Nietzsche. The reflections of this idiosyncratic thinker are singular for their interrogation of religious moods and motivations in an era of change. Herein lies their relevance for contemporary scholarship. Despite the efforts of influential scholars such as Clifford Geertz, the way specific traditions condition moods and motivations is nowadays seldom seen as a defining feature of religions. This paper argues that a renewed hermeneutics of moods and motivations is an essential task for the history of religions: a task that is especially pertinent when it comes to understanding religious change.

Stanislovas Juknevičius: Secularization theory revised: a post-Jungian approach

The report argues that a post-Jungian approach to religion can be an alternative to secularization theory. It is based on two ideas of Carl Gustav Jung's. The first one is that gods do not die but only change their names. In network society the members of each imagined or imagining community create and worship their own gods. The second idea is that compensation is a basic law of psychic behavior. A growing interest in the mysterious in arts, literature and daily life is a compensation for the rapid advance of science and technologies. Institutional religiosity has decreased in most Western countries, but non-institutional religiosity has increased. On the other hand, some decrease of institutional Christianity in the West is compensated by the resurrection of Islam worldwide. In general, religiosity in modern societies does not decrease but only changes its intensity and forms of expression.

Dalits and Religion

Panel Chair: Martin Fuchs

What is it that Dalits seek in religion? How do they understand religion? How do the problems of conceptualizing “religion” reflect in the ways the relations and problems of Dalits with the field thus categorized are being understood? (“Dalit”, originally a modern self-designation, is here used to cover the historically discriminated people earlier termed “Untouchables”). The panel wants to discuss the different ways in which members of marginalized groups, whose authority in these (as well as in other) matters has traditionally been questioned or overlooked, structure religious discourses and define their religious practices. The category Dalit in actual fact covers a wide range of discriminated, but differently positioned groups of people. The relation between (religious) ideas, practices and social groups cannot be reduced to questions of identity, but has to be conceived as interactive. The panel will focus both on the ways religious practices and ideas are being articulated and appropriated by different actors as well as on the ways new and uncommon religious experiences and imaginaries are being formulated and expressed (this includes non-verbal modes of expression). Cases addressed in this panel may comprise religious movements and self-constituted denominations of Dalits, the engagement of Dalits with bhakti, the changing relations of Dalits with institutionalized Hindu religion(s), Dalit engagement with Christian and Islamic denominations, and the presentations may also encompass the local religious traditions of Dalits.

Till Luge: The Bavari panth and the Dalit question: conflicting constructions of history and identity

The Bavari panth of eastern Uttar Pradesh is part of the Satnami family, a set of Sant groups that are or were tolerant toward and sometimes even composed of Dalits. Although the poetry composed by past Bavari panthi saints is soteriological rather than political, issues of caste, class, and religious identity are addressed at times and the notion that such divisions may derive from human nature is rejected. Today, however, the Bavari panth is largely controlled by members of the upper castes and rather oblivious to Dalit issues. Nonetheless, the panth is important to many Dalits, since they understand the history and nature of the panth in sociopolitical terms. This presentation shall contrast the different discourses on caste, class, and religious identity as found in the poetry of the saints and produced in interviews with and in the natural discourse of Bavari panthis belonging to various social groups.

Ishita Banerjee-Dube: Dalits and Mahima Dharma

How do radical religious orders of subordinate groups deal with caste in general and Dalits in particular? Does the interrogation of caste and social hierarchy in-

herent in the tenets and practices of the faith allow Dalits to become full-fledged members of the new community of adherents or do they still remain separate from members of “touchable” castes? What impact does the gradual and shifting evolution of the religious order have on the everyday interaction of its lay members? To what extent do existing societal norms condition the tenets of the faith? How do Dalit disciples juggle with and negotiate their identities as members of an associative community and that of an ascriptive one? My intervention will address some of these issues by tracking the growth and evolution of Mahima Dharma, a heterodox religious order of mid-nineteenth century Odisha that exists till today. Through an analysis of the doctrines and practices of the abstemious, itinerant ascetic preceptor of Mahima Dharma and his “tribal” poet-philosopher devotee, as well as their diverse understanding and apprehension by ascetic disciples and lay members – consisting primarily of Dalit and lower caste peoples, I will try and unpack the mixed and contingent world of Mahima Dharmis where doctrines and social rules get confounded and contested and new spaces are carved out only to get circumscribed. My brief account will attempt to lay bare the many meanings of being Dalit within a “rebel” faith; a faith that often gets subsumed by the overarching presence of village and caste society and yet enables its followers to circumvent the norms of such a society.

M.T. Joseph: “Engaged Buddhism” of Dalits in Maharashtra: plurality of perspectives and practices

Navayana Buddhism of the Dalits of Maharashtra embodies a modern interpretation of Buddhism. Along with Siddhartha Gautama (the Buddha), the interpreter (Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar) is accorded supreme sentiments of veneration by the Navayana Buddhists. This paper is based on observations carried out by the author and is an attempt to look at the multiplicity of ways in which Dalits belonging to different strata and ideologies approach Buddhism. Scholars who have studied Dalit religiosity generally characterize it as systems of thought and practice that privilege immanence over transcendence, the ethical dimensions over metaphysical ones, and instrumentality over abstraction. The acts of interpretation have been analyzed as interventions in fashioning religion to political and social philosophy for the purpose of forging ideologies of emancipation. However, a closer look at the theory and practice of Navayana Buddhism would present a complex picture. Atheistic rationalism and related standpoints that read modernity in tradition exist side by side to a growing practice of “devotionalism”. The notion of the monk as social worker enshrined in Dr. Ambedkar’s thoughts is supplanted in some contexts by bhanteji (monk) with ritualistic and devotional overtones. Very broadly one could also observe differences of class and gender habitus flowing into the variations in the way a Navayana Buddhist would ap-

proach and understand his/her religious thought and practice. This paper seeks to demonstrate how the ideas and practices relating to Navayana Buddhism in the field are a mixture of many streams, coming from different standpoints and historical antecedents. If this diversity is to be studied in its own terms, it is imperative for the academicians to move beyond the familiar terrain of binaries and polemics. This paper is an attempt in that direction. At the same time it also attempts to pinpoint certain common denominators that bind this multiplicity of ideas and practices into certain identities.

Saurabh Dube: Religiosity and iconography in Dalit art

This paper shall explore issues of religiosity and iconography in the work of Savindra ("Savi") Sarkar, an important, contemporary expressionist and Dalit artist. Savi is a Mahar, a neo-Buddhist from Nagpur, who lives and works in Delhi now. Central to his iconography and imagination are very particular representations of religiosity and hierarchy, history and the here-and-now. The sources are overlapping and distinct, poignant and varied. Moving recitals of untouchable pasts by Savi's unlettered paternal grandmother. Liturgical lists drawn up within the political movement led by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar concerning the disabilities faced by untouchables, especially under Brahman kingship in western India in the eighteenth century. Haunting lore of Dalit communities deriving from different regions of India. Passionate parables regarding the life and times of Dr. Ambedkar and of other (major and minor) Dalit protagonists. Telling tales of Buddhist reason. Sensorial stories from Dalit literature. And Savi's own experiences as an artist, an activist, and a Dalit in distinct locales, from statist spaces in New Delhi, to remote places of gender and caste oppression in rural and semi-urban India. My paper would explore how Savi seizes upon these discursive and experiential resources of faith and reason, sieving them through the force of an expressionist art, in order to construe thereby icons and imaginings, a religiosity and an ethic that are contestatory yet complex, strong yet sensitive.

Heinz Werner Wessler: Dalit criticism of Ambedkar's conversion to Buddhism

While the Mahar community in Maharashtra followed Ambedkar in his conversion to Buddhism in October 1956 to quite some extent, and while Buddhist conversion campaigns among marginalized groups in Indian society are a continuing feature of Dalit consciousness movements since then, certain groups within the Dalit community resist the call to Buddhism as part of the Dalit awareness movement. Two of the prominent voices among these Dalit critics of Ambedkar are MC Raj, who has identified *bhūśakti* ("the power of the earth") as the most prominent feature of Dalit religiosity, and Dharmvīr. "There always were enemies of the Dalits in this country – in the old days Brahmans and Buddhists, in the middle age Hindus and Moslems and in the present age Hindus and British"

(Dharmvīr, Kabīr aur Rāmānaṃd : kiṃvadaṃtiyāṃ. Nayī dillī 2000. Kabīr nāī sadī meṃ; 2, p.134). After a phase of rigorous re-reading of Sant religiosity in an effort of reclaiming Kabīr and the nirguṇ bhakti tradition, Dharmvīr turned toward an effort to revive the Ājīvaka religion, the third prominent heterodox tradition besides Buddhism and Jainism in Indian antiquity. It died out early, and only few original inscriptions and quotations have survived. A.L. Basham and other researchers have tried to reconstruct the structure of its text corpus and belief system from these few sources and from Buddhist polemics. One of the arguments used by Dharmvīr and his followers on their return to the Ājīvaka religion is the belief that its founder, Makkalī Gosālā, appears to have belonged to the Kumbhakāra, i. e., potter caste, and therefore by modern standards a representative of a marginalized group.

Martin Fuchs: Response

The Dark Side of Late Antiquity: Marginality and Integration of Esoteric Trends in Late Antique Spirituality and Philosophy

Panel Chair: Chiara O. Tommasi

The present workshop aims at presenting the results – and therefore paving the way for further researches and scholarly cooperation – of a triennial project (2013–15) sponsored by the French Maison des Recherches de l’Homme, the German DFG and the Italian Villa Vigoni Foundation. The project involved an international team, coordinated by Dr. Luciana Soares (EPHE Paris/A. von Humboldt Stiftung Bonn), Prof. Dr. Helmut Seng (Univ. Konstanz/Frankfurt a.M.) and Dr. Chiara Ombretta Tommasi (Univ. Pisa) respectively. Following the recent scholarly revival for Western esotericism (which, however, is mainly concerned with modern and contemporary phenomena), the proponents aimed to establish how some esoteric or “marginal trends” that are only partially falling in line with mainstream culture, permeated late antique spirituality (second to sixth century) and interacted with the major philosophy of the period, Platonism, being either rejected or incorporated by the predominant culture.

Chiara O. Tommasi: Ancient esotericism: a new labelling for an old phenomenon?

In the ancient world it is possible to find an array of doctrines or teachings addressed to small groups of adepts or initiates, often conceived as alternatives to official religious traditions, which can be usefully paralleled to areas covered by the academic studies of modern esotericism. These trends became quite widespread during late antiquity, being characterized by foreign influences and the introduction of new rituals, which implied the compresence of trivial practices

(magic, superstition) or their elitist or secret character. Underlining the tension between mainstream and marginal groups (such as Gnostics, Hermetists, etc.) and discussing their reciprocal interaction appears much more challenging than reiterating the opposition between orthodoxy and heresy or the dialectical confrontation between rational or irrational trends. As remarked by some scholars of early Christianity, “orthodoxy” can be seen as a fluid and continuous process that implies a progressive process of self-definition.

Ilinca Tanaseanu-Döbler: Rituals

A crucial question in the study of marginal trends involves the practice of performing or even “inventing” rituals. Alongside with traditional cultic practices, a key feature of late antique paganism is the ascription of a “sacred” status to particular authoritative texts (such as the Chaldaean Oracles or the Orphic writings or even the Homeric poems), based on a distinctive way of interpretation. Theoretical knowledge derived not least from the exegesis of such texts establishes and shapes rituals or religious practices, as theurgical texts or magical papyri witness, and, at the same time, textual exegesis can be employed to found or justify the existing ritual praxis. All these textual and ritual endeavors are aimed eventually at a progressive ascension of the soul, especially as far as the insertion of prayers in a specific ritual or the (philosophical as well) techniques of the “spiritual exercises” are concerned.

Luciana Gabriela Soares Santoprete: Gnosticism and Neoplatonism in the digital era

The paper will approach the issues that led to the implementation of an electronic project which deals with “traditional” Middle and Neoplatonic philosophers illustrating the interconnectedness of Platonism and the other main philosophic-religious Platonizing “marginal” currents, in order to furnish the scientific community with new digital resources, such as a database capable of performing cross-disciplinary searches between the Philosophic, Gnostic, Hermetic, and Chaldean texts using vocabulary and doctrines; or a bibliographic index. The philosophical references will be analyzed to answer the following questions, among others: What are the polemic viewpoints, the vocabulary and the elements from Gnostic, Hermetic, and Chaldean tenets that can be seen in the works of the Middle and Neoplatonic authors? What philosophical doctrines can be found in Gnostic, Hermetic, and Chaldean texts? What is the current state of research on all of these different references and what conclusions can be drawn today on their relationship?

The Dawn of the Therapeutic in the Age of Aquarius: Healing, Transformation and Well-Being as Technologies of the Self in Postmodern Religious Discourse

Panel Chair: Inken Prohl

Notions of the human individual being subjected to religio-therapeutic techniques for the sake of his or her well-being have become increasingly popularized throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Various providers – among them yoga teachers, qigong masters, Reiki initiates, shamanic healers, transpersonal therapists, self-help talk shows, and many others – offer a variety of customizable psycho-physiological techniques designed to ameliorate the individual's self-perception while preserving a sense of religious flair rooted in ancient traditions. These post-secular trends seem to have emerged in the wake of transcultural encounters since the nineteenth century between diverse institutions such as the New Thought Movement, Theosophy, Psychology, and Buddhist Studies, as well as prominent social actors including Swami Vivekananda, Carl Gustav Jung, D.T. Suzuki, and Osho. This panel proposes an in-depth analysis of the history of the global religio-therapeutic discourse and offers a selection of cases to reflect the transcultural complexity of religion and healing in a progressively growing neoliberal economy.

Franz Höllinger: Spirituality and healing in the contemporary holistic milieu

A central aim of the contemporary holistic milieu that developed out of the New Age-movement of the 1970s and 1980s is to reestablish the connection between religion and healing which had been dissolved as a consequence of the differentiation of professional spheres during the process of (Western) modernization. In this context, religion generally means a rather vague form of spirituality manifesting itself in some kind of ritual practice and belief in the existence of a universal energy. Healing, in turn, refers to any kind of improvement of physical and emotional personal well-being. The positive effects of spiritual rituals on personal well-being are explained by means of merging traditional religious, magical and spiritualist concepts of healing and modern psychological, psychosomatic and psychotherapeutic approaches. The following factors (explanations) are considered particularly important: (1) the potential of spiritual or magical symbols and rituals to direct the human mind towards desired goals; (2) the cathartic effect of spiritual and symbolic healing rituals; (3) influencing (“harmonizing”) the energy flow or energy field of human beings as a means of health improvement and (4) the charisma of the healer as an important factor for inducing the aforementioned effects.

Dimitry Okropiridze: Gopi Krishna: The discursive catalyst of the Kuṇḍalinī-awakening

This paper focuses on a discursive catalyst of the recent religio-therapeutic discourse – the Pandit Gopi Krishna (1903–1984) from Kashmir, India. Krishna was the first to meticulously describe what came to be known as the kuṇḍalinī-awakening, now widely interpreted as a physical and mental process mentioned in Sanskrit texts and resulting in a superhuman condition. Krishna describes various symptoms of the rising kuṇḍalinī – imagined as a serpent moving through the spinal column – in his seminal autobiography *Kundalini: The Evolutionary Energy in Man* (1967). On the one hand the reader is presented with a narrated blend of near death experiences and excruciatingly painful sensations caused by the “burning” kuṇḍalinī. On the other hand Krishna recounts blissful, transpersonal sensations, clairvoyance, and other superhuman capacities. This paper will contextualize the discursive impact of Krishna’s kuṇḍalinī-experience on the religio-therapeutic discourse in the late twentieth century and locate it in the network of modern Indian Gurus and Euro-American consumers of psycho-physiological techniques for self-improvement.

David Jordan: Sufism and parapsychology in Iraq: the case of the Kasnazāniyyah Order

Facing the advance of education and sciences in modern Muslim societies on the one hand and a growing critique of heresy by puritan Salafism on the other, one may assume that Sufi orders in Islam might put less and less emphasis on miracle performances for which they have become so famous throughout the centuries. Contrary to that assumption, the case of the Kurdish Kasnazāniyyah Order in Iraq shows that miracle performances such as the piercing of certain parts of the body with skewers without any injury are still a central practice supposed to prove physically the shaykh’s spiritual healing power and to contribute to membership recruitment. These miracles are, furthermore, buttressed carefully through parapsychological research in order to prove their divine origin scientifically and challenge thus Western materialist and positivist perceptions of the human as sole source of agency.

Martin Riexinger: Self-improvement and eschatology: the Turkish author Muhammed Bozdağ

The Turkish Islamic author Muhammed Bozdağ (b. 1967) became famous with his self-development books and related media activities. With his activities he apparently aimed at the increasingly wealthier and better educated religious middle class which has emerged in Turkey in the last two decades. Many of his ideas, in particular parascientific justifications of his concepts, are borrowed from Western New Age authors. However, he apparently considers other aspects of the New Age as dangerous, as they threaten a theistic worldview and promote

individualization at the expense of collective norms. In order to counter this he also advocates a “post-modernized” form of traditional Islamic eschatology. For this purpose he uses again many holistic concepts from Western and Japanese New Age authors. Bozdağ’s writings may hence be seen as indication for how far New Age concepts can be “Islamically digested” in the Turkish context.

Death, Lived Religion and the Crisis of Meaning

Panel Chair: Eric Venbrux

Religion in contemporary Western society is characterized by the decline of apparent frameworks for meaning making, resumed in the concept “crisis of meaning” (Berger & Luckmann 1995). This seems very much the case in the Netherlands due to sweeping secularization and individualization. At the same time we observe tremendous creativity in Dutch ways of coping with death, dying and disposal. In confrontation with death, the most important cultural values by which people live and evaluate their experiences are conveyed. It does not only present an opportunity for expressing beliefs and values but also an arena for construing meaning. How does this contribute to a new perception of religion? By presenting cases where varieties of religion and non-religion, particular contexts and actual death practices collide, we bring in the value of thanatology for the study of lived religion and spirituality.

Peter Nissen: Fading vocabularies: death and religious meaning making in the Netherlands

In the last five decades the Netherlands witnessed a rapid process of deinstitutionalization of religion and worldview. Fifty years ago the country ranked among the European countries with the highest degree of church affiliation. This has changed in such a way that historians refer to “the strange death of Dutch Christianity”. Religiosity and meaning making have relocated themselves outside the institutional churches. But also among Dutch church members religious notions have changed radically. As a result the global meaning system to which Dutch people can refer in situational meaning making has been weakened. In the paper this will be studied for three kinds of vocabularies: the verbal, the ritual, and the symbolic vocabulary. This process leads to a certain level of cultural aphasia on the one hand, and to the development of verbal, ritual, and symbolic creativity on the other hand.

Brenda Mathijssen: Dutch funerary practices: innovation and tradition

In the Netherlands one finds a hybridity of lived religion, whereas traditional Christian belief and church membership are declining. In this dynamic context of innovation and tradition, beliefs and practices of funeral participants are

transforming. By looking at accounts of participants in “secular” and “religious” funerals, this paper will explore dynamics of religiosity in people’s experience of crisis in confrontation with death. Specifically, we will focus on eschatology, ritual elements, and situational meaning making. What afterlife beliefs are to be found among funeral participants? In what way are ritual elements perceived? Is it fruitful to focus on liminality to understand situational belief?

Frans Jespers: Belief in reincarnation: a Dutch case study

Western belief in reincarnation has shown a spectacular growth over the past five decades: from zero up to almost thirty percent of the population (ISSP 2008). This western – originally esoteric – idea of reincarnation as a series of ever improving lives, a chain of learning geared to fulfillment, does not only provide comfort in this life through the certainty that there will always be a new opportunity, a better situation, but also a kind of salvation. It also provides a framework for practices such as contacts with the deceased (by psychics) or retrieving memories of past lives (in “regression” therapy sessions). Ideas on reincarnation are animatedly represented and discussed in popular texts and images. Through a selection of Dutch books and websites, this paper seeks to provide insight into the cognitive and emotional components that leading figures in the field of reincarnation have on offer for their followers.

Claudia Venhorst: Negotiating Muslim death practices in the Netherlands Muslims in the Netherlands are mainly of migrant background and dying in a “strange” environment is a rather intense experience that poses challenges for all involved: the dying, their significant others and care providers. This paper investigates how to gain insights into the “lived religion” of Islam as practiced by a diversity of Muslims in this particular context, to arrive at a more detailed and penetrating view on their ritual practices and meaning making processes where death and dying are concerned. These ritual death practices are being influenced by the context of origin, by migration, and by their current context and are driven by ritual re-imagination and negotiation. They are reflected in and instigated by ritual narratives that weave “webs of significance” that have implications for all major interpretive questions. This will be vividly illustrated through a case study of Dutch-Surinamese-Javanese Muslims.

Defining Religious Minorities in a Pre-Global World (Antiquity and Late Antiquity)

Panel Chair: Mar Marcos, Alessandro Saggio

Religious minority as a concept is well known in the contemporary world, permanently under discussion in politics about religious freedom and in scientific

research about the establishing of a current concept of “religion” and religious identity. This panel aims at discussing some questions about the definition of “minoritarian” groups or small religious groups in relationship with the majoritarian or the mainstream religions. Reflecting on the past and focusing on the Ancient Near East, the Mediterranean and the Christian world in antiquity, it is our purpose to contribute to a critical understanding of the contemporary globalized religious dynamics as a coherent part of world history. In this panel, we aim at investigating the interplay between the global framework and the local dynamics in societies as a historical matrix within which the religious minority as a concept has been conceived and the religious minoritarian groups self-represented. Such a poly-focalized field of research aims at critically reflecting on the cultural (political, social, religious, linguistic) network within which the religious groups had interacted with other groups; on the normative space within which the dynamics of inclusion and/or exclusion had been achieved; and on the narrative social understanding of religious minority as concept, identity, group, and agency. Regarding religious groups as loci of cohabitation, rather than emphasizing their ideological and theological polarizations, we suggest taking into account the sources they produced as instruments of self-representation. This panel aims to offer answers to the following questions: How do minorities or small religious groups define themselves in relation to the state or dominant/majoritarian religions? How does a state or a dominant religious group interact with those groups or communities that seem not to be conformed to the mainstream beliefs? How does negotiation on self-definition determine conflict or facilitate cohabitation of religious groups? How does religious identity impact on ancient and modern conceptions of “religious freedom” and how may we assess our understanding of this process in a historical perspective? Eventually, how do both documentary and literary sources thematize, represent and discuss these issues? This panel will be published as a theme section of the *Journal Studi e Materiali di Storia delle Religioni*.

Santiago Montero, Diego Mateo Escámez De Vera: Minorities and divination practices in the Roman Empire

In the present paper we will analyze the divination practices attributed by the classics to some minorities within the Empire and, in the provincial context, to certain groups and sects. These consist of rites which, most of the time, were alien to the official practices carried on by specialized priests in the municipal and provincial cadres. We will also analyze how official practices – auguratio, haruspicina – became the minority with the triumph of Christianity in the fourth century CE, and so how inductive divination became a minority practice with the rise of revelation, prophecy and natural divination.

Luca Arcari: “Minority” as a practice of self-definition in Second Temple Judaism (Dead Sea Scrolls, 1 Enoch)

With this paper I intend to analyze some practices of self-definition well attested in several documents of Second Temple Judaism, wherein a concept less or more coincident with our definition of minority assumes a pivotal role (Dead Sea Scrolls and 1 Enoch). My principal focus is to underline how a practice of self-definition, in terms of an actual or of a perceived minority as regards a broader context (or a context culturally constructed as a macro-context), determines the interactions between neighboring groups that share actual and symbolic spaces. First of all, the paper aims to focus on distinct aspects concerning the implicit value of the documents analyzed: for example, the use of specific literary forms and/or specific terminology, the reformulation of traditional topoi, the use of appellatives and formulae that also characterize contexts represented and/or are considered as “other” in order to construct a viable representation of the self. In such a perspective, the paper will also pay attention to cases of re-negotiated identities, in which the “other” appears to be re-constructed in terms of conflict, with the aim of defining specific group identities. My paper intends to analyze the construction of conflicts as instruments of self-definition, rather than mirrors of real and/or well-documented social contrasts.

Mar Marcos: When Christians called for religious freedom: the rhetoric of the “new race”

Throughout the history of the ancient Mediterranean, a plurality of religious groups and traditions coexisted in Rome, without any theoretical discourse over religious freedom having ever been formulated. Religious cohabitation changed with the spread of Christianity. As a monotheistic, exclusivist religion with a universalistic scope, Christianity was incompatible with the traditional religious practices of the Graeco-Roman world as well as with the religious demands of the Roman state. During the persecutions, Christian apologists developed a discourse in favor of religious freedom founded on arguments of various kinds, including Rome’s traditional toleration based on a respect for “national” religions. Searching for legitimacy, and in order to gain the same respect as the other “nations”, apologists brought out the argument of a “new race”: Christianity should be accepted as a licit religion because it constituted a *tertium genus*, after the Greeks and the Jews. But the rhetorical argument of ethnicity, flexible and ambiguous as it was, could turn into a dangerous one. From the outside, Christians were also seen contemptuously as a distinct race, foreign to Graeco-Roman culture and suspected of misanthropy and political disloyalty. To counteract pagan criticism, apologists reshaped the argument of ethnicity to stress the universal character of their religion. The aim of this paper is to study the use of the argument of race in the building of the early Christian discourse on

identity and religious freedom, and the many rhetorical values of this reasoning in apologetic contexts.

Emiliano Rubens Urcioli: Silent majorities claiming “minority rights”. Weakness and strength of small numbers in Tertullian’s rhetorical strategy. According to strongly fluctuating estimates, at the very beginning of the fourth century, Christianity is a cult practiced by ten to fifteen percent of the total population of the Empire. It is, indeed, a minority religion. Furthermore, within this minority, most believers take Christian religious identity for a situational membership, i.e., for a not relevant system of meaning in most social contexts of everyday life. “Communitarians” like Tertullian, supporting an imperative idea of religious allegiance within a hierarchical arrangement of membership, represent the majority of the extant sources, but they were a tiny (even though influential) minority in their societies – and maybe also among the clergy. So, how can a minority of a minority pretend to be the social force that it is not? By converting its objective weakness into a virtual asset. Invisibility, which characterizes the Christian religious phenotype due to its unflashy traits and allegiance dynamics, even more than to its tricky legal status, may become an uncanny feature, if one only knows how to use it. This paper focuses on the rhetorical strategy by which Tertullian, in as little as three chapters of his *Apology* (chaps. 37–39), shifts from a majority’s threat to a minority’s plea: the appalling representation of the social desertion and spatial withdrawal of Christians as an outraged “multitude of men” turns into the cheering pledge that this curia of “upright, virtuous, pious, and pure people” respects the rules of the social game and thus deserves a political guarantee for a safe religious life. At the center of the picture (chap. 38), Christian alleged detachment from politics is the very core of Tertullian’s strategic reasoning: with the same argument (“we do not care about state affairs!”) a putative majority can claim to be socially harmless (“we do not declare war on you!”) and an effective minority can call for tolerance and recognition (“you have no right to harass us!”).

Maijastina Kahlos: Minority report: “minorities” and “majorities” in argumentation in the late antique inter-religious and intra-religious disputes. In the course of the fourth century, Christianity was gradually shifting from a minority position to the majority one or at least to a strong minority within the Roman Empire. Graeco-Roman religions (called “paganism” by Christian writers) were gradually shifting to the minority position or a weakened majority. It is impossible to define the proportions of religious groups in the Roman Empire; at best we can speak of guesstimates. The same applies to the proportions and power relations between the Nicene and other Christian groups (e.g. Homoians or “Arians” as they were called by the Nicene Christians). In certain areas and at specific times, the Homoians held the upper hand while the Nicene Christians

were at risk of being marginalized. Nevertheless, for the most part of the fourth century, the Nicene Christians were setting the boundaries for the normative orthodoxy. This paper will discuss the argument of the majority position in the inter- and intra-religious disputes in the fourth and fifth centuries. Jerome of Stridon, for instance, rejoices at the expansion of Christianity in the city of Rome. Augustine of Hippo derides “pagans” who according to him were a small minority living in fear and shame. Isidore of Pelusium and Theodoret of Cyrrhus declared that “paganism” no longer existed. Furthermore, the triumph of Christianity over paganism was exulted in the imperial legislation. I will not take any stand on which religious group or sect was in the majority or minority in the Empire at a particular moment. Instead, I will study, for instance, for what purposes was the majority position argued for and what kinds of arguments and rhetorical techniques were used. What was the background of these claims and who was the audience?

Alessandro Saggiaro: *Sine suffragio: exclusion of religious minorities in the Theodosian code*

In the sixteenth book of the Theodosian Code, dedicated to the theme of religion, we find both the definition of Christianity as a “religion”, and that of “religious otherness”. Heresy, apostasy, Judaism, and paganism are the general concepts identified as “religious”, though also in the sense of otherness. Into these general definitions fall then communities, groups, places, which in turn are integrated or excluded within the horizon of *res publica*. The concept of *suffragium*, well known in the field of legal studies as “vote”, after the *comitia* had ceased to meet in the early part of Tiberius’ principate, changed its meaning. From the political point of view, it inherited from its original significance the meaning of influence exercised by the powerful. Connected with this, *suffragium* meant also patronage, recommendation, and the money paid to secure power to a candidate. In late antiquity, the legal term takes on a meaning in relation to religious issues, to define social inclusion or exclusion. The communities are then placed within a range of possible levels of acceptability concerning the social consensus derived from the civic-religious communion.

Gian Franco Chiaï: *Christiani adversos Christianos in late antique Asia Minor*

The numerous Christian inscriptions found in Asia Minor show the complexity and variety of the Christian communities in this part of the Roman Empire, including after the end of the persecutions and the affirmation of Christianity as the imperial religion. Particularly the epigraphic documents from Phrygia and Lydia testify – frequently in the small district of the same village community – to the presence of many Christian sects (Montanists, Novatians e.g.), who often with intolerance and exclusion refrained not only from the local pagan tra-

ditions, which always remained strong, but also from those of other Christians, who did not follow their faith and lifestyle. Through the analysis of a selected number of epigraphic documents, this paper aims on the one hand to reconstruct how the Christian communities bring out their identity as exponents of the true faith, and on the other hand to show how the inscriptions enable us to find out the various competing forms of the *Christiani adversos Christianos* in the local contexts.

Defining Religious Minorities in a Global World (Early Modern History)

Panel Chairs: Sergio Botta, Marianna Ferrara

Religious minority is a concept historically conditioned and informed by the dominant religious system. As a category, it appears constantly at stake when historians attempt to outline the ways by which colonial experiences have come to forge newly conquered territories, altering both the landscapes and mindscapes of societies under colonial control. This panel aims to address and problematize the concept of religious minority, hoping to cast new light on the multifaceted religious, political, ethnic and socio-cultural interplay occurring between global/wider frameworks and local dynamics in early modern history. By focusing on the dynamics involved in conflicts, negotiations, exchanges and compromises between minority and hegemonic religious actors, as well as on the necessary process of self-definition and self-representation on the part of non-dominant groups, we aim to highlight and critically assess the complex realities of religious minorities in different areas of the world within a time-frame that stretches from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries. Critical interventions will deal with the colonial sources such as missionary works, travel chronicles, archival materials, and any other source useful for our research proposal. A critical and deep understanding of the connected world will definitively impact our knowledge of contemporaneity.

Anna Andreeva, Chiara Ghidini: Transferring the economies of the “sacred”: the case of the Ryūkyū Islands at the turn of the seventeenth century The *Ryūkyū Shintōki* (Account of the “Way of the kami” in the Ryukyus, c. 1603–1606) is one of the oldest surviving texts providing historical descriptions of the religious landscape of the Ryūkyū Islands before the Satsuma feudal domain established its suzerainty over the Ryūkyū Kingdom in 1609. Stretching southwest from Kyushu to Taiwan, the Ryukyus were a site of multiple polities and peoples, with a strategic position at the crossroads of maritime routes connecting Japan, Southern China, Korea and Taiwan. Recorded by the Japanese Buddhist Pure

Land priest Taichū (1552–1639) at the request of Ryukyuan court officials, Ryūkyū Shintōki reflects the founding legends, traditional beliefs and ritual practices of the pre-1600s Ryūkyū archipelago. Most importantly, the text charts the historical attempts to “replicate” on Ryūkyū’s soil a religious landscape constructed and developed by the Buddhist-Shinto milieu of medieval Japan, and exemplifies the multifaceted religious culture of pre-modern Ryukyus. Andreeva focuses on the relevant aspects related to Japan’s medieval religious landscape and on the way it entered the Ryukyuan archipelago. Ghidini deals with Ryukyuan local systems of worship, later advocated by Japanese folklorists in order to corroborate their theory of “Shinto” rituals and oracles performed and delivered mainly by shamanistic women in ancient Japan. Since it is through Taichū’s use of the formula “Ryūkyū Shintō” that Japanese folklorists came to refer to Ryukyuan religious system as Shinto, we believe that a deeper gaze into Taichū’s text is crucial in order to better understand the cultural and social dynamics taking place in the Ryukyuan archipelago shortly before the sovereignty of the independent kingdom was eventually shattered by Satsuma’s colonial domination in the seventeenth century.

Gautam Chakrabarti: “In-between” religiosity: European Kāli-bhakti in early modern Calcutta

One of the most engaging socio-cultural traits in late eighteenth-century India was the disarmingly involved and comparativist manner in which European travelers responded to the richly syncretized field of devotional spirituality in eastern India. The predominantly shākta orientation of early modern Bengali configurations of religious devotion led, especially in the vicinity of the rather heterodox city of Calcutta, to the familiarization of European migrants to the Goddess Kāli, herself representing a certain subaltern, tāntrika configuration of Hindu devotionalism. Anthony Firingee, (Antōni Phiringī) originally Hensman Anthony (?-1836), was a folk-poet/bard, who, despite being of Portuguese origin, was married to a Hindu Brahmin widow and famous for his much-feted devotional songs, addressed to the goddesses Kāli and Durgā, in Bengali towards the beginning of the nineteenth century. He was also celebrated for his performance in literary face-offs, occasionally of a competitively scurrilous nature, known as Kavigān (bardic duels) with the then crēme de la crēme of Bengali composers. His āgamani songs, celebrating the return of Goddess Durga to her parental home – a process that marks the Bengali autumn-festival of Durgā Pujā – are immensely-popular till today and he was instrumental in the construction of a temple to goddess Kāli in the Bowbazar-area of North Calcutta that is nowadays famous as the Phiringī Kālibāri (foreigner’s Kāli temple). In this paper, the literary-cultural construction of a religious hybridity, operating between and cross-fertilizing Indo-European cultural conjunctions, will be exam-

ined through the study of individual, “in-between” religious agency, in this case of Hensman Anthony, and literary-cultural borrowings.

Wei Jiang: Minority, heterodoxy, and alternatives: popular religions in the context of Catholic accommodation in China, sixteenth to seventeenth centuries
In recent historiography, Christianity as a local religion in Late Imperial China has been considered in three different aspects. Erik Zürcher claims that the accommodation policy of the Jesuits responded to the cultural imperative of China that distinguished orthodox Confucianism from the heterodox religious sects. Nicolas Standaert holds that the notion of religion in the early modern period concerns is more adequately interpreted in a cultural and secular sense rather than in its modern concept. From an anthropological point of view, Eugenio Menegon asserts that Christianity became a local religion through a successful adaptation to the kinship network in rural China. The three statements consider popular religions as a minor parameter to measure the localization of Christianity. This paper, instead, examines the interactive dynamics between Christianity and Chinese popular religions in a series of case studies in both rural and urban settings in the southern vice-province of China, sixteenth to seventeenth centuries.

Paolo Aranha: “Sheep in the midst of wolves”: representations of marginality and persecution in early modern Catholic missions to South India
Central to the Christian notion of mission is the idea that the Good News will be rejected and lead to persecutions. Jesus warned his disciples: “I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves” (Matthew 10:16). This paper explores how Catholic missionaries to South India represented themselves as potential or real victims of the hostility of “gentiles” and “Moors”, even when these majoritarian communities were far more tolerant than the Catholics themselves, especially notorious in the Portuguese Estado da Índia. On the basis of an analysis grounded in Church and missionary history I will verify how situations of religious tension and marginality came to be defined in terms of “persecution”, with special reference to the Jesuit missions of Madurai, Mysore and the Carnatic in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Marianna Ferrara: The “useful” Brahmin: understanding the cohabitation of minorities in South Asia throughout the descriptions of Brahmins in the Italian travel chronicles (sixteenth to seventeenth centuries)

Brahmins and ascetics are described in many travel chronicles on India as the authoritative inhabitants of a wide land where strange rituals were performed and terrific idols were venerated. The Brahmins were often at the center of these descriptions as “useful” mediating figures who had negotiated between the foreigners and the “gentiles”, between the ambitions of the former and the interests of the latter. In the “discovered” lands there were also long-term resi-

dents such as Muslims, Jews, or like-Christians. The Italian travel chronicles composed between the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries provide a rich repertoire of details on how the Brahmin minority was perceived from the view of travelers and traders and compared with the other religious minorities who had a commercial and/or military position on the Malabar coast. I will compare these data with the Sanskrit sources containing a self-representation of the Brahmins as a protected and authoritative minority.

Sergio Botta: Manufacturing indigenous culture as religious minority in New Spain: the work of Fray Toribio de Benavente Motolinía
During the first stage of the colonial history of the New Spain (1524–1577), missionary orders (Franciscans, Augustinians, Dominicans) dominated the production of religious discourses about otherness. The Franciscan Toribio de Benavente Motolinía took part in the famous expedition of the Doce, which gave life to the mendicant mission in 1524. The friar was also the author of two major works – the *Memoriales* and the *Historia de los Indios de la Nueva España* – that in 1541 concur to the manufacturing of an image of the Mesoamerican indigenous cultures as a religious minority. The paper will analyze the rhetorical strategy used by the Franciscan to represent indigenous religion as a dissolved phenomenon and as an historical fact related only to the pre-Hispanic past. In particular, the paper will focus on the use of the Old Testament discourses relating to idolatry as a dispositif to symbolically separate Christianity from indigenous religions.

De-limiting “Right Religion”: Transgression, Innovation and Tradition in South Asia

Panel Chair: Peter Valdina

Our panel rallies around the topics of transgression, innovation and limits as interrelated processes in religious (and thereby social) contexts in South Asia. Religious boundaries in South Asia always remained porous, fluid or even blurred. While the insistence on sharp, discernable limits of religious traditions frequently appeared, religious practices and communities regularly transgressed these very limits. In the context of lived South Asian plurality, “theological” borrowings and accretions both on the level of teachings and practices were ubiquitous. Likewise “other” religious communities and philosophic principles presented a negative foil, against which one could fathom the boundaries of one’s “own” tradition. It must be stressed that transgressing these limits could challenge, reinforce, or introduce structures of hierarchy and social dominance. We mean to trace the process by which contours are de-limited through challenges to existing

orders in four different religious traditions. Defining “right religion” entails the establishment, justification and defense of new limits against the next onslaught of transgressions. We ask if limits are more than limiting. Can they also be productive frameworks accommodating currents of thought? Does this give us a new way to read their transgression?

Rahul Parson: Relatively “right”: manifold perspectives of truth in the works of Banārsīdās

The seventeenth century Jain merchant Banārsīdās authored South Asia’s first autobiography, the *Ardhakathanaka*. In his work he discloses a catalogue of his social and religious deviations that led him to particular spiritual epiphanies and eventually to de facto leadership of a Jain reform movement called *Adhyātma*. He demonstrates, albeit poetically, that like the soul passing through different stations towards liberation, the social being also occupies different developmental stages that allow for a variety of ways of being in the world. Banārsīdās’ work suggests that within the Jain scriptural corpus there are justifications for his former deviance. His exegesis reveals the possibility of social transgression in Jain philosophical literature concerned with spiritual transcendence. Therefore, those who condemned him missed the point of Jain values of neutrality (*madhyastha*). Banārsīdās maintains that a way of being, behaving, or a statement can be simultaneously true and false, transgressive and appropriate, if seen from multiple perspectives, e.g. Jain *anekāntavāda*. The narrative presents his misadventures as necessary and productive as they compel him to develop a sense of “right” religion that is personal and relative, thereby militating against religious absolutism.

Amit Dey: Myriad ways to god: the improvising Muslim mystics of South Asia

The paper focuses on Bulleh Shah of Punjab, Shah Abdul Latif of Sind, and the baul and jari singers of Bengal during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Consulting Persian and Urdu *tazkiras* (*Akhbar ul Akhiyar*, *Safinat ul Auliya* etc.) Punjabi *kafis* and *dohas* and Bengali folk songs, the paper aims at exploring the endeavors of some eclectic poet-singers towards the construction of an alternative path of mutual understanding often culminating in mutual appreciation. Understanding such “imaginaire” Muslims is becoming relevant in the context of the emerging hyperactive, exclusionist and homogenizing socio-political institutions of South-Asia. At times these poet-singers reflect a “competitive spirituality” or they may function within the framework of established religion. In this context we aim at analyzing the transgressions (*bida* or innovation to many) of poet-singers with a motive to accommodate the “other” (non-Muslims) and the constraints imposed on such propensities by the prevalent socio-economic circumstances. Partially rejecting the “five pillars of Islam” and challeng-

ing the notion of miraj or “heavenly ascension of the prophet,” some of these poet-mystics introduced counter hierarchies to legitimize what they understood to be the “right religion”.

Vera Höke: Brahma, Krishna, Jesus and Socrates: transgression and limits in the Brahma Samaj of India

The nineteenth-century Brahma Samaj of India, under its experimentally minded leader Keshub Chandra Sen (1838–1884), may at first sight appear as a kind of religious “anything goes”. However, possibilities within the limits of “right religion” were in fact restricted. The insistence on the necessity of first-hand experiences of the divine on the one hand, and the rejection of “idolatry” on the other, informed Keshub’s choice and interpretation of religious traditions. Shifting between abstract (nirguna) and personal (saguna) notions of the highest being (addressed variously as Brahma, Ishwar, Hari, Father, Ma, Mother and God to name but a few), both the popular practices of the lower classes and authority grounded on the knowledge of specific holy texts (the traditional domain of Brahmins) were rejected. Yet, this limit was a creative framework. At the expense of traditional Brahmin and common culture, room was made for European personalities and currents of thought to intertwine with Vaishnava practice in a specific way under the auspices of “right religion”.

Developments within Russian Orthodoxy in Past and Present

Elena Medvedeva: Penitentiary religiosity in Russia

The problem of religiosity among prisoners is studied through different aspects in social science and humanities. The main attention is paid to the role of religion in a prison colony as one of the correctional methods of work with prisoners. Socio-psychological studies of religious components in the everyday life of a prison colony reveal contradictions in attitudes to the role of religion for prisoners. Notwithstanding that correctional authorities cooperate actively with religious organizations, mostly with the Russian Orthodox Church as the most predictable and well-known partner, divine worship is public and plays a generally pedagogical role. So prisoners prefer to attend divine worship even though they do not practice religion themselves. Most of the prisoners show only superficial religiosity. Participation in official events approved by correctional authorities (celebration of religious holidays, church building) is seen as an obvious sign of correction and is taken into account in consideration of parole.

German Bokov: Science and religion in the Russian Federation nowadays: conflict or conversation?

The report discusses the main aspects of the relationship between science and religion in the Russian Federation nowadays. It shows an official position of the Russian Orthodox Church concerning the latest scientific developments, secular culture and education, and the separate views of different scientists and theologians. The paper deals with approaches to religion within both modern evolutionary and theological theories. In particular, the paper examines the problem of teaching basics of religious cultures and secular ethics in high school and religious studies in the higher educational system. This is connected with negative reaction from the academic community in the Russian Federation towards attempts to introduce theology into secular space, science and education.

Tatiana Folieva: The results of the introduction of religious subjects into the school educational program (according to qualitative research data)

In the Russian Federation a course “Basics of religious cultures and society ethics” has been introduced into the school educational program. We conducted a qualitative research, aiming to discover to what extent these courses have an impact on the religiosity of the children. At the end of the research we have obtained 720 drawings. The religiosity is higher among those children where the subject “Fundamentals of Orthodox culture” is taught from the first grade. The course outlines a concept of religion, but the kids keep this knowledge in mind only under constant review of the learned material. After the sixth grade, the child starts to develop his own vision of God that differs from the one introduced to him during lessons. Thus, the existing system of education and the presence of school subjects on religious culture do not affect the religiosity of children.

Diaspora: A Source of Hybridization

Barbara Dellwo: Visibilization of religious belonging and social position: highly skilled Muslim migrants in Geneva

In the aftermath of the “cultural turn”, there is a common understanding that the main fault lines dividing people are of cultural and, increasingly, of religious nature. Based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted within the project “(In)visible Islam in the City”, which explores the ways in which individuals of Islamic culture express their presence in Swiss urban spaces, I noted on the contrary that social position was a major factor in their everyday practices and strategies of self-representation. Firstly, highly skilled migrants historically enjoy a better image than other migrants. Furthermore, their social, cultural and symbolic cap-

ital provides them with more resources to handle the dominant discourse on Islam in Switzerland. In light of these facts, I intend to show how highly skilled Muslim migrants shape and display a certain form of “Orientalism”, responding both to the rhetoric of cosmopolitanism and to a global process of urban marketing of diversity

Georgios Trantas, Eleni Tseligka: Greek migrants in Germany and their entopic fulfilment via their church

Migration entails mobility, therefore location is in flux. Yet in the case of Greek migrants in Germany the establishment of their communities has been facilitated by the Greek-Orthodox Church with spatiality being taken into consideration so that it became part of their collective narrative. This allowed for an appropriation of the place by – and in – the latter, such that narrative begot entopia and the initial deterritorialization shifted to spatial fulfilment and integration. The aforementioned phenomenon can be attested by extended iconographic examples where, at a symbolic level, German language and prominent local landmarks have been integrated in church-building frescoes. Additionally, new figures of memory have enriched their now hybrid calendar and cyclical time-lapse perception, with new anniversaries that stem from their unique narratives and self-perception. Notably, the public manifestation/celebration of narrative hybridity is mostly organized and hosted by their corresponding parishes, within the premises of the latter when possible.

Natalia Zawiejska: Angolan evangelical communities in Lisbon

The paper is based on field research conducted in 2013–2014 in Portugal and Angola. In the last two decades several Angolan evangelical communities started to mark their presence in Lisbon’s religious landscape. Many of them are independent evangelical churches based on one leader’s charisma, but there are several cases where an Angolan division of a global denomination or a well developed Angolan based denomination started the missionary work in Portugal. These are the cases of Assembly of God of Maculusso and Good God Church (Igreja Bom Deus). The paper will show the complex interchange between Portuguese society and Portuguese religious institutions and these religious migrant communities. I will concentrate on spatial and material dimensions as well as appoint the political, cosmopolitan and global context of the actions undertaken by these communities in balancing between adaptation and maintaining their social and religious identity.

Differentiating Nonreligion

Panel Chair: Johannes Quack

There is an apparent growth of research on people who explicitly or implicitly distance(d) themselves in diverse ways from specific religious traditions and ways of life or from religion as such. These studies of “nonreligion” or “nonreligiosity” complement research on secularism and secularity. In our panel, we differentiate specific modes of nonreligion by approaching nonreligious phenomena relationally, i.e., we propose focusing on their various (often co-constitutive) relations towards respective local religious fields in order to contextualize historical transformations and ongoing changes in these religious fields as well as struggles of religious and nonreligious actors about issues of secularism. By interrelating individual biographical factors and the wider socio-cultural, religious, and political contexts shaping distinct understandings and expressions of nonreligiosity, we move ahead of obvious contrasts such as the opposition between indifference to religion on the one hand and various forms of atheism on the other. Focusing on methodologies and concepts of representations and interpretations of such different types/kinds/modes of nonreligion, our panel aims to bring together scholars engaging empirically and theoretically with these questions.

Susanne Schenk: “Don’t make it so religious”: an analysis of how secular humanism is negotiated in Sweden

“Modes of nonreligion” differ in their rationalities of nonreligion itself or simply point to distinct strategies of how to promote nonreligious ideals and values. Analyzing such different modes, it is not only important to compare seemingly homogenous forms of nonreligion of distinct groups, but also to research the pluralism of such modes within one organization as well as diverging understandings of nonreligion on the individual level. Based on my research about secular humanists in Sweden, my paper discusses the relationship between diverse rationalities and manifestations of nonreligion, how they are negotiated, how compromises are established or conflict lines solidified. This analysis helps to understand the interdependency between competing modes of humanism and generational shifts of nonreligious activism as well as their entanglement with the on-going societal change.

Alexander Blechschmidt: Different “modes of nonreligion”? Analyzing the local diversity of organized nonreligion in the Philippines

How can the concept of different “modes of nonreligion” help to describe and understand the local diversity of nonreligious groups and their socio-political activism in different cultural contexts, and thereby contribute to what Cannell called “a genuine comparative anthropology of secularisms” (2010)? In my

paper I focus on two of such nonreligious groups in the Philippines – besides East-Timor the only Christian-dominated country in the region of Southeast Asia – and look at the differences and similarities between them as well as their internal dynamics and changes over time regarding their overall profile and agenda. By analyzing these recently established forms of organized nonreligion, their agency and forms of engagement in struggles over issues of “secularism” in relation to the local-specific religious field and its transformations (cf. Quack 2014), I will illustrate the complementary potential of differentiating nonreligion to shed new light on the dynamic ensemble of religion, politics and modernity.

Stephen LeDrew: Atheism in America: conflict and differentiation in a new social movement

Atheist activism in the U.S. has recently attracted the attention of scholars who approach it as a social movement. In this presentation I will discuss how debates regarding goals and strategies within atheist and secularist organizations are highlighting deep ideological tensions that are not only shaping movement dynamics, but threaten to fragment the movement and halt its recent explosive growth. These tensions, I argue, are essentially political, and involve distinct understandings of the nature of atheism and what it means to be an atheist, with some groups seeking to replace religion with scientific authority, and others linking atheism to a conception of social justice. This reflects the duality in the historical construction of atheism, but it also represents a new stage in its development, as new groups and ideologies are emerging that combine atheism, politics, and ethics in novel ways.

Stefan Schröder: Negotiating “Humanism”: practical and evolutionary humanism as different modes of nonreligion in Germany?

In German society, the term Humanism is associated with many different phenomena, from ancient Greek philosophers, to the “era” of Italian Renaissance, to a specific concept of higher education based on ancient languages. However, for the last twenty to thirty years irreligious organizations which were traditionally called “Freethinkers” or “Freereligious Congregations” have been trying to occupy the term and re-define it as their nonreligious “Weltanschauung”. In my paper, this negotiation process of the concept “Humanism” shall be refined through comparing Humanism-drafts of two eminent German irreligious organizations, the Giordano Bruno Foundation and the German Humanist Association. Are there different modes of nonreligion at play, competing over the interpretational sovereignty of the concept? Or do we observe the formation of a coherent irreligious “Humanist movement” in Germany? In raising these questions, some general conclusions on nonreligion and criticism of religion in Germany are aspired.

Doing Study of Religions in Public Institutions

Panel Chairs: Sarah J. Jahn, Lene Kühle

Doing Study of Religions in public institutions in countries where religion is legally separated from the public sphere is a common research topic. The participants of the panel are doing research of “religion” in several public institutions in different European and/or North American countries; but, what does it mean to do research on “religion” in public institutions? The question does not only touch upon the issue of research practice, but also raises fundamental methodological considerations, and calls for consideration of science-policy and -politics that arise from a specific understanding of what is meant by the “Study of Religions”. Overall, it can be stated that research on religion has to be analyzed on different levels and from different perspectives, because there are also several understandings of “religion”. After a general introduction by the chairwomen, the participants will discuss this overarching topic of the panel with reference to their own research experience.

Julia Martínez-Ariño: Questions, risks and implications of doing research on religion in public institutions: a reflexive approach

Drawing upon empirical research conducted in prisons, hospitals and schools in Spain and Canada and departing from Beaman’s (2013) notion of “the will to religion”, this presentation will reflect upon some of the main epistemological and methodological questions and risks – and their political implications – that arise when doing research on religion in public institutions. What are our preconceptions of what religion is and how do they influence the way we approach the object of our research? Do we reify categories of religion with our research, or do we help deconstruct them? Do we reinforce majority-minority dynamics and the minority and “stranger” status of minority religions? Are we, by searching for religion and religious people, overemphasizing the importance of religion in particular institutional contexts? Do we miss non-traditional and non-institutionalized forms of religiosity and religious care provision when entering the institutions through formally established gatekeepers?

Ines Michalowski: Bringing together different levels of comparison in research on religion in public institutions

The international comparison of how public institutions accommodate immigrant religious minorities implies many different levels of comparison that need to be taken into consideration for case selection, data collection and data analysis. Using the example of the armed forces in five European countries and the U.S., the paper shows that each level of comparison relates to specific hypotheses about what explains differences in immigrant religious minority accommodation. Institutional differences discussed include differences in national

ideologies, specificities of the public institution under study and differences across local organizations or branches of that particular public institution. Some challenges of collecting and analyzing the data that captures differences across these institutional levels as well as the particular challenges of collecting data in an institution as secretive as the military will be presented for discussion.

Katharina Frank: Challenges for the Study of Religions in public schools In different countries, Religion Education has developed as a subject for all pupils. If there is no possibility to opt out, it has to respect freedom of religion in all its aspects. It seems self-evident that the Study of Religions constitutes the reference discipline for this new subject. The contribution presents basic research on Religion Education in Switzerland and experiences from a scientific evaluation in the canton of Zurich. It illustrates the specific challenges the Study of Religions is faced with, when attending to this topic of public affair: methodologically, it is necessary to provide new instruments for qualitative and quantitative research in order to be accepted by the established Educational Sciences. In regard to science politics, it has to establish itself against theological claims and also against interreligious understandings of religion as anthropological constants.

Dreaming Buddhism and Awakening

Panel Chair: Stuart Lachs

Some Buddhist schools in the West are presented in sanitized versions. One especially salient feature of these schools is the presentation of the leader as an enlightened being beyond the understanding of the mass of humanity. This imputed enlightenment divides the world into two groups: the enlightened master and everyone else. At the same time, this elitist perspective contradicts Western conceptions of Buddhism, according to which “spirituality” implies autonomy, rationality, and freedom. So how can Westerners comply to the new world views and practices these Buddhist teachers bring with them? How can they cope with the contradictions? This panel explores several cases of cultural misunderstanding and different co-adaptation strategies. We will explore the rhetorical and practical ways in which Western students are taught a radically different conception of Buddhism, and the ways in which and the reasons why these adaptive strategies sometimes fail.

Stuart Lachs: For whose best interest?

Zen master Joshu Sasaki recently died at the age of 107. Though he was considered by some to be the pre-eminent tough old style authentic Zen master in the West, by other well informed people it was known that this was not the case. Sasaki is an interesting example of a traditional Rinzai Zen master and the organ-

ization built up by him shaping a Buddhist organization in response to and in interaction with his mostly Western disciples. I will show how the meeting of a charismatic traditionally trained Japanese Rinzai Zen master with, in many ways, a naïve and uninformed modern Western audience in search for meaning led to a unique blend of modern and traditional Buddhism. But also this unique mixture in concert with Zen's legitimating story facilitates a world unto itself, marked by troubling behavior by both master and disciples.

Andre van der Braak: Gurus and Charisma: New perspectives on the student-teacher relationship in the West

As the confluence of Eastern religions with Western modernity matures, it is becoming increasingly clear that premodern Asian models of the relationship between charismatic gurus and their disciples are no longer adequate in a modern, or even postmodern, Western context. This paper discusses various possibilities for new perspectives on the student-teacher relationship, based on recent developments in transpersonal psychology and object relations theory that emphasize the dialogical nature of the self.

James Mark Shields: Response

Dynamics of Accommodation: Law and Religion in Contemporary Western Societies

Panel Chair: Werner Menski

Over the past few decades, state courts had to deal with an increasing number of cases that involved religious issues. At the same time, legal responses to the demands of religious groups have come under public scrutiny. This negotiation process between state law and religion(s) concerns almost all aspects of individual life, such as clothing (burqa ban) and the integrity of the body (circumcision), but also the (legal) status of religious groups as corporate entities. It challenges legal frameworks that are often built amidst specific historical conditions that did not reflect the religious plurality that modern states face today. As a result, both the law and religions find themselves undergoing change, adaption, seclusion and contestation. This panel explores the tension between the objectives of state law and the interests of religious communities by bringing together researchers from legal studies, anthropology and religious studies.

Markus Klank: The long way to recognition: on the legal status of Jehovah's Witnesses in Germany

In March 1990, after more than forty years of repression, Jehovah's Witnesses became officially recognized as a licit religion by the former government of the German Democratic Republic. Following the German reunification in October 1990,

Jehovah's Witnesses asked the state of Berlin to confirm that their official status has now been changed to the privileged status of a corporate body under public law. This initiated a complex legal dispute that engaged different legal authorities for years. After fifteen years, Jehovah's Witnesses were finally granted this legal status in the state of Berlin but they have not succeeded yet in all German states. This paper focuses on the impact of a decade-long legal dispute on the religious community of Jehovah's Witnesses in Germany and how it affected their internal approach to (state) law. It also raises the question if or how far legal settings transform religious groups and vice versa.

Mareike Riedel: A matter of faith or birth? Jewish pluralism as a challenge for state law

The entangled nature of religion and ethnicity is a central feature of Judaism. The question "Who is a Jew?" has always been a subject of halakhic debate and is answered differently within the various streams of Judaism. What appears on first sight to be an internal religious matter has occasionally engaged secular courts like the UK Supreme Court regarding the admission policy of a Jewish school. This paper draws on several case studies in a comparative way to assess how state courts addressed the competing understandings of Jewish identity and how they tried to make sense of its hybrid nature within legal categories of religion, ethnicity and nationality. This paper argues that the concept of "Jewish identity" transcends Western legal categories that are built upon a particular understanding of religion. Such an understanding risks not only imposing certain notions and criteria of religion but also restricting the freedom of religion for minority religions such as Judaism.

Helene R. Kirstein: An ethnological analysis of "religion" in the European Union's dialogue with churches

Religion as a complex concept constitutes a distinct organization for churches in the contemporary democratic process of consultation in the European Union. Dialogue initiated by the European Union establishes a position for churches that is both unique and universal at the same time. The goal of the churches can be seen as one of changing both everyday habits and public policies in a global context related to such topics as nuclear weapons, environmental issues, climate change, and poverty. In reference to these subjects, churches utilize theories drawn from science, theology, law, and the humanities to understand and explain their aims. Nevertheless, although both partners in the dialogue recognize the churches' objectives as wholistic in conception and purpose, both also see churches as having a specific contribution to make to the improvement of society. My research will show that this apparent contradiction is actually an enabling, foundational principle of the dialogue itself.

Martin Ramstedt: Translating Buddhism into different European normativities: the case of the Shaolin Europe Association

In 2010, the UNESCO accorded the status of “world heritage” to the Songshan Shaolin Temple in the Province of Henan (People’s Republic of China) as part of a whole series of monuments comprising both sacred and secular sites. Far from taking issue with the ensuing reordering of monastic life along secular lines, the abbot of the Shaolin temple, the Venerable Shi Yong Xin has continued to lobby for official recognition of his monastery’s “Shaolin Chan Culture” as “intangible heritage”. Already back in 1999, Shi Yong Xin had founded some institutions that have fostered his endeavor, inter alia the Shaolin Europe Association. The paper argues that the cultural translation of the Shaolin Chan Culture into different – spiritual and secular – European normativities has not only supported the international branding of the Shaolin martial arts. It has also rendered Shaolin’s international image more compatible with the criteria of the respective UNESCO program.

The Dynamics of East Asian New Religions

Panel Chair: David William Kim

The East Asian nations have a similar historical background of modernization in the nineteenth to early twentieth centuries. While the society, culture, religion, and thought were altered with advanced technology and Christianity, the new religious movements also emerged from the Asian traditions of Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism, Shintoism, and Shamanism. How, then, did they motivate the local societies of East Asia region? What were the new perspectives they offered? How were the new religions challengeable over the traditional beliefs? The papers of this panel explore the following subjects to demonstrate the socio-religious dynamics of East Asia, such as the metaphysical relation between God and man within the context of the Korean Daesoonjinrihoe and Japanese Tenrikyo, the newly individualized spirituality of a Taiwanese new religion (“the Sacred Teaching of Mind-only”), the social engagement of Won-Buddhism, and the history of Tenrikyo and its restoration in contemporary Japan.

Gyung-Won Lee: The god-man relation in East Asian New Religious Movements: the cases of Daesoonjinrihoe and Tenrikyo

The paper explores the metaphysical relation between god and man within new religious movements in East Asia. The founder of Daesoonjinrihoe is taught as being present in the world as the Lord of the ninth heaven in order to create an earthly paradise through the work-process of so called Cheonji-Gongsa (“re-forming the universe”). Human beings are seen to have privileges by which

gods and men are harmonized (Shinin-Johaw). Meanwhile, the god of Tenrikyo (god the Parent) is comprehended as the creator of all creatures including human beings. So, all human beings are viewed as brothers and sisters. They teach that as god and men keep the relationship of parent and children, they can enjoy an ideal life. Thus, the comparative study of the paper will not only demonstrate the individual concept of the God-man relation, but also unveil the creative identity of the Korean and Japanese new religions.

Shu-Wei Hsieh: Master, scriptures and rituals: a study on Taiwanese Sacred Teaching of Mind-only

The paper investigates a new religious movement in Taiwan by focusing on its master, scriptures and rituals. The Sacred Teaching of Mind-only is a new religion which is integrated with divination and fongshui practices. The founding master, Hunyuan, is a charismatic figure as well as a new religious innovator in Taiwan. The small-scale cases of charisma illuminate its theoretical and comparative purposes. Then, how can one interpret the religious community and their unique teachings? The paper analyzes the new Taiwanese religion by means of three perspectives: (1) the relationship of master with the scriptures; (2) the links of circulation of impacts between scriptures and rituals; (3) methods and theories to explore alternative models of spirituality and new religion. The newly individualized spirituality is often represented in different ways, but this paper tries to address the new spirituality empirically as well as the broader flows within religious and divination traditions.

Kwangsoo Park: A study on the “Gaebyok (Great Opening 開闢)” thought and social reformation of Won-Buddhism

The religious culture of modern Korea is a traditional heritage of Korean spirit and history. It is very important to study such heritages because they are a treasure house maintaining a variety of Koreanity. They have been collected throughout the process of confrontation and naturalization of conventional religions of foreign origin. Among the founders of new Korean religions, Chung-Bin Pak (1891–1943), better known by his religious epithet, *Sot’aesan*, founded a reformed Buddhist movement called Won-Buddhism (Wonbulgyo). The leader’s main purpose in the reformation of Buddhism was to apply Buddhism to the contemporary secular society. Then, how do the new religious teachings engage with the local communities of Korean society? The paper argues that the new religious founder’s goal of reformation was based on the thought of Gaebyok (Great Opening of Era) in order to build a peaceful world through reformations of the imbalances in social and religious systems.

Jiro Sawai: Scriptures and their restoration: a case study of Tenrikyo
Tenrikyo has the three Scriptures, which constitute the foundation of its faith. Before WWII, however, the new Japanese religion was severely persecuted by

the Japanese Government. Therefore, it was very difficult for Tenrikyo adherents to communicate its teachings to people on the basis of its Scriptures. As soon as WWII was over in 1945, the Tenri community immediately began to restore its teachings, based on its Scriptures. Thus, in my presentation, by examining the history of conformation and restoration in Tenrikyo, I attempt to explore what the changeable or the unchangeable in Tenrikyo faith is. From a historical viewpoint of religions, in order to clarify the characteristics of religions in modern Japan, it may be significant to demonstrate how Tenrikyo restored its original teachings as the foundress Miki Nakayama taught them.

The Dynamics of Material Text Practices and the Somatics of Sacred Scripture

Panel Chairs: Isabel Laack, Katharina Wilkens

The semantic interpretation of religious texts is a central endeavor of religious studies, shaped by Bible studies, philologies and the comparative concept of sacred scripture. The fact that people in many traditions relate to religious texts in material, sensory and somatic ways is only gradually coming into academic focus. The panel seeks to overcome judgmental divisions in the discourse of religious experts and in academic thinking such as literate vs. oral cultures, reading vs. seeing/feeling, text vs. image, “intellectual” text interpretation vs. “superstitious” text practices and religion vs. magic. In order to develop this field of study we use the perspectives of material/visual religion and aesthetics of religion. Analyzing material from diverse regions and epochs, theoretical questions of efficacy, literacy and somatics of material text practices are discussed. The panel explores the worlds of sensory phenomena in text practices and considers the dynamic constellation of religion, sensation and materiality.

Kristina Myrvold: Drinking the guru’s transformative words: uses of amrit in Sikh religious practices

In Sikh religious traditions there are various practices of using amrit, that is, sweetened water that has been consecrated by recitations of compositions from the scripture Guru Granth. Usually the term refers to the blessed nectar-water given to neophytes during the initiation ceremony of Khalsa, when a person adopts a normative Sikh identity. However, in living practices it also implies a whole range of consecrated waters that are attributed transformative powers. This paper examines how different types of amrit are believed to produce various effects on people, depending upon textual and contextual factors during the process of transforming ordinary water to nectar, including the identity of the agent preparing amrit, ritual spaces and instruments, and dispositions among

recipients. The transformative powers ascribed to particular waters are intimately connected with semantic properties of the recited scriptural hymns or what these hymns have come to represent in the broader Sikh tradition.

Hanna Nieber: The body reading the dissolved Qur'an

When Qur'anic verses, sometimes supplemented with certain names, drawings, or numbers, are written with saffron ink and then washed off with water, this water in Swahili is referred to as *kombe* and healing powers are attached to it. The written word – the picture of the text – which has taken considerable time and knowledge to prepare is not legible to the eye anymore, but the body can absorb the liquid and then be affected by it. The body “reads” a “formless script”. This paper, based on ethnographic fieldwork in Zanzibar, views the practice of drinking *kombe* as a sensational form and investigates how different actors value or disapprove of this practice due to its sensuousness. It aims to highlight how the afflicted body is conceptualized in the argumentations with respect to its relation to the imbued script. The paper draws on the materiality both of the body and of text in its specific Swahili context.

Katharina Wilkens: Drinking the Qur'an as modern practice

Protection and healing have been sought through a number of material text practices throughout Islamic history. Efficacy is guaranteed by the sacred reality of the Book embodied through air and water. While these practices (classified as *sihir*, permitted magic, in Islamic theology) have been discussed as contagious magic in academic literature, I am interested in relating the interconnectedness of scriptural and medical practice with a view to such questions as popularity, efficacy and viability over time. The comparable Alpine Catholic tradition of swallowing small paper copies of a miraculous Madonna at a pilgrimage site did not survive into the second half of the twentieth century. Qur'anic scriptural practices can thus be interpreted within the framework of multiple modernities in which medicine and scripture do not present an insurmountable antinomy.

Isabel Laack: Sensing sacred reality in Aztec divination codices

The ancient Aztecs (Mexico, thirteenth to sixteenth century) used a system of written visual communication combining elements both of “writing” and of “art”, producing something between our categories of “text” and “image.” Analyzing the material text practices around divination codices such as the *Codex Borbonicus*, the paper seeks to explore how the Aztecs used this visual medium to communicate their knowledge about the workings of sacred reality perceived as the materially present and sensorially experienced essence of all things. According to my interpretative thesis, the divination codices depicted rather than represented aspects of this sacred reality, thus showing an approach to visuality and writing that has fundamental consequences for the processes of “reading” and interpreting these “texts”.

James W. Watts: Ritualizing possession of iconic books

Drawing on recent comparative studies of material scriptures and iconic texts (Myrvold 2010; Watts 2013), I will survey ritual practices of “possessing” sacred texts. For many people, having a scripture or other iconic book in one’s possession provides prestige and spiritual merit. Devotees without the resources to become scholars or expert readers can nevertheless ritualize a scripture iconically. They therefore ritualize their possession of books by collecting, carrying, displaying, and even ingesting them, among many other practices. Many owners of scriptures feel particularly impelled to protect them from pollution and desecration. Particularly rare or distinctive texts may get treated as relics on analogy with bodily relics. Iconic books convey social legitimacy to their owners, whether they are individuals, a community, a tradition or an institution. By claiming a scripture as their own, communities and individuals assert the right to determine its meaning and on that basis to judge each other’s orthodoxy. Carrying them on one’s person and in portraits claims association with inspired authority and shows one’s learning, piety, and orthodoxy. The stereotypical images of certain books of scripture have therefore come to represent entire religious traditions as much as any other symbols.

S. Brent Plate: Response

Dynamics of Politics and Religions: Beyond a “Standard Model” of Secularization

Panel Chair: Karsten Lehmann

The Academic Study of Religions is witnessing a fundamental reconfiguration of the debates on what is frequently described as the “secularization paradigm”. The 2000s and 2010s were dominated by an increasing debate on notions such as de-secularization (Peter Berger), re-enchantment (Christopher Partridge), or the “resurgence of religions” (Martin Riesebrodt). In a most recent article, the English sociologist of religions David Martin opened a new dimension for those debates. He made the point that even those new debates are basically reproducing the main structure of what he describes as the “standard model” of secularization – which is characterized by the basic bipolarity of the secular and the religious. Along those lines, internationally renowned scholars of religions such as Linda Woodhead, Detlef Pollack, José Casanova, and Francois Gauthier have been arguing for a stronger historization of the very notion of secularization. In a number of publications (such as *Religion and Change in Modern Britain/2012*; *Umstrittene Säkularisierung/2012*; *Europas Angst vor der Religion/2013*; *Religion in the Neoliberal Age/2013*), they argue that it is necessary to go

beyond the mere dualism of “the religious” and “the secular”, and to find a new terminology to adequately describe the respective processes. The panel at hand wants to follow this avenue by adding a comparative dimension to the respective debates. It wants to start from the general critique of the “standard model” of secularization. On this basis it intends to discuss to what an extent terminologies that go beyond the standard model can be developed in different cultural contexts.

Ansgar Jödicke: Beyond the “standard model” in the South Caucasus?

Both the standard model of secularization and the alternative models of a revival of religion do not fit to the recent developments of religion in the new independent states of the South Caucasus. On the basis of fieldwork in Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia, I argue that a secular political self-understanding is still dominant in all three countries, although religion has doubtlessly gained more influence in politics and society. This theoretical dilemma can be solved when we analyze religion at different social levels such as personal religiosity, organizational authority, interactions with politics etc. I will discuss the relationship between these levels in my contribution.

Weigang Chen: Beyond the “standard model” in China?

The powerful resurgence of religion in the post-Cold War world forces a major rethink of the “standard model of secularization” and, in so doing, puts the Huntingtonian paradigm of the “clash of civilizations” at the heart of current discussions on global politics. It is this neo-Weberian position the present paper proposes to challenge. Drawing on the historical and conceptual linkage between Confucian Marxism in China and liberation theology in Latin America, it concurs with José Casanova in arguing that a radical reinterpretation of the “public” roles of religion holds the key to a formation of civil society that goes beyond the limits of Western liberal democracy.

Karsten Lehmann: Beyond the “standard model” in global contexts

Throughout the last two decades, globalization theory has established itself as one of the most significant theoretical frameworks in the Academic Study of Religions. The present paper argues that a globalization perspective can also contribute to a better understanding/critique of the “standard model” of secularization. On the basis of an in-depth analysis of modern human rights discourses, it shows to what an extent these discourses have become more and more hybrid. Since the establishment of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), human rights discourses have accumulated multi-fold religious and secular layers. This is not only central to the understanding of present-day human rights. It also adds a significant dimension to the discussions of the panel.

Kim Knott: Response

Dynamics of Religion and Cultural Evolution

Hubert Seiwert

Opening Keynote and Gary Lease Memorial Lecture

The theme of this conference “Dynamics of Religions: Past and Present” can be understood as just another term for religious change, whose past and present forms are traditionally studied by the history and the sociology of religions. A more specific understanding of “dynamics” focuses on the effects religions have on the evolution of human cultures. In this lecture, culture is conceived of as the environment of human activity that has been produced and is continuously reproduced by humans. Since whatever can be studied as “religion” has been produced by humans, religions are part of the cultural environment, which includes both material and immaterial artefacts. Cultural evolution – being a cumulative process marked by the reproduction and modification of the cultural environment – is therefore affected by those products of human activity that are objects of the study of religions. It will be explained that their effects contribute both to the maintenance of the cultural environment and to its modification. Empirical examples to illustrate the dynamics of religions and cultural evolution will mainly be taken from the history of religions in China, past and present.

Dynamics of Religion in Pakistani Society

Panel Chair: Syed Furrukh Zad Ali Shah

This panel intends to discuss the dynamics of religion in Pakistan. The four participants focus on various aspects to develop an understanding of a country which is famous for being the heir of first human settlements – with a rich history, reflective of a diverse Indo-oriental culture, carrying different Islamic religious expressions – and a modern nation-state facing challenges of governance, globalization and modernity. The first participant shall highlight the changing patterns of “madrasa education”, which have been vigorously resisted in the past; the second paper intends to explain the religious transformation on social media and its consequences; the last paper shall look into the changing patterns of local politics, with emerging cultural patterns being subsumed under appeals to religion. All these are broadly linked to various aspects of the politics and discourse of religion from four different angles but ultimately creating an understandable pattern.

Misbah-Ur Rehman: From resistance to reforms: religious education in Pakistani madrasas in the aftermath of 9/11

Traditional Islamic institutions, the madrasas, are under intense scrutiny due to their apparent linkages with terrorism. It is being argued that madrasa pedagogy produces fanaticism and intolerance, which are detrimental to pluralism and multicultural reality. More often than not, the assertion has been that madrasas have become factories for global jihadis and a breeding ground for terrorism. Thus, in Pakistan and Afghanistan they have been linked to the rise of the Taliban (a Persian/Pashto plural of “talib”, a student of madrasa). The curriculum taught in Pakistani madrasas is an evolved version of the standardized teaching developed by Mulla Nizam al-Din of Lucknow (d. 1748), called Dars-i Nizami after its founder, consisting of texts written mostly during the twelfth to fifteenth centuries. With minor changes, this curriculum continues to be taught in religious institutions until today. In order to counter the “narrow mindset of medieval ages”, there have been several attempts to reform this curriculum. The first attempt was in 1962 and another one in 1979 but none of them could achieve their aims. The events of September 11 created an increased interest in these institutions on a global level and the process of reform accelerated. Though attempts made by the then military ruler Pervez Musharraf did not succeed, the changing environment forced many of the madrasa officials to change their perspective about reforms and a new movement of “reforms from within” appeared. Currently, the curriculum itself is untouched, but madrasa officials have agreed to introduce 2–5 years of “secular curriculum” before students start their “religious curriculum”. The current paper will analyze these reforms locating them in the changing political environment.

Bilal Rana: The social Ghazwa: extremist and counter-extremist Islamic discourses in Pakistani social media

Social media has provided users with an interactive space for discussions. The emergence of new media technologies is changing the premises of discussion about Islam. Pakistani social media has become a new arena for discussion and interaction among extremists and moderate Muslim voices. Muslims as content producers on social media are engaged in discussions about Islam and its multiple interpretations. Marginalized voices have gained a new platform to challenge the dominating discourse of Islam in Pakistan. Scholars have recently focused on the role of social media in propagating or resisting Islamic extremism in Pakistan. This study will conduct a qualitative meta-analysis of existing literature on extremists and counter-extremist discourses in the social media of Pakistan. This study will conceptualize the academic and main stream work on diversified Muslim discourses in the social media of Pakistan. The purpose is to point out the gaps within the literature and set an agenda for future research.

Hussain Muhammad: Religion, music and mass mobilization by PTI: transformation of political culture in Pakistan

The emergence of Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaaf (PTI) or "Pakistan Movement for Justice" as a strong political force since October 2011 brought about significant changes in the political landscape of the country. Using the slogan of "Change", PTI succeeded in soliciting support from certain new segments and strata of society. Despite having a strong presence in the newly emerging social media, PTI could not ignore the importance of large political gatherings for securing and showing political strength. PTI used new devices, coined new political vocabulary and introduced a new style for mobilizing its enthusiastic supporters/activists in public gatherings in different cities of Pakistan. They employed an unusual combination of religious jargon and live music at their rallies. The response of the young participants, both male and female, with dancing and singing gives a unique shape to these meetings. The trend has been significant both for politics in general and for the tradition of right wing politics in Pakistan in particular. This new pattern of blending music, singing and dancing with political speeches, however, attracted sharp criticism from Pakistan's traditional religious establishment. The trend is seen to be a departure from Pakistan's so-called traditional Islamic values of "haya", i.e., modesty, by many religious groups. Though a debatable issue, listening to and playing music is proscribed by many religious clerics in Islam. Similarly, dancing and free mixing of genders is considered to be immodest behavior by them. Terming the political meetings of PTI to be mere "musical concerts" and "dance parties", they accuse Imran Khan of spreading "obscenity", "contaminating" Pakistan's Islamic civilization with "Western" Culture and Civilization and playing into the hands of the "Jewish" lobby. Prominent among the critics of PTI is Jamiat-ul-Ulama-i-Islam (JUI) of Maulana Fazl-ur-Rehman, an important religio-political party of Pakistan. Maulana Fazl-ur-Rehman and Imran Khan have emerged to be arch rivals in Pakistani politics. This is in spite of the fact that like JUI, PTI also maintains the public image of a right wing political party. Analyzing this new pattern of PTI politics and the subsequent negative reaction of various religious groups, from the perspective of adaptation and transformation through which Pakistani society is passing, poses certain questions. Can these new experiments of PTI be understood in the context of traditional "right" versus "left" wing politics? Or is the ideological division of Pakistani politics and society into "right" and "left" wing no longer valid? How far can the intercultural global exchange be held responsible for the emergence of this new style of PTI politics which employs singing and dancing on a public platform? Can this phenomenon be understood in the paradigm of the Sufi traditions of this region and the harsh criticism of Ulama in the context of traditional Sufi-Ulama rivalry? To what extent can this

trend be an outcome of a non traditional and in varying degrees, a liberal interpretation of the new creed of religious media-savvy preachers? Is the political aspect involving political point scoring and mileage enough to fully explain these developments? How far do these experiments of PTI have the potential to affect political, social and religious changes in Pakistan and in which direction?

The Dynamics of Silent Prayer in Antiquity

Panel Chair: Maik Patzelt

Silent prayer is a religious practice that has been discussed rather ambivalently in ancient discourses. Whereas some ancient authors regard such a practice with scepticism or even as an expression of malevolence and criminality, others treat it quite respectfully and even positively. This panel aims to understand this very ambivalent discourse on silent prayer, which ranges from deviation to idealization. Therefore, Christian and non-Christian authors must be understood as participants in multiple discourses that consequently lead to the assumption that they not only reflect on silent prayers, but rather create their personal interpretations on silent prayers. This panel focuses mainly on the positive interpretations. It seeks to elaborate questions of reinterpretation, innovation and thus of performance, space, social acceptance and experience. In what way was a given tradition of (silent) prayer adapted, transformed or even opposed? Furthermore, which legacies were in use and subsequently produced?

Erika Meyer-Dietrich: Imagined spaces in New Kingdom Egypt

The paper explores the relationship between silent prayer and imagined spaces mainly in the iconographical record. Silent prayer is here taken as a practice in space and time to constitute imagined spaces. As a repetitive practice prayer maintains these spaces and creates a religious knowledge about them. Archaeological finds from Middle Egypt confirm several important changes in prayer practices during the New Kingdom (1550–1069 BCE). The prayer's posture changed. Traditional places for silent communication over ontological borders were abandoned. New symbols were created for the sun as divinity. This paper considers the consequences of these changes. In particular, it will focus on the creation of new places and spaces. Which were the new places to substitute old areas for silent prayer? How did the development of private religious practices becoming a means of social acceptance further the creation of new places? How did the representation of praying persons constitute imagined spaces in an urban environment?

Pieter Willem van der Horst: Unarticulated prayer in early Judaism

Ancient Israel shared with all other nations of the ancient Mediterranean world the custom that prayers were said out loud. In post-biblical Judaism, however, there were right from the start some elements that made for significant difference. For Judaism the most important factor simply was that in the Bible there was a story about Hannah praying in silence which, although being frowned upon by Eli the priest, was heard favorably by God. The paper will discuss the “Wirkungsgeschichte” of this story. It will, however, also deal with other elements that helped create a prayer practice that was different from the dominant custom of prayers said out loud.

Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony: The performance of silent prayer and hidden worship in Eastern Christianity

This paper explores the performance of silent prayer and hidden worship among a variety of Eastern Greek and Syriac authors (fourth to eighth centuries). By focusing on the history of this topic I hope to shift the emphasis in the study of Christian prayer beyond the history of doctrine, and to focus on the practice of inner worship, its inner space and images. I will examine the dynamic of the Greek ascetic literary legacy (fourth to fifth century) and its impact on Syriac Christianity (fifth to eighth century). Above all, this paper asks about the ways in which the teachings and the religious anthropology of Eastern influential authors – Evagrius Ponticus, Mark the Monk, and Pseudo-Dionysius – shaped Syriac thought on silent prayer and hidden worship as reflected in the writings of Isaac of Nineveh (second half of the seventh century), John of Dalyatha and Joseph Hazzaya (eighth century).

Maik Patzelt: The paradox of Seneca’s “mental” prayer

As it seems, praying in ancient Rome was a very loud business, especially during official services to the gods. Thus, it is not surprising that several people were stigmatized as deviant because of their silent prayers. Or should that be surprising? This paper elaborates the most paradoxical case of Seneca within that discourse. He posits his version of a silent prayer against every other style of praying, ironically even including other silent prayers. Regarding the wider discourse, the following points shall be the focus of discussion: How does Seneca attend to the achievement of social acceptance? Does he create a new tradition as the church fathers suggest or does he just position a more or less new practice – or just a new interpretation – within a wider framework of existing praying practices? Which experiences accompany his concept of “mental” prayer? What transfers of sacred spaces occur?

Economy and Religion beyond Neoclassical Economics of Religion

Panel Chair: Alexander Alberts

The distinction between an “economic” and a “religious” sphere in human affairs has proven fruitful and controversial at the same time, in the history as well as historiography and systematic study of religions. Yet, scholars of religion have been rather reluctant to exploit the resulting relationships between “economy” and “religion”. Though some steps have been made towards an “economy of religion” from a religious studies perspective, the field is still predominated by neoclassical economics of religion. Moreover, in religious studies the reception of approaches such as anthropological “*économie religieuse*” and economic sociology is marginal at best. This panel wants to compensate for this imbalance and goes beyond the neoclassical paradigm. It therefore provides an invitation to employ more widely the heuristic distinction between “economy” and “religion”, discussing the application of new institutional economics, Marx’s intrinsic analogy between capital and religion, and finally capitalism as religion.

Christoph Lucas Zapf: A conceptual framework for the economics of religion

The “economics of religion” explores the interplay between religion, economy, and economics. Its interdisciplinary nature leads to a multitude of methods and theories being involved. The paper provides a conceptual framework and a systematical overview of different approaches in the economics of religion while paying special attention to the relationship between economics and the study of religion. A tangible example of how to describe the influence of religion on economic processes (i.e., religion as an independent variable) substantiates the systematization. The paper will argue that the theoretical framework of New Institutional Economics is especially commensurable with a religious studies perspective on the economics of religion. Methodological issues will be discussed by employing a comparative approach and the concept of mental models. The paper opens a perspective on the economics of religion beyond disciplinary constraints and promotes an innovative research approach.

Jens Schlamelcher: Enslaving the creator: analogies of religion and capital in the early and late works of Karl Marx

What are the differences between “economy” and “religion”? How can we grasp the relation between these two “spheres”, “fields” or “functional systems”? These questions are still paramount in the sociology of religion. Recent approaches such as proposed in the new paradigm of economics of religion tend to deny any differences between them, conceiving religion as just another “market”. As this paper will show, the classic Karl Marx has found more subtle an-

swers to these questions. This presentation aims to revisit his insights and show the intrinsic analogies between religion and capital in his theory. Marx never questioned Feuerbach's thesis of religion as a human invention resulting in subordination. However, he revealed that capital functions in precisely the same way on a material plane. Secondly, Marx proved that capitalist modes of exploitation can, due to their generic production of "false consciousness", ignore religion as a primary justification for material exploitation. Thus, Marx offers an understanding of both modernity and re-sacralization at the same time.

Alexander Alberts: Capitalism as religion? A typology of a convoluted comparison

For over 150 years, writers, theologians and scholars have sought to compare the striving for monetary profit (and its justification by *laissez-faire*) to religion ("capitalism as religion", abbr. CAR). According to CAR, elements commonly understood as belonging to the economic system of society (e.g. capitalism, money) are in fact intrinsically religious. This (mostly normative) discourse has received little attention from scholars of religion up till now. Its function, inner motives and axioms remain unstudied. Promoting a systematic analysis of CAR, this paper proposes a typology of the major distinctions operative in CAR's topoi. Inspired by sociological systems theory, it refrains from interpreting CAR in terms of a causal history of ideas. Rather, it adopts a perspective based on distinction theory and Luhmann's evolution of ideas. From this analysis the paper concludes with a critique of CAR.

Embedding Religions: Converting Figures and Conversion Stories

Panel Chair: Carmen Meinert

The panel presents the ongoing work of the interdisciplinary group "Buddhism in Motion" on conversion narratives. Stories about the conversion of communities are understood as analytical instruments to investigate ways of "making sense" of the introduction of a religion in a specific region. The objective of the papers presented at this panel is twofold: an investigation of the object-language level, and of the meta-language level. Firstly, papers aim at characterizing the dialectics of conversion accounts with respect to: (1) agent(s) of conversion and the strategies implemented; (2) justification of the propagation of the religious faith; (3) description of the converted other; and (4) repercussions of the conversion. As narrated reconstructions of the past, conversion stories are not merely an expression of the agenda of a religious community but also of dynam-

ics which go beyond the religious field. It is these underlying strings that the group seeks to unravel as a second step.

Robert Mayer: Padmasambhava and the Buddhist conversion of Tibet
The mythology surrounding the figure of Padmasambhava, the tantric hero famed for his role in converting Tibet to Buddhism in the eighth century, expresses many aspects of Tibetan self-representation, ranging from an uncivilized land of barbarians up to the arrival of Buddhism in the golden age of the Tibetan Empire. The stories connect Padmasambhava's deeds with a process of historical destiny, the creation of a sacred geography of Tibet, and with ongoing various religious themes. Features of the narratives are explored: developments over the generations, and contrasting versions favored by different groups, or the same group in different contexts. Padmasambhava is in fact not seen so much as an historical culture hero, but rather as a buddha with endless manifestations, so the narratives are never fixed, and remain alive with unlimited possibilities for new permutations. The Bon – the religious rivals – developed their own counter-narratives as well.

Stephen Eskildsen: Bodhidharma: bringer of the true dharma to China
Although Bodhidharma was active roughly 500 years after the introduction of Buddhism to China, he came to be touted as a heroic figure who converted Chinese Buddhists to authentic Buddhism for the first time. In Chan Buddhist sources this “authentic” Dharma is defined largely by austere discipline, meditation and wisdom that is “beyond words and letters”. However, as we shall see, Daoist sources indicate that his name also came to be associated with the transmission of “embryonic breathing” methods, or of methods for anticipating death and navigating through the intermediate state. Certain late imperial texts would maintain that the authentic Buddha Dharma transmitted by Bodhidharma was none other than the Internal Alchemy meditation of the Daoist Quanzhen tradition, and that Chinese Buddhists after Bodhidharma needed to be converted to the True Dharma once again.

Lisa Wevelsiep: Bringing Buddhism back to its homeland: narrating the (Re-)introduction of Buddhism in Bangladesh

Sources about Buddhism in the region of today's Bangladesh are scarce, but in most accounts the import of a new lineage from Arakan in the middle of the nineteenth century stands out as a central incident. Narrations about this intra-religious conversion usually take a quite standardized form, placing the monk Sāramedha and a return to a “true” vinaya-based Theravada Buddhism at the center of the story. The narration evokes a certain picture about the state of Buddhism as perceived before the reformation and as envisioned ideally for the future. By looking at this story with respect to the question how this narrative is informed by connections to other movements of reorientation in the

global Buddhist world and colonial encounters at this time, the case study gives less insight into what happened at this moment historically, but elaborates how Bangladeshi Buddhists situate themselves in a web of other narrations.

Licia di Giaconti: When Laozi travelled to the West: fictive conversions in medieval Daoist narratives

One of the most famous stories in the medieval Buddhho-Daoist interplay describes the travels of Laozi from China to India and the conversion of the “Barbarians” (huahu). Medieval sources (third to seventh century CE) contain many accounts of or allusions to this narrative. The paper shall briefly summarize the development of the story and discuss the religious history of the Santian neijie jing and the complex religious geography of the Taiqing jinye shendan jing. The main point here is to draw attention to those motifs that are not easily understood within a “nation-state” paradigm (= China versus foreigners).

The Emergence of Buddhism, Christianity and Islam: Old Problem, New Perspectives

Panel Chair: Jan N. Bremmer

In recent years important developments have taken place that are transforming, or already have done so, our understanding of the earliest phases of Buddhism, Christianity and Islam. Regarding Buddhism the discoveries of much earlier texts than known so far have given us a series of texts of which the impact may well be compared to that of the Dead Sea Scrolls on the study of Second temple Judaism. In the analysis of especially second-century Christianity recent studies have not only re-dated important witnesses, but also paid much attention to the rise of the notions of “heresy” and “canon”. Finally, in the study of Islam scholars have started to re-evaluate our earliest notices about Muhammad and the Qur’an, as exemplified by the work of Patricia Crone. The aim of this panel is to evaluate these new developments and thus to arrive at new insights in the emergence of these world religions by focusing on the new developments but also on problems like canonization, the transition from oral to written sources as well as the process of religious authority.

Jan N. Bremmer: The rise of Christianity: old problems, new perspectives
In recent years there has been much attention to early Christianity, yet its rise still remains rather enigmatic. In my contribution I intend to concentrate on the second century. In recent years we have witnessed pleas for re-dating important textual witnesses, such as the Letters of Ignatius and the Martyrdom of Polycarp, for re-evaluating the role of Marcion, for paying more attention to the Apocryphal Acts, as well as for critical discussions of notions such as “heresy” and

“canon”. To what extent do these new developments change or confirm the more traditional views of the rise of Christianity?

Einar Thomassen: New perspectives on Islamic origins

The emergence of a religion is a matter of theoretical interest in itself. In addition to looking at new sources, my paper will attempt a comparative analysis of the formation processes of Christianity and Islam with the help of such categories as orthodoxy and heresy, the canonization and function of Scripture, and the establishment and nature of religious authority. The similarities and the differences between the two religions in these regards are equally interesting. It should also be possible to make generalizations about successive stages in the formation processes, which in both religions took more than three hundred years to reach an equilibrium.

Jens-Uwe Hartman: Monks, money, and manuscripts: reflections on the fast growth of Buddhism in India

The date of the Buddha is still disputed, and no less disputed are the original content of his teaching and the early growth and development of his movement. The complete absence of sources, be they written or archaeological, for at least one or two centuries after the death of the Buddha encourages models which are highly speculative. However, amazing manuscript finds of the last twenty years provide a starting point for a fresh appraisal of that development, and they also shed new light on the important implications of the transition from an oral to a written transmission of the Buddhist lore.

Emotion as a Dynamic in Religious Practices in Antiquity

Panel Chair: Esther Eidinow

Emotion is a vital aspect of religious practice and often the force that establishes or transforms religious traditions. Indeed, interest in emotion spans the natural sciences, social sciences, and the humanities and thus provides an ideal stage for interdisciplinary examinations of human experience. This panel explores emotion as a dynamic in three religious traditions: ancient Greek magic, Second Temple Judaism, and formative Christianity. All three papers will examine the benefits and limitations of applying these theoretical approaches to understanding the cognitive components of emotion to the analysis of ancient religious practices and discourses.

Esther Eidinow: Metaphors to maim by

The texts in the corpus of ancient Greek binding spells show that occult aggression in this ancient culture was distinctively phrased: verbs of registering, dedicating, immobilizing, and above all binding are all found in the ritual formulae.

The general intent behind such constructions is relatively clear, and yet, for all the recent work on these spells, the question of how or why these particular terms were employed remains unanswered. In order to explore this aspect, this paper uses conceptual integration theory to examine and offer an explanation for the metaphor of binding in these spells, building on Sørensen's work on cognitive approaches to magic. It suggests that these metaphorical associations help to explain the power apparently attributed to these spells, by refining our understanding of the motivations of those using them, and the expectations of their effects on the victim.

Angela Kim Harkins: Emotional communities in the Second Temple period: the pro-social instrumentalization of affect after the exile

The Second Temple period is marked by penitential prayers which were often combined with rituals of mourning. Prose prayers written in the first person with petitionary and confessional elements are said to have been performed by highly esteemed individuals (e.g. Moses, Solomon, Ezra, Judith). I propose that the ritual arousal of emotion from both the phenomenal experiences of performing mourning rites and also from the discursive practice of reciting confession of sins and petitions contributed to, but cannot wholly account for, the emergence of a religious subjectivity that served various pro-social purposes. This strategic arousal of emotion allowed communities, after the rupture of the exile (586 BCE), to establish continuity with the past by recovering a first-hand experience of foundational events. The displays of grief can act as costly displays and credibility-enhancing displays, thus moving a community to deepen their commitment and heighten their receptivity to common goals and covenant renewal.

Kristyna Kubonova: Transition, transformation, transmission: Blood libel from the perspective of the Cognitive Science of Religion

Blood libel has been traditionally studied within historical discourses, by using mostly comparative or descriptive methods, which are on the one hand important for elemental understanding of the phenomenon but lack on the other hand possibility of going beyond their own limits. However, Cognitive Science of Religion provides different methods, tools and perspectives which seem to enable a deeper insight into the blood libel phenomenon and open a wider room for scientific discussion. To support this assertion I would like to present a conference paper on Dan Sperber's concept of culturally transmitted misbeliefs and its applicability to the blood libel phenomenon, specifically to the Leopold Hilsner's case (also known as Hilsner Affair or Polna Affair) which took place in Bohemia at the turn of nineteenth/twentieth century and was specific in many ways.

Emotions, Bodies, Experience

Catherine Hinault: From cloistered asceticism to Callisthenics: the emergence of a Protestant health ethic among French Canadians of evangelical obedience in late nineteenth to early twentieth century Quebec

In the heyday of French-speaking Protestantism in Quebec (1880–1920), French Canadian Protestants, together with some of their liberal-minded Catholic – at least nominally – French Canadian “close connections,” used *L’Aurore*, the interdenominational French Protestant weekly, as a soapbox to advance the reformation of French Canadian society, which they viewed as fettered by clerico-nationalism of the ultramontane variety and thus enfeebled, among other ills, by toxic Catholic representations of the body. Using hygienic teachings, an integral part of Anglo-Protestant late nineteenth-century culture, as their main battering ram, they endeavored to push back the walls of this Catholic habitus while carrying out an attitudinal reterritorialization of the body complete with muscular Christianity, prophylaxis, temperance, or homeopathy. As well as being a projecting screen for modernist aspirations fleshed out by a Protestant ethos, the French Protestant body appeared at times geared up to become some sort of “cultural capital,” as envisaged by Bourdieu.

Emese Berzsenyi: The representation of the historical development of disability in the major religions

In my dissertation “The representation of the historical development of disability in major religions”, I explore the history of disability from the perspective of a historian of religion. I examine the history of disability in the context of the social sciences and religious studies, and in light of the different cultures and civilizations influenced by the major religions. Disability History has only become a stand-alone discipline in recent years. Even though the topic had been examined in many different ways previously, it was always subjected to the values and interests of other disciplines. This led to the situation that nowadays crucial fragments of research on the topic can be found in almost any discipline, yet little, if any, attempt has been made to collect and unite these fragments into cohesive works. Due to my research being carried out at the University of Vienna I mainly focus on German literature.

Takako Okinaga: Bioethics for decision support on end-of-life care
In this presentation, I discuss the outlook of “Advance Care Planning (ACP)” in Japan, with attention to the dilemma of life-prolonging treatment in end-of-life care, which has been questioned by the study of bioethics. ACP is the development and expression of the wishes of a person nearing the end of life, with the goal of discussions with family and friends with whom the person has a relationship, and may involve health care providers and/or lawyers who may prepare

wills and powers of attorney. In ACP, a substitute decision maker is also appointed. This presentation aims to explore the current situation of Advance Directives (AD), Living Will (LW) and decision making in Japan, based on a survey involving questionnaires to 1,000 adults. Based on such a survey, I would like to consider how to support the decision making in end-of-life care in Japan.

Empirical Case-Studies of Continuity, Transition, and Discontinuity in the Context of Asceticism

Panel Chair: Anders Klostergaard Petersen

The panel presents four internally very different empirical case-studies of continuity, transition, and discontinuity in the context of the study of asceticism. Asceticism has traditionally mostly been examined in terms of self-rejection, self-renunciation and self-privation, but based on a more comprehensive notion – in the wake of Peter Sloterdijk – of askésis as programs of training. The four papers aim to develop a broader basis for the scrutinization of asceticism from a cross-cultural perspective. Rather than relegating asceticism to the study of Christian monasticism and some Eastern religious practices, the papers focus on four very different cases that simultaneously reflect forms of asceticism found in different types of religion. Asceticism is examined both in terms of a way of life as well as in the ritual context of self-privation. The shared theoretical frame of reference of the four papers allows for a discussion between the four empirical case-studies.

Bjarne Wernicke Olesen: Mapping medieval Śākta tantric traditions: on the conceptual modelling in the study of Hindu “Śāktism” and some characteristic ascetic developments in medieval India

In medieval India, or what Alexis Sanderson has called the “Saiva Age”, from roughly the sixth to the thirteenth century, influential tantric ascetic traditions underwent a development from concerns about the detachment from worldly desires to the detachment from cosmic opposites and a renewed interest in worldly aims. This development pertaining to the concerns of tantric ascetics as well as tantric householders corresponds with a well-known development from dualism to feminine monism. This paper will discuss some of the characteristics of these “Śākta” ascetic developments with an emphasis on cultural evolution and will examine some of the challenges we face with respect to the critical, analytical and tradition-external conceptual modelling of what has become known as Hindu “Śāktism” or the “Śākta tantric traditions”.

Johanne Louise Virenfeldt Christiansen: Ascetic practices in the Qur'an: the vigil as a case study

Asceticism is an important concept in the study of religion, but the Qur'an and early Islam have often been ignored in these discussions. The Qur'an does contain positive descriptions of ascetics (Q5:82) and ascetic practices like fasting (Q2:183–187), but a polemical tone is also intoned against those who exaggerate such practices (Q9:31–34; 17:26–27). Does this ambiguity render the concept of asceticism irrelevant with respect to the Qur'an? I suggest that Sloterdijk's definition of *áskesis* as "exercise" may be useful for understanding Qur'anic references to vigils. From a reading of *sūrat l-muzzammil* (Q73:1–9, 20), I argue that Qur'anic articulations of vigils should be considered as articulations of a "training program" intended not only as refrainment from sleep and time but also as a way to maintain the believer's level of training. In this way, the Qur'an may be seen to participate in the broader ascetic tendencies of late antiquity.

Søren Feldtfos Thomsen: Protestant monasticism: the ascetic ideal in Danish devotional literature after the Reformation

In this paper I explore the Protestant marital household as a space for the continuation and transformation of Christian monasticism after the Reformation. Tracing the ascetic ideal of medieval monasticism in a number of vernacular devotional titles from sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Denmark, I argue that Protestant devotional authors implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) drew on a monastic ideal of communal life upon which they modeled not only private religious practice but also the marital household as such. Inspired by Weber's concept of "inner-worldly asceticism" and more recent discussions of asceticism by Gavin Flood and Peter Sloterdijk, I demonstrate how Protestant devotional texts served as a medium for the intensified "sacralization" of the domestic sphere and its social relations in early modern lay religious culture. This included not only an appropriation of monastic ritual practice and social hierarchy, but also of the monastic notion of manual labor as a form of asceticism.

Ella Paldam: Ascetic practices in contemporary Chumash ceremony: refrainment as a ritual strategy in the revitalization of indigenous beliefs and practices Since the late 1960s, cultural revitalization of indigenous beliefs and practices has occurred among indigenous peoples all over North America. Among the Chumash Indians in southern California, very little coherent information about pre-colonial religion exists, and the community has been Catholic for generations. Nevertheless, religiosity and spirituality has been at the core of cultural revitalization since it began, but due to the lack of sources, it has been a process of "building the ship as it sails along." Ascetic practices such as fasting, sweat-lodging, and other types of refrainment immediately became an integral part of ceremony. In this paper, I explore the origins and gradual change in ascetic prac-

tices among the Chumash. Additionally I pose the question of how the insights from this case may be located within the larger theoretical framework of Sloterdijk's approach to asceticism.

Empirical Examinations of Asceticism from the Perspective of Cultural Evolution

Panel Chair: Anders Klostergaard Petersen

In the wake of renewed interest in cultural evolution – associated with Bellah and Eisenstadt – this panel focuses on the phenomenon of asceticism from a cultural evolutionary perspective. Whereas the first two papers are concerned with empirical analyses of asceticism in the religious context of late Second Temple Judaism and formative Islam, the last two papers – in continuity of Sloterdijk – extend the phenomenon to include wider cultural phenomena such as art. All four papers share Sloterdijk's understanding of *áskesis* as programs of training. It is on the basis of such an admittedly more comprehensive concept of asceticism that we are able to include not only various forms of religiously motivated bodily self-renunciation but also, for instance, art. Through the various examples provided we shall examine asceticism in terms of continuity, transformation, and discontinuity. Thereby, the panel covers all four of the central themes of the World Congress.

Sif Egede: Asceticism as martyrdom: excessive *askesis* in the context of late Second Temple Judaism

In Bellah's concept of the Axial Age, renunciation from the world constitutes a prevalent feature. The devaluation of the earth and concomitantly worldly goods correlates to a parallel change in religious life style. Although periodic ascetic practices such as fasting are mentioned in the Hebrew Bible, asceticism comes to the fore of the discussion in the first century BCE story of the mother and her seven sons in 2 Maccabees. Convinced of other-worldly life, they exemplify the ultimate ascetic action: martyrdom. Contrary to other contemporaneous ascetic movements, these ascetics are not depicted as merely renouncing their daily lives as a consequence of a philosophical and religious devaluation of the world. They are sacrificing their lives for the sake of the Torah. The narratives about this radical form of self-sacrifice serve to glorify extreme asceticism in late Second Temple Judaism – at least so in the context of 2 and 4 Maccabees.

Mette Bjerregaard Mortensen: Asceticism in the early extra-Quranic tradition

Based on Weber's typology of authority (from charismatic to traditional and institutional authority), I consider the phenomenon of asceticism in the context of

formative Islam. The underlying idea is that there is an intrinsic relationship between the emergence of particular forms of genre and specific types of authority. Whereas the Quran is predominantly epitomizing a charismatic type of authority, the subsequent emergence of a vast body of extra-Quranic literature (hadith and sirah) is indicative of the transition towards a traditional form of authority. The more distant Muhammad becomes as founder of the new religious movement, the more important is the need for retaining the traditions of Muhammad in terms of biography (sirah) and as a model to be emulated (hadith). Both elements exhibit the transition to a traditional form of authority and the evolvement of ascetic practices (most explicitly in the hadith literature).

Anders Klostergaard Petersen: Asceticism in the transition from religion to art: bridging the gap between asceticism in the context of religion in particular and in the context of culture in general

Traditionally, asceticism is conceived of as a religious phenomenon. In the wake of Peter Sloterdijk, however, one may examine it as a far more prevalent phenomenon disseminated with the emergence of early modernity to wider and semi-autonomous sectors of culture such as education, sports and arts. In order to account for this process of increased diffusion, I shall apply a cultural evolutionary perspective that will allow us to account for the continuity in and of ascetic practices, on the one hand, and the discontinuity in terms of the emergence of secular forms of asceticism, on the other hand. Operating with a macro-perspective that takes us back to the emergence of utopian or axial age forms of religion in antiquity, I shall consider the phenomenon in terms of a continuum at which we for obvious analytical purposes may impose various caesura that, simultaneously, will enable us to account for important transformations.

Lieke Wijnia: Transforming art into programs of training: self-staging in contemporary art

The contemporary art scene offers a relevant field to be explored in the framework of asceticism as programs of training (Sloterdijk). This applies not least to the most influential current of performance art. This paper highlights the work of Serbian artist Marina Abramovic (1946). Since her first performance in the early 1970s, Abramovic has tested and explored physical and mental boundaries, her own as well as those of her audiences. While continuously demanding committed involvement, her long-duration works have seen a remarkable transition in character, from physical to mental intensity. In performances like *The Artist is Present* (2010) and *512 Hours* (2014), Abramovic not only creates the conditions for her own self-staging but also for that of the audience members. I explore the dual character of performance art as a contemporary form of asceticism by examining how the performances offer a mode of training for both the artist and the audience.

“Empty Secrets”, “True Mysteries” and Causes for Concealment: Approaches to Religious Secrecy and the Public

Panel Chair: Egil Asprem, Christiane Königstedt

Georg Simmel is often invoked as a pioneer of the notion of the “empty secret”: the sociological form and function of secrecy are independent of its content, and can operate even in the absence of actual secrets. But how arbitrary is the relation between content and form really? Focusing on “religious secrecy” and the public, this panel addresses different aspects of the relation between the form, function, and content of secrecy: the reasons and aims of religious groups, who adopt secretive communication and organizational strategies; how these reasons relate to specific contents, to other organizational purposes, and to public perceptions and biases. And further, how these secretive strategies are represented and perceived in the public sphere, creating novel speculations about the secret’s content as well as the intentions behind secretive behavior. Reconceptualizing the relation between form and content may help us better understand the dynamic cultural productivity of secrecy and attempts to unveil it.

Christiane Königstedt: The paradox of “exoteric secrecy” and contemporary spirituality

Having developed from counterculture to a broader public phenomenon since the 1970s, the former “New Age” cannot only be regarded as a special form of contemporary religion, but also as a paradoxical case of “exoteric” secrecy. The wide availability of its religio-spiritual contents is accompanied by somewhat shared, but rather unspecified, myths about a profound change of the universe and of human life. Within the milieu, spiritual experiences remain very personal and are not revealed to everyone. Further, constellations of asymmetric knowledge distribution, as in teacher-pupil or “magician”-client relationships, constitute a staple characteristic within the empirical field. This raises several questions concerning “religious secrecy” to be investigated here, above all: what is public in different contexts, what is hidden, and why? Or, in a broader framework: what kind of dynamic relations with other forms of knowledge in society do “secretive areas” indicate, and how important is (within the case under discussion here) the notion of “empty secrets” and accusations thereof as a reaction from critics?

Egil Asprem: Travelling secrets: reflections on the epidemiology of secretive representations

The essential lack of transparency regarding both the content of concealed knowledge and the causes for adopting strategies of dissimulation enables intriguing dynamics of cultural creativity and meaning-making. There is ample historical evidence (e.g. in conspiracy theories, discourses on “mystery cults,” “spiritual alchemy,” etc.), that the use of secretive techniques for quite specific,

practical ends can trigger innovative speculations on profound esoteric secrets that were never there, along with novel ideas concerning the rationale for secrecy. We can better understand this dynamic by drawing on the epidemiology of representations pioneered by Dan Sperber. The key theoretical problem of an epidemiology of secrecy is to explain why, how, and in what sense secrets, which on the face of it are about restricting public communication, can become powerful cultural entities that are transmitted through larger populations. This paper explores secrecy as a form of meta-representation that produces “relevant mysteries,” affording salient but divergent inferences in different social and cultural contexts, which account for the cultural and religious productivity of secretive representations.

Chrystal Vanel: Secrecy in Mormonism: from separation to speculation

Mormonism is a strongly proselytizing religion, with more than 80,000 young full-time missionaries worldwide, and a sophisticated communications network in both old and new media. But Mormonism is also a secretive religion. While its chapels are wide open to the public and all its members, its temples are only open to the most faithful Mormons. Through secret (“sacred”) rituals, they can hope for deification in the afterlife and be married for “time and eternity.” It is possible that the top Mormon leadership may undergo even more secretive rites. Mormon secrecy solidifies a particular Mormon community, distancing Mormons from others, as they are united by common secrets. But those secrets also generate speculation from journalists, critics, and certain Christian groups. The same can be said of Mormon finances, which typically are not communicated to the faithful, nor the public.

The Environmentalist Turn in Religions: Religious Communities in Society, Adaptation and Transformation; Practices and Discourses, Innovation and Tradition

Panel Chair: Carrie B. Dohé

Anthropogenic climate change and overuse of natural resources are the major crises facing humanity today. Given the global scope of these problems, individuals and communities around the world seek to contribute to their solution. This includes religious actors. In this panel, scholars researching Christianity in Denmark and Germany, Buddhism in Germany, Afro-Cuban religious traditions, Islam in Chicago, and Chinese popular religion in Taiwan explore how specific religious communities and institutions are adapting to cultural change wrought by environmental degradation and climate change and investigate the mechanisms and agents of religious innovation. They consider what sources religious

actors draw on to develop their own religiously-specific environmental ethics and practice, and the resistance they face by others who do not support the environmentalist turn in their religion. The scholars examine both religions that have traditionally separated humanity from nature as well as those that do not, and address how these differing understandings impact specific religious communities' attempts to grapple with climate change. They examine transformation processes towards more sustainable structures and behavioral patterns in various normally secular venues and through different means: campaigning in the public sphere; grocery shopping; and transportation. These presentations also discuss how traditional religious ethics are mobilized or modified to formulate and stimulate new religiously-grounded environmental ethics and practices.

Carrie B. Dohe: Together for the preservation of nature? The prospects for and challenges of interreligious engagement for nature conservation in Germany In February 2015, the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation and the Abrahamic Forum co-sponsored a dialog forum to initiate an interreligious project for nature conservancy in Germany, combining the two main churches with several new, immigrant-based religions. The goals of the project are four-fold: a collective declaration on religious communities and nature conservation; interreligious teams to conduct educational outreach in schools; an interreligious week to be held in conjunction with the Christian ecumenical Creationtide; and an interreligious network. Despite the initial enthusiasm expressed by the ninety participants, the project faces several challenges, from a lack of funds and personnel to a refusal of some groups to work with representatives of their enemies or persecutors in other countries. Based on ongoing participant observation and conversation with individual actors, this presentation will provide an overview of the four projects and the various prospects for and challenges to this new initiative.

Lioba Rossbach De Olmos: Gods and humans in the environment: shared responsibilities in Afro-Cuban religions

The Abrahamic religions' view of the origin of the world centers on the act of creation by an almighty god. Man was the "coronation" of his creation including the mandate to reign over the rest of the material world. The anthropogenic destruction of the world as well as an "environmental turn" in religion can be seen as an outcome of this domination. This is not the case with many polytheistic religions, where the environment is not separate but intermingled with the human sphere and is itself an integral part of religious belief and ritual practice. Deities and humans are both conceived as relevant entities with environmental responsibility. This will be shown and discussed by the example of Afro-Cuban religions. In their world conception humans are less powerful, and the environment and its

spiritual actors are understood as acting on their own authority. This cosmological conception also allows sustainable conduct.

Jens Köhrsen: Religious involvement in environmental action: an empirical case study

The presentation addresses the religious involvement in sustainable transitions, i. e., transformation processes towards more sustainable and eco-friendly socio-technological structures and behavioral patterns. Based on academic debates about religion and sustainability, three main ways in which religion can contribute to sustainable transitions are identified: (1) campaigning and intermediation in the public sphere; (2) “materialization” of transitions in the form of participation in projects related to sustainability transitions; and (3) dissemination of values that empower environmental attitudes and actions. The three potential dimensions of religious involvement are studied for the empirical case of the energy transition in Emden, a northern German city. The empirical case-study is based on a completed research project which was conducted in 2012/13. It shows how and to which extent the Lutheran, the Reformed, and the Catholic Church contribute to the local transition process.

Jacob F. Tischer: Environmentalism in Taiwanese popular religion

Growing consciousness about environmental issues in Taiwanese society has directly reflected on popular religious institutions, which are usually run by lay people and are both value-traditional and technologically innovation-friendly. I aim to explore the relationship of power and interests behind their adoption of environmental-friendly practices (or the failure thereof) with reference to three case studies: One revolves around a temple that has sealed its incense burner (the temple’s spiritual centre) and encourages its visitors to “pray with their hearts instead of burning incense”. This has met with criticism from community members whose livelihood depends on selling sacrificial items such as incense and paper money. Another is the case of a female deity which since 1987 has been protesting the construction of a nuclear power plant in the vicinity of her temple – successfully so far. Thirdly, I will look at the promotion of pilgrimages on bicycle by some popular temples.

Sigurd Bergmann: Response

Equilibrium – Violence – Entanglement: Interaction between Minority and Majority Religious Communities in the Middle Ages

Panel Chair: Dorothea Weltecke

Religious affiliation and identity has to be repeatedly negotiated, defined, and chosen. The external borders of religions are repeatedly re-determined and penetrated. Frequently, quantitative relationships between religious groups are incongruent with prevailing power relationships. Followers of dominant religions continue to quite often be numerically inferior so that non-dominant religious communities have had to take on subordinate positions. This process has direct consequences for, on the one hand, social, economic, and cultural developments and, on the other hand, the development of religious doctrines and convictions themselves. Not rarely, and across a broad societal spectrum, religious minorities have seen themselves subjected to persecution, violence, or exclusion. Models explaining religious violence need theoretical and methodological refinement. This panel will deal with these aspects of interaction between majority and minority religious communities by selecting case studies from diverse cultural milieus ranging from medieval Anatolia to South Asia.

Dorothea Weltecke: On religious violence in the late Middle Ages

Religious violence is very present in today's public debates. In the humanities, violence has been studied intensively, but in different disciplines. In religious studies, meta theories on religion and violence were developed which clearly assume religions as a cause of violence. On the contrary, in sociological and political studies on violence religion is only rarely mentioned, and its function as a cause of violence is by no means given. Thirdly, historians studied individual traditions of violence and individual acts, identified agents, strategies and ideologies, but did not usually refer to sociological theories of violence. Surprisingly, therefore, there is no history of religious violence proper. Could there be and what could be a genuine historical contribution to the debate on religious violence? As a first attempt to answer this question three emblematic aspects of late medieval religious violence (the crusades, the inquisition, the persecution of Jews in the German lands) shall be discussed in the light of the theories.

Pekka Tolonen: Conceptualizing differences in religions and faiths in the High Middle Ages

In the High Middle Ages, by and after the so called Gregorian Reform, the boundaries of Christianity and orthodoxy became acute again (after late antiquity). With the lack of a word for the modern "religion" the boundaries of orthodoxy were discerned otherwise. Outside of Christianity were the "pagans" and "idolaters". Christianity itself was divided into orthodoxy and heresy. Jews and Mus-

lms found their place within a Christian historical framework being not quite heretical Christians but neither fully pagan (Nongbri 2013). The growing awareness of “us” and “them” within Western Christianity has been observed to be connected to the formation of the persecuting society, where different kinds of minorities were excluded more strongly (Moore 1987). It should also be noted that use of the terms “pagans”, “idolaters” and “heretics” was highly polemical and political during the Middle Ages (Janson 2003; Patschovsky 2003), clearly demonstrating how religion extended to other areas of human culture (e.g. social, economical, political) in a different way than it does today. In this larger context of sharpening the boundary of “us” and “them” I will concentrate on intra-religious discussions. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries there was growing interest in the different orders of the church and comparison between them (Bynum 1984). Texts like the anonymous twelfth century *Libellus de diversis Ordinibus et Professionibus qui sunt in Ecclesia* (Constable and Smith 1972) and James of Vitry’s thirteenth century *Historia Occidentalis* (Hinnebusch 1972) are good examples of this. How do they compare the different vocations and lifestyles? In my paper I will juxtapose these learned texts with the experience of the unlearned. The earliest sources of the Inquisition in Languedoc include a list of more than 600 people who had had dealings with heretics (Cathars and Waldensians) during the early thirteenth century (Duvernoy 2001). The sources depict a time when competing groups were debating with each other. Most of the people interrogated had contacts with only one group while there were also men and women who would have had contacts with both of them. How did people see the different groups and the Roman church which condemned the others? The view of the Inquisition is also present in the source. Posing questions to the people shows the underlying understanding of “religion” and religious movements. All of these sources shed an interesting light on “medieval religious sociology”.

Stamatia Noutsou: The sociotheological turn and the study of religious violence in the Middle Ages and a case study: The Cistercian epistemic worldview and the violence against the heretics

Having as a point of departure Ames’ argument, that “In various ways, religious convictions could build foundations for repression in particular circumstances, and violence could play diverse roles within an economy of belief” (2005), the aim of this paper is to examine the interlink between the Cistercian epistemic worldview and the violent persecution of heretics, by focusing on the anti-heretical writings of the Cistercian monks in the second half of the twelfth century. Following the socio-theological approach, which studies “a group’s internal epistemic worldview” and the external world, where the group operates (Juergensmeyer and Sheikh 2013), I will analyze how the the internal Cistercian religious

beliefs in relation to the external social structures led to the violent persecution of heretics.

Tomas Bubik: Church reformer John Hus as a model for the re-interpretation of religious, national, and social identity

The figure of the medieval reformer John Hus, burnt at the stake in 1415 at the council of Constance, has been reinterpreted throughout Czech history. On the one hand, the Catholic Church considered him a heretic rebelling against the authority of the Church, undermining its doctrinal positions and respect towards the Church. On the other hand, Czech Reformation regarded Hus as a role model of religious life, willing to sacrifice his life for higher ideals. Nationalists have tried to use Hus as a symbol of anti-German resistance, and of national character (genuine Czech-ness). Further, some Marxist-Leninists saw Hus as a significant social reformer who stood up against the feudal type of social order and who represented social critique of his society. All these interpretations illustrate the fact that a religious leader can gain many faces during history, all construed depending on the social needs and prevailing ideology.

Alexandra Cuffel: Response

Esoteric Catholicism

Panel Chair: Helmut Zander

The contacts between the Catholic Church and esoteric thinking have not yet been studied in depth. In this panel, we discuss these interactions in order to explore the innovation potential of non-hegemonic groups and practices for people and groups rooted in their inherited Catholic tradition: we examine how “esoteric” – meaning mesmerist, spiritualistic or anthroposophic – beliefs and practices shaped and transformed some segments of Catholicism. Given that these developments are reciprocal, we also focus on the influence of a Catholic background on esotericism. We suggest analyzing these processes in the Catholic Church with a model of internal differentiation, as opposed to the often-used model of external segmentation.

Maren Sziede: Catholic mesmerists in Germany

This paper aims to explore the invention of a particular form of Catholic piety informed by mesmerism as being a major medical-religious current in the early nineteenth century. It suggests that Catholicism at the time was much more heterogeneous than usually accepted and examines a field of Catholic piety and theory building often neglected in Catholic historiography. There is a strand of German scholars that “Catholicized” mesmerist beliefs and practices. I will examine these developments, which started in the early 1820s and were lo-

cated in two regional centres, Bonn and Munich, along with their protagonists K.J.H. Windischmann, J. Ennemoser and J. Görres. One main feature of these interpretations that mingled mesmerism and Catholic beliefs is the reference to mystical phenomena (stigmatizations and visions). I will argue that one cannot understand this so-called “ultramontane piety” without taking into consideration its mesmerist roots and the Catholic-mesmerist hybridizations.

Marco Pasi: Western esotericism, alternative spirituality and Roman Catholicism in modern Italy

Little research has been done about the way in which the religious background of a particular country has influenced the development of modern Western esotericism. Did modern Western esotericism develop in different ways in Roman Catholic countries with respect to Protestant countries? This paper will focus on the Italian case (less studied than, for example, its French counterpart) and more specifically on the way in which the arrival of new forms of esotericism and alternative spirituality in Italy in the second half of the nineteenth century interacted with the traditional religious predominance of Roman Catholicism in the country. The analysis will particularly focus on Giuseppe Mazzini’s (1805–1872) religious thought, and on the cultural and political legacy he left behind after his death. The analysis will also focus on the response of the Church, which extended to the phenomenon of Catholic modernism at the turn of the twentieth century.

Helmut Zander: Robert Spaemann: esoteric dimensions of a Catholic philosopher

This contribution aims at analyzing an esoteric network within the Catholic Church. As an example will serve Robert Spaemann (*1927), a well-renowned philosopher in Germany and former holder of the Chair of Philosophy at the University of Munich. Though, on the one hand, an “orthodox” Catholic – he was engaged, for example, in the question of abortion and animal ethics – Spaemann was also, unbeknownst to many, wrapped up in an anthroposophical milieu and formed part of an esoteric Catholic network (including, *inter alia*, the theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar and the jurist Martin Kriele), in which he defended reincarnation and the meditative use of tarot cards as a means of access to secret knowledge. This paper will discuss Spaemann’s techniques of integrating these “esoteric” positions into an “orthodox” view as part of an internal Catholic differentiation. This case will enable us to discuss processes of pluralization without external segmentation.

Esotericism

Johanneke Kroesbergen-Kamps: Hidden meanings: the occult in studies on society and religion in Africa

Since the 1990s, there has been a marked increase in scholarly articles and books about religion and society in Africa discussing the so-called “occult”. This popularity is somewhat surprising, since the concept “occult” is by no means uncontested within religious studies. In a critical review, Ter Haar & Ellis (2009) propose to abolish the term altogether. Hanegraaff (2005, 2012) discusses the history and use of the concept, and retains it as a technical term, specifically applied to certain nineteenth century trends in western Esotericism. This approach suggests that the term may be redeemed if it has a clear subject matter and can be used in a non-pejorative way, at least on an etic level. In this paper the use of the concept occult in African studies is analyzed for its subject matter and connotations to see whether the concept can be retained in this field of study.

Marco Toti: The “Prayer of the Heart” in Western Christianity: history and meaning

During the second half of the seventeenth century a specific spiritual practice emerges in the Catholic milieu: the so-called “oraison cordiale”. This contemplative “method”, that shows historical relationships with the devotion to the Sacred Heart too, is connected with the well-known Mary of the Incarnation, St Francis of Sales, J.P. de Caussade and St Ignatius Loyola, and is mainly represented by figures like A. Berger, J. Aumont and M. Le Gall. The aim of this paper is to try to locate some possible filiations among the latter figures and to discuss the question of an “esoteric Christianity”, taking the definition of “esotericism” by W. Hanegraaff as a starting-point; a comparison with the Eastern Orthodox “prayer of the heart” will also be provided.

Pavel Nosachev: Concept of “esoteric tradition” in Soviet and post-Soviet Religious Studies in the 1970–90s

In his latest monograph W. Hanegraaff assumed that research in the field of Western Esotericism has been governed by mnemohistoric constructs, and due to that scholars studied not the factual data but their own ideas of phenomena, enclosing historical data within those perceptions. In my paper I would like to display the results of my research on applying the theory of the invented tradition and the mnemohistorical constructs to Soviet and post-Soviet Religious Studies of the 1970–90s which approached the sphere of Western Esotericism. Since the ‘70s, due to a non-critical embrace of emic views of the Western Esotericism adherents, the concept of “esoteric tradition” has developed among Russian-speaking religious scholars, becoming the reputable benchmark in the research of Western Esotericism first in Soviet, and later in Russian Religious

Studies. This concept became widely popular after the breakup of the Soviet Union and resulted at its full extent in so-called “confessional Religious Studies”.

Ullrich Kleinhempel: The socio-cultural migration of Umbanda: challenges for interpretation

The recent major change in membership of Umbanda, from an Afro-Brazilian basis to a chiefly white middle class one, including its reception in German-speaking countries, requires a critical review of “functionalistic” interpretations of Umbanda as a phenomenon of cultural resistance and of symbolic cure for marginalized non-whites. It demands an interpretation in the context of current studies on trance and spirit possession as expressive of the quest for a wider concept of the “self” and “higher self”, which includes non-rational agencies beyond the subjective autonomous “ego”, including the body as medium. This transformative reception of Umbanda follows and unfolds a major theme of culture since Romanticism and depth psychology in the field of religion and esotericism. Hereby Umbanda’s African and Indian elements, doctrines and practices attain new symbolic meanings, as may be shown. The author has a background of long familiarity with Umbanda as participant observer in Europe.

Ethnography of Contemporary Shi’ism

Panel Chair: David Thurffjell

The last decade bore witness to massive changes within many Shi’ite Muslim societies. In Iran, the Khomeinist system is challenged in hitherto unseen ways and critique of the dominating ideology is articulated also within the Islamist establishment. In Iraq, the political influence of the country’s Shi’ite majority has drastically increased. In Lebanon, Hezbollah’s involvement in the country’s politics has changed as the organization became a member of the country’s government for the first time in 2011. The uprisings in many Arab countries and increasing sectarian tensions with Sunni-Muslim communities, furthermore, have also had great impact on the life of Shi’ites both in their traditional heartlands and in the West. Based on ethnographic research, this panel focuses on how Shi’ite Muslims on a grass-roots level negotiate, interpret and practice their religious tradition in these new religious, cultural and political environments.

Oliver Scharbrodt: Remembering “Ashura” in London: the embodiment and material culture of Shii rituals in the diaspora

The events around the murder of the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad Husayn in Karbala (680 CE) and their annual remembrance during “Ashura” have been crucial in forming and maintaining Shii sectarian identity. During

the period of “Ashura”, the first ten days of the Islamic month of Muharram, Shiis perform a number of rituals to remember, mourn and recreate the events of Karbala. Aspects of the mythico-historical narrative are re-created and the soteriological role of Imam Husayn’s martyrdom is articulated in a number of rituals. These distinct Shii rituals are also the result of various cultural influences, more consciously expressed in a diasporic context. This paper investigates how Shii historical narratives and poignant elements of Shii doctrine are embodied and translated into material culture in Shii rituals performed among male diasporic Iraqi Shii communities in London.

Ingvild Flakerud: Ashura processions as peace demonstrations

Sociological studies have demonstrated that public rituals are important for creating and maintaining identity within a religious community. The annual Ashura processions performed in many Shia Muslim communities around the world serve such purposes. Drawing on ritual practices developed since the 1500s, the localized performance of a procession is often shaped as a response to current local and international socio-political issues. In the present paper I examine five successive annual performances of Ashura processions in Oslo, to discuss how and why the commemorative ritual in this particular social setting is gradually being turned into statements on the issues of peace and terror, while simultaneously serving as an arena for carving out a space of belonging also outside the religious community, in the public space.

Chris Heinhold: The use of political context to legitimize sectarianism discourse among Shia communities in the UK

The sectarian division between Shia and Sunni Islam is an issue of global geopolitical importance. Daesh (IS) is spreading rapidly across Syria and Iraq, into post-“Arab spring” states, and online. Shia organizations have seized this opportunity to portray themselves as natural allies of the West. This paper will examine how the current political context allows for overt sectarian sentiment to be expressed in highly public spaces. In portraying themselves as sharing a common enemy with the West, Shia groups may feel justified in making highly sectarian claims against their Sunni counterparts. I argue that some Shia communities in Britain have seized upon the current crisis in the Middle East in order to convey their own, self-styled, position as the moderate face of Islam in the West. In doing so they are portraying Sunni Muslims as inherently violent; while occupying for themselves a dual position of victim and ally to the West.

Yafa Shanneik: Remembering the “women of Karbala” past and present: Shia women in London

Twelver Shia remember the events of Karbala when the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad, Husayn, and almost his entire family were murdered in Southern Iraq in 680 CE. This master-narrative (Wertsch 2002) of the “Karbala paradigm”

(Fischer 1980) is in turn de-constructed into several sub-narratives in which subjective understandings of historical events are connected to personal individual life circumstances producing various understandings and representations of historical events. This paper examines one of these sub-narratives and focuses on remembering the “women of Karbala” as articulated through the majalis al qiraya rituals among various Shia women communities in London. A particular emphasis is placed on the geo-political context of the development of this memory in the Middle East and Europe expressed in traditional and modern Shia lamentation poetry.

David Thurffell: The Heyyati-movement and charismatic Shi'ism in contemporary Iran

The heyayati-movement is a folk-religious movement in Iran circling around the practice of chest beating and ritual mourning of the martyred household of the Prophet. During the last decade, since the presidential period of Mohammad Khatami, the structure of this movement has changed. The heyayati-groups were mobilized in the campaign that led to the victory of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in the presidential elections of 2005 and since then what may be described as a new type of heyayati-culture has flourished in certain layers of Iranian society and it has frequently been a matter of controversy. Today, the movement can be described as a charismatic alternative to the religious authority of the clerical establishment. Based on interviews and ethnographic observations this paper describes and analyzes one heyayati-community in Qom.

Sufyan Abid: Recreating Karbala in London: contested expressions of commemorating Ashura among Twelver Shi'i Muslims of South Asian background This paper explains the contested nature of expressions and commemorations of Ashura among Shi'i Muslims of South Asian background living in London. The researcher explores how Shi'i Muslims in London are uniquely asserting their way of commemorating Ashura in the public sphere as “authentic and with the true spirit of Shi'i Islam”. The paper also presents the ethnographic accounts of the complex and often contested nature of the relationship between the expressions and practices of Shi'i Muslims from South Asian background with Shi'i centres of religious authority affiliated with Iran and Iraq. Shi'i Muslims of South Asian background constitute a numerical majority among Shi'i in Britain but lack representation in Shi'i leadership. The paper argues that Shi'i Muslims from South Asian background are not the passive recipients of reformist versions of commemorating Ashura as presented by individuals trained in Iran and Iraq, but they keep their version of practicing Ashura intact by contesting and often rejecting the reformist Shi'i trends.

Evangelical and Charismatic Transformations: Tradition and Innovation in Contemporary Evangelical Christianity

Panel Chair: Martin Radermacher

Considering revivalism, processes of institutionalization of churches and revitalization of traditions, Evangelical and Charismatic Christianity have been the prototype of both innovation and tradition from the start. This apparent paradox and interdependency will be in the center of this panel: How is it possible for movements and communities to flesh out an identity, encourage innovative methods, and still feel ingrained in religious tradition? What normative role do texts and re-adaptations of texts play? How does the body become a means of religious innovation and regulation? Evangelicals navigate between engagement and distancing – what Lynne Gerber (2012) calls (following Smith) the “evangelical dance of engagement and distinction”. This condition fosters cultural adaptations that include, e.g. media and new technologies which transform what they transport (Birgit Meyer 2010) and thus entail innovation. The panel welcomes papers on evangelical and charismatic practices and discourses from different regions in the world in a contemporary perspective addressing these questions.

Justin Michael Doran: American Pentecostals: charismatic innovations from Canada to Brazil

This paper follows a network of Pentecostal preachers and church planters from Toronto, to Rio de Janeiro, to Houston, Texas. Since the 1950s, these closely networked evangelists produced and disseminated one of the fastest growing segments of global evangelicalism and are significantly responsible for the transformation of Latin American Christianity. The paper begins with the arrival of Canadian missionary Robert McAlister to Rio de Janeiro and his adaptation of Canadian Pentecostalism to Brazil. It then follows McAlister’s conversion of Edir Macedo, who has become Brazil’s wealthiest and most influential pastor. It concludes with the arrival of Macedo’s son-in-law, Renato Cardoso, at a church in Houston – down the road from Lakewood Church, the United States’ largest congregation. Alternatively referred to as neo-Pentecostal, neo-Charismatic, or the “prosperity gospel,” this paper argues that these movements are better understood as local, institutional adaptations of an affective religious experience that is shared across global evangelicalism.

Martin Radermacher: Transformation of/through the body: the case of devotional fitness

When in the 1950s and 60s evangelicals began to develop and distribute biblically based fitness and diet plans, they promoted an innovative re-adaption of biblical texts, nonetheless reassuring their followers that what they did was

deeply rooted in the Christian tradition. In constant negotiation with wider societal trends of body perfection and “healthism,” these programs turned out to be among the most successful versions of evangelical life, luring believers and non-believers with the promise of good health, beauty, and – last but not least – eternal salvation. The paper addresses devotional fitness as a field of religious innovation and carves out mechanisms of transformation under the conditions of biblicism and traditionalism.

Orivaldo Lopes Jr.: Northeast Brazil: the last stronghold against Protestantism

During the twentieth century, Northeast represented the minus protestant region of Brazil. The monopoly of Catholicism in this region was prominent, and it represented an efficient barrier against the evangelical missionary entrepreneur. It composed the canvas that characterized the Northeast as an archaic, underdeveloped and traditional region. Nevertheless, evangelicals had greater success in Brazil and in Northeast in particular, not with the traditional Protestantism, but with its Pentecostal version. It was linked not to an anti-modern or modern tension, but to the breaking of a religious monopoly.

Elisabeth Mareels: Videira, a “new” way of being a cell church in Brazil
In the Pentecostal field, it is generally assumed that South-Korean pastor Paul Yonggi Cho is the father of cell churches. This form of organizing church life – all church members must be part of a small group (cell) which meets once a week at home – aims to enhance church growth and to cope with the anonymity of megachurches. It is considered as a sign of the second coming of Christ, which gives it a specific place in Christian historiography. Nowadays, thousands of Pentecostal (and other Christian) churches all over the world have adopted this model. In Brazil, the cell church model entered in the 1990s, mainly from Colombia and the USA, creating a lot of criticism. Videira, founded in 1999 in Goiânia (Goiás), started from scratch “reinventing” the cell church into a model which links a historical conscience and Millenarianism to social control and recognition, distancing itself from other models by a “visible discretion”.

Minna Opas: Turning one’s back and turning back: negotiations of belonging among indigenous Amazonian Evangelicals

For the indigenous Amazonian Yine people, to be a Christian is by no means a static state of being. The Yine may simultaneously claim to be both Catholic and Evangelical and deny one of these denominations as false. They may participate in the weekly Evangelical meetings for months, only to suddenly stop practicing the religion, and then pick it up as quickly as they first dropped it. This paper examines the processes of belonging and being Christian among the Peruvian Yine people: how do they sustain several contradictory Christian affiliations at the same time, and what are the factors causing them to move back and forth

in regard to their religion/faith? With the help of the notion of the “inconstancy of the Indian soul” (Viveiros de Castro 2011) and the scholarship on the politics of belonging (e.g. Yuval-Davis 2012), the paper will focus in particular on the questions of intentionality and socio-technological change in the Yine practice of Christianity.

The Evolution of Religion and Morality Project

Panel Chair: Benjamin Purzycki

Evidence continues to mount to suggest that religion contributes to the persistence and evolution of cooperation and coordination. The international Cultural Evolution of Religion Research Consortium (CERC) based at the Centre for Human Evolution, Cognition, and Culture at the University of British Columbia executed a cross-cultural study in eight diverse societies around the world. Using a synthetic regime of ethnographic methods and an experimental economic game to detect cheating behavior, we tested whether or not certain kinds of gods (1) curb antisocial behavior towards other people, and (2) whether or not this effect extends to people beyond one’s immediate community. This panel consists of some of the highlights from specific sites, and presents overall results from our eight field sites.

Benjamin Purzycki: High gods and the expansion of sociality: the random allocation game in eight societies

Understanding the expansion of human sociality and cooperation beyond kin and allies remains a pressing problem. Religion contributes to this problem in a variety of ways including ritual, and commitment to omniscient, punitive gods. Building on this, recent hypotheses predict that this effect fosters the expansion of sociality beyond the local community and thus contributes to the development of highly complex social organizations. Using an experimental economic game designed to detect cheating, we tested whether or not individual models of moralistic, punishing, and omniscient gods (High Gods) curb cheating behavior better than Local Gods. Among a sample of participants from eight diverse societies – Fijians, the Hadza of Tanzania, Indo-Fijians, Mauritians, Tyvans of southern Siberia, Inland and Coastal Vanuatians, and Brazilians from Pesqueiro – we present cross-cultural evidence that the closer individuals approximate their gods to High Gods, the less likely people are to cheat in favor of themselves and their community.

Rita McNamara: Local favoritism modulated by Big and Little Gods in Fiji
Conducted among villagers in Yasawa, Fiji, this study is an experimental replication of the correlational results of McNamara, Norenzayan, and Henrich

(2014). In Yasawa, supernatural punishment beliefs about the Christian God (“Bible God”) vs. deified ancestors (Kalou-vu) promote different expectations about distant, anonymous strangers. We compare random allocation game offers to strangers across primes evoking Christian, traditional, or neutral beliefs. Though the Christian prime did not produce offers that were significantly different from neutral, the traditional prime did promote significantly higher offers to local recipients over distant, anonymous recipients. This effect seemed to be particularly strong for men. These results help corroborate the effect of local ancestor spirits promoting local in-group favoritism indicated in previous studies. Further, these results further suggest that beliefs about different kinds of deities might promote prosociality towards some recipients at the expense of others.

Quentin Atkinson: Religiosity and expanding the cooperative sphere in Kastom and Christian villages on Tanna, Vanuatu

The island of Tanna is a kaleidoscope of religious variation. Waves of Christian missionary influence interact with traditional Kastom beliefs, as well as more recent “cargo cults” (themselves a mix of Kastom, Christian and nationalist ideas). This affords a unique opportunity to compare the psychological effects of a recently expanded world religion (Christianity), and indigenous religious beliefs and practices in a common cultural setting. Here, we compare results from survey data together with a Random Allocation Game and Dictator Game conducted across two sites on Tanna – a coastal Christian village and a cluster of three inland, Kastom hamlets. We investigate whether religious beliefs and practices at each location predict prosocial game behavior and the extent to which participants’ prosociality extends to those who share or do not share the same religion. We discuss the implications of our findings for theories of the cultural evolution of religion.

Aiyana K. Willard: Religion’s effect on in-group and out-group preferences in Fiji

Fiji’s ethnic and religious diversity makes it possible to test religious prosocial behavior within and between the three major religious groups (Hindus, Muslims, and Christians) and two major ethnic groups (Fijians and Indo-Fijians). This paper presents two versions of the random allocation game conducted in Lovu, Fiji. The first game used a prime condition (a shrine), but only female Hindu participants cheated less in the prime condition. However, in the second game without a prime, the religious and ethnic group differences of players had a far greater effect. In this game, Christian Fijian and Christian Indo-Fijians divided money between religious and ethnic in-groups and out-groups. I found that Indo-Fijian Christians readily cheated against same-ethnic Hindus and Muslims, but not other-ethnic Christians. This provides evidence that religious in-group preferences are stronger than ethnic in-group preferences.

Examining the Religious-Secular Divide: Some Case Studies

Douglas Pratt: Secularism and the rise of anti-religion in Western societies: from antipodean “Godzone” to secularized “God-free” zone?

Secularization, as both an idea and a process, refers to a social contract enabling people of different religious identities and belief systems, or none, to co-exist peacefully. Whilst the specifics of Church-State relations vary across western secular nations, they arguably have one thing in common, namely that secularization, the initial context of allowability for religion within the public sphere, has yielded increasingly to secularism as an ideology of obviating religion from the public sphere. The notion and discourse of “being secular” has arguably shifted from a climate of acceptability of religion per se, together with tolerance of religious diversity, to that of being effectively synonymous with “non-religion”, even “irreligion”. Findings from a study of secularism in New Zealand, a western society that in 2013 recorded Christian allegiance of under 50%, raise issues and questions pertinent for considering the place of religion within western secular societies today. Is secularism obviating religious tolerance?

Whitney Bauman: Secular and religious dogmatism: globalization, climate change and the space for pluralism

As many scholars have pointed out, western secularism is itself a very faith-filled and religiously located concept. It forces other understandings of secularism (and along with it other religions) to adhere to the public reason/private faith distinction, which doesn't work in many societies, all the while projecting such a distinction as reasonable, enlightened, or somehow progressive. This paper argues that two very important bio-historical factors are beginning to shed light on the faith-filled and culturally located concept of western secularity: globalization and climate change. The contemporary processes of globalization and climate change are forcing the hidden faith of secularism out of its foxhole. This happens in at least three ways: through the undoing of mastery, through the hybridity of meaning-making practices, and following these two through the undoing of the narrative of chronological progress.

Jonathan D Smith: Religious-secular partnerships for social change: the case of the Jubilee Debt Campaign UK

Amidst debate over religious-secular divides in Europe, instances of cooperation between religious communities and secular activists in global justice campaigns are often overlooked. Interfaith solidarity, defined as multi-religious and religious-secular coalitions unified around common goals, builds on social capital theory and Habermas' concept of religion and the public sphere. In partnerships with a diverse range of civil society actors, religious groups provide mobilizing power and grassroots legitimacy to campaigns, and secular partners provide ac-

tivist expertise and political acumen. These striking coalitions gain attention from global powers precisely because they cut across expected political divides. This concept is exemplified by the Jubilee Debt Campaign in the UK. Based on a biblical concept of debt forgiveness, religious groups formed coalitions with secular activists and musicians which challenged the neoliberal consensus and gained notable political concessions. The paper details how partnerships were formed and how religious language was adapted for a political and technocratic audience.

Anna-Konstanze Schröder: Religion at sea: mapping the maritime field of research

History of Religion is a history of religions on terra firma. There can hardly be found any systematic theorizing or empirical research of maritime cultures by scholars of religion. In the fields of anthropology and maritime history, there are some case studies about sea-related cultures and their religion, especially for the Pacific and the Indian Ocean regions, about some aspects like gods (e.g. Matsu or Poseidon) and also about the material culture like seafarer churches in Europe. These data are lacking research questions from the Study of Religion like: How did the maritime trade interact with the expansion of Muslim, Buddhist or Christian religions? Which interreligious dynamics can be described for the international sailing crews? Which religion(s) were created among the seafarers on their vessels at different times and spaces? This presentation will give a raw structure to start a systematic research of religion at sea.

Experiencing Kṛṣṇa: Theophilosophical, Phenomenological, and Cognitive Dimensions of Religious Experience in the Caitanya Vaiṣṇava Tradition

Panel Chair: Kiyokazu Okita

In Hindu traditions the role of religious experience is of central concern in epistemological debates about the *pramāṇas*, means of valid knowledge, and more specifically about the relative importance ascribed to *pratyakṣa* (perception), knowledge derived from the senses, and *śabda* (verbal testimony), knowledge derived from *śruti*, the Vedic scriptures. The authority of *śruti* is linked to the experiences of the *ṛṣis*, “seers,” who are held to have cognized the transcendent structures of reality and recorded their cognitions in the form of the Vedic scriptures. This panel will focus on the role of religious experience as a *pramāṇa* in the Caitanya Vaiṣṇava tradition, a Hindu devotional tradition that originated in sixteenth-century India and flourishes today throughout the world. Using scriptural, historical, and ethnographic data, the panelists will analyze from theophi-

losophical, phenomenological, and cognitive perspectives various practices that are aimed at attaining direct experience of the object of devotion, the deity Kṛṣṇa.

Barbara Holdrege: Replicating the experiences of the sages: Caitanya Vaiṣṇava technologies of meditation

Jīva Gosvāmin, one of the principal architects of the Caitanya Vaiṣṇava theological edifice, invokes the authority of the sage Vyāsa and other great ṛṣis (seers) who, while immersed in samādhi in the depths of meditation, attained a direct cognition of the deity Kṛṣṇa in his transcendent abode and recorded their cognitions in the scriptures. He declares the direct experiences of the sages (vidvadanubhava) to be the “crest-jewel of all pramāṇas” in that the records of their experiences preserved in the scriptures are authoritative testimonies of valid knowledge (pramāṇa) for future generations. He claims, moreover, that these experiences are not the exclusive prerogative of the sages of the past but can be experienced “even today” by advanced practitioners who incorporate meditation into their devotional regimen. This paper will examine the unique repertoire of meditative practices developed by Jīva to replicate the experiences of the sages and attain direct realization of Kṛṣṇa.

Aleksandar Uskokov: Scriptural perception and religious experience in the Caitanya Vaiṣṇava tradition

The two main branches of Vedic hermeneutics, Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta, understand śabda, revealed scriptural knowledge, to be a form of immediate apprehension. Such apprehension is viewed as similar to pratyakṣa, perceptual apprehension by means of the senses, insofar as it is immediate, but it differs from ordinary perception in that the objects of apprehension are beyond the range of the senses. In this paper I will examine how Jīva Gosvāmin, a leading theologian of the Caitanya Vaiṣṇava tradition, draws on these subtle exegetical understandings of perceptual and scriptural knowledge to develop an original account of what we might call “scriptural perception.” Applying the basic features of perception to scripture, he claims that these features are operative in the ways in which scripture presents knowledge of God. This paper will use these ideas, developed in the context of scriptural interpretation, to explore aspects of religious experience in the Caitanya Vaiṣṇava tradition.

Hrvoje Čargonja: Aesthetics of emotional expansion in Caitanya Vaiṣṇava religious experiences

The Caitanya Vaiṣṇava tradition emphasizes emotional expansion as a central feature of religious experience. Drawing on the ancient Indian theory of drama and poetics known as rasa theory, this tradition approaches aesthetic experience primarily through the optics of emotional aesthetics. In this way the tradition foregrounds an often neglected feature of the dynamics of emotions, sen-

sations, and feelings: their time-extended, periodic, and expansive nature. Employing the anthropological perspective of cultural phenomenology, I will use my fieldwork on the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, a modern branch of Caitanya Vaiṣṇavism, to show how the “embodied aesthetics” of emotional expansion evidenced in the practitioners’ narratives of religious experience can be described through aesthetic values of control, intimacy, and play. In this perspective the flow of emotional embodiment that engenders these three aesthetic values serves as a positive feedback loop that gradually increases the overall coherence and emotional intensity of the religious experience.

Travis Chilcott: Experiencing deities: the cognitive dynamics of perceiving Kṛṣṇa

Early Gauḍīya theologians make numerous claims that advanced practitioners have private experiences of perceiving Kṛṣṇa, but questions arise as to whether these claims are based on actual experiences that they or others had, exegetical ruminations developed on the basis of inherited teachings, or some combination thereof. In light of these questions, this paper investigates whether or not occurrences of private experiences of perceiving Kṛṣṇa can be plausibly understood within the framework of methodological naturalism. If they can, this offers support for the hypothesis that these theologians’ claims are based, at least in part, on experiences that they or others had. If they cannot, it suggests they may be better understood as the result of exegetical ruminations. This investigation combines humanistic and scientific approaches for the study of historical claims to facilitate a richer interpretation and explanation of such claims than what is possible through traditional humanistic approaches alone.

“Experimental Religion”: New Paradigms and Revolutionary Patterns in Japan and North America

Panel Chair: Elisabetta Porcu

This panel explores “experimental” ways through which religious institutions, leaders, and lay followers have attempted to cope with secular society, both in a modern and contemporary perspective. Here, the term “experimental religion” indicates both a theoretical and descriptive approach to religious phenomena, one flexible enough to explain a broad array of dynamics and practices regarding diverse traditions. The panel, which is particularly focused on Japanese and North American religious landscapes, aims to address the following questions: How can the concept of “experimental religion” serve to contextualize global flows and institutional restructuring as well as their impact on religious practice and affiliation? What tensions and limits were involved in Buddhist “experi-

ments” with engaged – and particularly revolutionary – political activities during the modern period? And how are religious institutions, leaders and lay followers in contemporary Japan and North America experimenting with popular culture patterns as ways of increasing relevance within their social settings?

John Nelson: “Experimental religion”: a new paradigm for identifying religious practice and affiliation

In an age of new and “disruptive” information technologies, immigration flows, institutional restructuring and greater personal agency, the concept of “experimental religion” can serve to contextualize these dynamics as they impact religious practice and affiliation. Religions in liberal democratic societies are increasingly seen by practitioners as flexible applications to be approached, reconfigured, and then implemented experimentally, with a focus on tangible benefits (improved health, relationships, career, spirituality, or even political ends) in this world, not the next. Even the former archbishop of Canterbury wrote recently about employing Buddhist meditation to augment his religious devotions. And yet the concept also holds relevance for understanding how an individual turns to religious extremism. Using contemporary Japanese and American Buddhist temples, priests, and their surrounding communities as case studies, this paper identifies five factors that not only characterize “experimental religion” for the individual but which also create issues that undermine institutional and doctrinal stabilities.

James Mark Shields: Zen and the art of revolution: Japanese experiments in progressive and radical Buddhism

On 5 April 1931, Nichiren Buddhist layman Seno’o Girō (1889–1961) established the Shinkō Bukkyō Seinen Dōmei (Youth League for Revitalizing Buddhism), made up of several dozen young social activists who were critical of capitalism, internationalist in outlook, and committed to both a pan-sectarian and “rational and practical” form of Buddhism that would aggressively work for social justice and world peace – even to the extent of advocating political revolution. Their activities in support of poor farmers, striking workers and burakumin “outcastes” eventually led to the arrest of Seno’o and the League’s forced dissolution in 1937. This paper analyzes the views of the Youth League for Revitalizing Buddhism as found in the writings of Seno’o Girō with specific reference to the various tensions and limits involved in Buddhist “experiments” with engaged – and particularly revolutionary – political activities. What, if anything, is the legacy and lasting impact of “radical Buddhism”?

Elisabetta Porcu: Experimental religion and popular culture in Japan
A noticeable expression of the historical tendency among Japanese religions to adjust to socioeconomic change is the contemporary use of popular culture formats, such as manga and anime, by religious institutions. In general terms, such

cultural formats have contributed to shape the contemporary image of Japan at the global level, and have been informed by transnational influences and dynamics. The use of manga and anime, the creation of original pop characters, as well as various entrepreneurial activities by religious institutions and individual priests, are not disconnected from the aim of softening a negative perception of religion among the general public. Manga and anime also serve promotional and proselytization purposes. In this paper, I will explore how Japanese religious organizations are experimenting with such popular culture-related patterns and analyze various diversified activities carried out by both institutions and entrepreneurial priests in contemporary Japan.

Abdulkader Tayob: Response

Experiments in the Field as a Bridge between Psychological Science and the Humanities

Panel Chair: Radek Kundt

Anthropologists have a tradition of documenting the practices of individuals immersed in a particular religious environment. Clinical and social psychologists also routinely study populations with long-term exposure to particular life circumstances, comparing them to the general population on some measure. In social psychology and other sub-fields, cognitive psychologists emphasize the value of objective measures regardless of whether the investigated groups were formed by life circumstances or experimental manipulation. This panel will make presentations and invite discussion on the theoretical value of collecting objective measures in the field (usually, from real existing religious communities). Rather than taking “subjects” out of context and moving them into sterilized laboratory settings, field experiments attempt to take the laboratory into context by moving it into the field. We argue that the integration of experimental techniques and participant observation may offer complementary insights that neither approach alone can.

Dimitris Xygalatas: Experimental anthropology: bringing the lab into the field

The integration of experimental techniques and participant observation may offer complementary insights that neither approach alone can achieve. Rather than taking “subjects” out of context and moving them into sterilized laboratory settings where they become “objects” of experimentation, an integrative approach attempts to take the laboratory into context by moving it into the field. Through this combination of anthropological and experimental techniques, experiments become for anthropologists a new form of obtaining data as well as

a new way of being in the field. At the same time, they may create new problems and raise new important questions, allowing us to problematize some of the standard methods used to study human social behavior and reflect on their merits, limitations, and ways to improve them. Based on a series of case studies, I will discuss the advantages, limitations, and problems of this “experimental anthropology”.

Jakub Cigán: Experimental study of prosocial behavior in cross-religious settings on Mauritius

The benefits and challenges of combining anthropological and experimental techniques are discussed in detail in this presentation of an experimental research project conducted in Mauritius in 2013. An economic game paradigm was used to explore prosocial behavior among religious people in various religious and non-religious environments. Environments can constitute implicit contextual cues guiding behavior. While there is evidence supporting the view that in-group religious settings induce parochial prosocial behavior among co-religionists, prosocial behavior in other people’s religious settings has remained largely unexplored. In this study on the topic, we surprisingly found that participants behaved more prosocially in other people’s religious settings. It is likely that the results reflect the relationship between Catholics and Hindus in Mauritius. The results, therefore, connect prosocial behavior in religious settings to broader sociocultural conditions.

Jan Krátký: Religious statues affect prosocial behavior

Decision-making in environments with agency cues is of interest to religious studies scholars because of the potential role of agency cues in inspiring a sense of awe and subsequent social coordination. In a series of experiments disguised as a promotional initiative by a well-known company, we compared the effects of agentic and non-agentic cues on prosocial behavior. More specifically, visitors to a university library were invited to make private donations to a cause in the presence of either an intentional agentic cue (statue of human face), a non-human intentional agentic cue (statue of an animal face), or a non-agentic cue (a plant). Results suggest that, while intentional agency cues might enhance prosociality, investigations are needed for potential parallel effects of crowds and of cue typicality in the chosen setting.

Exploring Aniconism

Panel Chair: Mikael Aktor, Milette Gaifman

Aniconic objects together form a broad category of religious material sources – a category which in fact seems both too broad and incoherent. It includes clearly

recognizable depictions of wheels, fish, phalli, unmanufactured objects and elements in the natural environment such as unwrought stones, trees, rivers and mountains, fashioned objects, such as stelai and logs, as well as empty spaces, such as vacant seats, and empty rooms. While all of these objects are described as “aniconic”, they differ dramatically in their religious agency and manner of mediating divine presence. Based on empirical data from different traditions this panel discusses aniconism from three perspectives: classification (what are the criteria for distinguishing between different types of aniconic objects?); historiography (what are the historical relations between aniconic and iconic representations within single traditions or in general?); and mediality (how do the sensory properties of aniconic objects generate notions of ritual agency?).

Robert G. Bednarik: Aniconism and the origins of palaeoart

Contrary to the widely held belief that iconic palaeoart precedes aniconism during the early history of humans, palaeoart commences as non-iconic forms, and in most parts of the world then settled by hominins continues as such during the Pleistocene. The forms, development and global distribution of such palaeoart are presented within the framework of hominin evolution. Attention is given to the question of the continuation of aniconism after the introduction of iconicity and the apparent connection between the latter and youth. This coincides with the role of aniconism in the world of specific ethnographically studied peoples, such as the Aborigines of Australia and the Jarawas of the Andamans. The neuroscientific explanation of aniconism shows that it is cognitively more complex than iconic depiction. Based on these and other strands of evidence, a general hypothesis of the roles and significance of aniconism in the world’s pre-literate societies is developed.

Jay Johnston: Stone-agency: Sense, sight and magical efficacy

This paper will consider the materiality and mediality of sacred and “magical” stones in Northern European vernacular belief practices (especially Gaelic traditions). In particular it will examine their attribution to specific deities and metaphysical beings, their role in healing rituals and in enabling humans to perceive metaphysical realms. The paper will focus – via methodologies and theories recently developed in both religious aesthetics and “new materialism” – on the materiality and ontology of the objects, their associated visions and the “relations” such stones are understood to have produced. As “sites” of divine agency and efficacy the stones (including amulets and prehistoric flints) were imbued not only with spiritual agency, but also placed within an invisible network of relations that linked individuals, non-human animals, the landscape and the metaphysical realms. This panoply of relations will be demonstrated to be crucial to the aesthetic logic guiding selection and “attribution” to specific deities/spiritual beings.

Jørgen Podemann Sørensen: The real presence of Osiris: iconic, semi-iconic and aniconic ritual representations of an Egyptian god
 In ancient Egyptian religion, images of the gods served to secure their presence in the world. Statues used in ritual were the *nfr.w*, the vital presence of the god, and when kings were called “the living image” (*tw t ʿnh*— as in Tutankhamun) of a god, this was really based on the role of statues in ritual. Gods could also be present through their sacred animals, kept in large numbers within the temple precincts, and they could also be ritually active in the form of aniconic and semi-iconic symbols. At the same time there was an idea that gods had a “true form” (*jr w m3ʿ*), independent of all kinds of iconic or aniconic representation. Particularly interesting are the many iconic and aniconic representations of Osiris. The contemporary currency of so many forms of ritual presence demonstrates the futility of any “theological” approach and calls for a broader theory of representation.

Hans Jørgen Lundager Jensen: Aniconism in the Bible
 The Hebrew Bible promoted aniconism as a general rule for the Yahweh-religion: images of the god Yahweh were strictly prohibited. In the Ten Commandments aniconism follows immediately after the monolatrous rule not to “have” other gods than Yahweh. The reason for the prohibition against “idols” is not Yahweh’s inherent indescribability; in the Bible, there is no lack of literary images of Yahweh who is described as or compared with humans, animals, and meteorological phenomena. Among Biblical scholars, aniconism is often regarded as a local, “Israelite”, phenomenon. My own proposal will be to see it in the broader context of the religious revolutions (the so-called “axial age”) in the middle of first millennium BCE and regard it as an element in a general transformation from a “pre-axial” type of religion, based on cult, ritual and material culture, to an ascetic, and cognitively sophisticated, form of religion.

Mikael Aktor: Why would a god want to appear like this? Worshippers’ exegeses of the Hindu *Pañcāyatana Pūjā*

Many Hindu gods are worshipped both in their iconic, mostly anthropomorphic forms, and in aniconic forms, mostly as natural stones or simple geometrical shapes. There is even in some contexts the tendency that the aniconic forms, especially of *Viṣṇu* and *Śiva*, are seen as more apt representations of the indivisible, true aspect of these gods. But what do people say – people who perform aniconic worship today? This paper presents the results from interviews conducted on field work in Nepal and India where I researched the five stones used in the *pañcāyatanapūjā*. In this ritual five divinities are worshipped in the form of five natural stones from five different locations of South Asia. The field work was conducted on these five locations and at each place I asked worshippers how

they understand the aniconic appearance of the god, especially in its relations to the anthropomorphic image.

David L. Haberman: Drawing out the iconic in the aniconic Rivers, trees and mountains are often directly worshiped in northern India as natural forms of divinity. For the past couple of decades I have been researching Hindu worshipful interaction with three such natural phenomena: the Yamuna River, sacred trees of Varanasi, and Mount Govardhan. Although all three would be considered aniconic religious objects, they all have iconic forms as well, typically personified as various gods or goddesses. Religious conceptualization of and ritual interaction with these natural phenomena, therefore, are an ideal context in which to explore the relationship between aniconism and iconism. There is often a historical relationship between aniconism and iconism, but they often exist simultaneously side-by-side. A major aim of this presentation will be an examination of the devotional tendency to anthropomorphize aniconic objects as a way of manifesting their full being and bringing out their personality – in other words, to draw the iconic out of the aniconic.

Richard H. Davis: Icons and aniconism from a priest's perspective: manifestations of Śiva in a temple festival

“It is only to the extent that You possess a visible form that one is able to approach You,” states a medieval Śaivasiddhānta text. This idea provides the foundation for the many anthropomorphic manifestations of Śiva that we see in South Indian temples. The central icon in such temples, the Śivaliṅga, represents Śiva in an aniconic form. Thus a Śiva temple contains both iconic and aniconic forms, for Śiva to inhabit and for human devotees to worship. I will consider the varied forms that are transformed ritually into manifestations of Śiva during a Saiva temple festival, as spelled out in medieval priestly guidebooks. Apart from the aniconic Śivaliṅga and the anthropomorphic processional icons, these also include a flagpole, a sacrificial fire, a trident, a pot of water, a drum, and a temporary liṅga made of rice and yogurt. The festival provides a demonstration of Śiva's divine ubiquity.

Klemens Karlsson: Shifting meanings of “aniconic” signs in the Buddhist tradition

Meanings attributed to objects are not inherent to the objects themselves. Instead, meanings are the result of cultural and historical processes and are constantly changing. The same applies to “aniconic” objects. Early Buddhist cultic sites in South Asia were covered with signs that have been interpreted as “aniconic” representations of the Buddha. This study will focus on the shifting meanings of these signs from the early “aniconic” phase to the time when these signs exist side by side with anthropomorphic presentations of the Buddha and become symbolic signs that serve as vehicles for Buddhist doctrines. It will discuss

the varied significances of these signs during Buddhist history, in different cultural traditions and according to different interpreters (artists, sponsors and beholders). This will also lead to a discussion about the meaningfulness of using concepts like “aniconic” and “aniconism”.

Exploring the Post-Secular

David Westerberg: Who benefits from the idea of the post-secular? A critical investigation of the fashionable concept of “post-secularity”

The term “post-secular” was popularized by Jürgen Habermas and generally refers to some form of resurgence of religion, as well as the more or less inevitable place of religion in politics. By critically examining several theorists and academic debates, this study looks at how different meanings are ascribed to “post-secular” and the interests at stake. “Post-secularity” varies from being about “secular sociological naturalism”, to doing “political theology”, to being about “living in the presence of God”. Since many of these writers tend to ignore (the problem of) defining religion all together, this study shows how superficial and inherently flawed the concept is, incorporating many of the theoretical problems within Religious Studies. The proponents of “post-secularity” uncritically reinforce essentialist ideas of “believers” and “non-believers”, as well as naturalizing “religion” and “the secular”, thereby masking any socio-political interests in using and redrawing the boundaries of these categories

Mari Miyamoto: Reconstructing religious spheres: religion and democracy in re-Buddhisizing societies in the Himalayas

The presentation aims to describe the recent transitions of value systems and religious practices in re-Buddhisizing societies in the Himalayas. While Bhutan is widely known as a Mahayana Buddhist society under the supervision of the central monastery of the Drukpa-Kagyü school in Bhutan, the religious sphere of Bhutan in fact has been constructed also by rich and plural religious actors and indigenous rituals. However, under the recent secularization of the political system, including the disfranchisement of “religious personalities” under the government’s democratization policy, Buddhist monasteries and monks are now trying to reconstruct the religious sphere as a unified entity through the integration of alternative religious practices into Buddhism. In this presentation, I aim to examine how people interpret new religious orders and reconstruct their value systems and religious spheres through their everyday practices in rural Bhutan.